

Cheese Factories: Part 2

By Dorothy French

The November 2010 story about the Lincoln Cheese Factory prompted Stu Huntley to remind us there were two cheese factories located east of Walworth village on Walworth-Marion Road. Numerous sources contributed information for this story.

Walworth Cheese Factory: In 1986 Loyde F. Bassage wrote his memories of the Walworth area. One of the topics was the cheese factory behind the Baptist Church, located at the northwest corner of the present day Main and Church Streets. This information is also contained in a Hoffman Foundation Paper written in 1958 by Leslie George Hall and titled "Important Businesses in Walworth."

Leslie stated the factory was operated by Harry Brush around 1910; he moved it to a large building ¼ mile east of Walworth on the south side of Walworth-Marion Road. Harry operated it for several years before selling it to Earl Stevenson. Charles Pembroke included information about the cheese factory in his 1990 book, "Walworth, As I Remember It," and commented the building may have been erected by the Yeomans family. This site is now known as 2310 Walworth-Marion Road; Absolute Auto is located there.

According to Loyde, "Many of the farmers who had cows found the cheese factory a good place to dispose of their surplus milk and could get whey to add to the diet for the pigs. Harry Brush's brother, Arthur, had a cheese factory in Lincoln. The cheese from their factories was as good as any we get in the store today."

Stuart Huntley said Earl owned the factory until he moved to a neighboring town in Monroe County where he set up a dairy. According to Stuart and Charlie, Louis Duell bought this building when he started drilling wells and used it to store pipe. It was rented by the Duell brothers (Louis and Ernest) to store threshing machines and engines for power.

Charlie remembered a whey vat located on the east side of the property adjoining DeWitt Tuttle's line fence. It was a large hole dug into the ground and staved up with silo stave lumber with the top sticking a foot out of the ground. The whey would feed into this vat from the floor of the plant. The cheese was pressed into a form or wheel and covered with cheese cloth and stored on shelves to cure or age. A steam boiler was used to make steam and heat the product produced.

During the 1968-69 timeframe, Joe and Marcia Englert purchased the area to the east of the factory from Emily Huntley so they could build a welding shop. They later purchased the property to the west of the factory from Gene East. The factory burned in the 1969-70 timeframe. The Englert's third purchase was the area to the west and south of the factory. This right-of-way provided access to Walworth-Marion Road from the farmland behind the buildings and was owned by Mrs. Clifford (Emily) Huntley.

Information about the Marion cheese factory on Walworth-Marion Road will appear in a future issue.

Editor's Note: Because the dairy industry was a prime source of revenue for the farmers, we believe there were other cheese factories in the area. If you have any information about the factories, please contact any officer or trustee listed on the front cover of this newsletter.