



WELCOME TO THE HOCKEN
Friends of the Hocken Collections
BULLETIN NUMBER 26: November 1998

La Crème de la Crème

THE MOVE of the Hocken Library, reconsolidated with Hocken Archives, into the old Otago Co-operative Dairy Company building on Anzac Avenue, is an opportune time to examine some of the material on the dairy industry held within the Hocken collections.

While the NZ dairy industry is now more often associated with Taranaki and the Waikato, Otago has a special place in the history of that industry. The first co-operative dairy factory in New Zealand was located on the Otago Peninsula, and the country's first refrigerated butter export sailed on the *s.s.Dunedin* from Port Chalmers in 1882. Both were seminal events for the industry that was to become one of New Zealand's most important export earners.

The first moves away from simple domestic production of butter and cheese towards a more commercial operation in New Zealand were probably made either on Banks Peninsula or in Taranaki in the 1850s. In 1855, some five tons of butter and 34 tons of cheese were exported from Banks Peninsula to the rest of New Zealand and Australia, while at some time during the decade a 'factory' was established in Taranaki to collect milk from several suppliers to produce cheese for local sale.

However, the birth of the co-operative system which came to typify the New Zealand dairy industry took place in Otago. The country's first co-operative dairy factory was established at John Mathieson's 'Springfield' farm on the Otago Peninsula in 1871. The Otago Peninsula Co-operative Cheese Factory Co. Ltd began producing Scottish-style 'Dunlop' cheese in September that year, the first manager being J.L. McGregor. Mathieson left the company in 1875, and the factory was moved a short distance to Pukehiki (Highcliffe), where cheese production continued until the mid-1880s when there was a switch to butter manufacture. The concern finally disbanded some time in the 1890s.

A second dairy factory was established on the Otago Peninsula, near Harbour Cone, in 1877. It had 11 shareholders, and the cheesemaker was Edward Ward, who had been taught his skills by John McGregor at the Pukehiki factory. This concern only lasted until 1881, when the factory was destroyed by bush fires that swept the Peninsula.

The following year saw the famous first export of refrigerated cheese from Port Chalmers, an event which secured the industry an export future. Also in 1882, a new dairy factory was established at Edendale, in Southland. This factory, initially a proprietary concern, did not become co-operatively owned until 1903. In its second year of operation it won a £500 government bonus offered in 1881 for the first factory-made export of 25 tons of butter or 50 tons of cheese.

Many changes

With these two 1882 events, the New Zealand dairy industry began to thrive, although the main focus was soon to move to the North Island. A complex series of economic and technological developments caused many changes in the industry over the ensuing years, important improvements being the periodic shifts in the relative profitability of butter and cheese production, the introduction of home separators and, later, the tanker collection of milk.

The development of the industry in Otago was described in the Friends' newsletter *Flotsam and Jetsam*, No.13, May 1996, and does not require repetition here. It is enough to say that the result of this evolution was the centralisation of the industry into a small number of large dairy factories, particularly in the North Island. In Otago, the Stirling factory, established in 1983, became the focus of the industry; while in Southland, Edendale built on its early start by gradually absorbing the whole of the province's production into a substantial factory.

When Eric Warr, author of one of the three standard histories on the New Zealand industry, became senior lecturer in geography at Massey in the late 1950s, he encouraged the Massey University Library to gather up dairy company records from around the country to provide a basis for research. As a result, the records of many southern New Zealand dairy factories are now held in the North Island. Nevertheless, the Hocken Collections contain much information about the industry, both by way of specific records as well as more general references.

An overview

Three books offering a general introduction are worth noting:

Philpott, H.G. *A History of the New Zealand Dairy Industry, 1840-1935*, Govt. Printer, Wellington, 1937. The standard reference for events up to 1935.

Ward, Arthur H. *A Command of Co-operatives*, N.Z. Dairy Board, Wellington, 1975.
Warr, Eric. *From Bush-burn to Butter. A journey in words and pictures*, Butterworths, Wellington, 1988. Generously illustrated.

Contemporary Industry Manuals, Publications & Journals

Numerous publications were produced which were either guides on 'how to do it' or were commentaries on the state of the industry. Many of these were of a general agricultural nature, but some were more specifically focused on the dairy industry and factory operations.

Bowron, William. *Observations on the Manufacture of Cheese, Butter and Bacon in N.Z.*, Wilsons & Horton, Auckland, 1883.

Hamilton, W.H. *The Dairy Industry in N.Z.*, Govt. Print, Wellington, 1944.

N.Z. Dairy Board. *From Milk to Dairy Products*, Dairy Advisory Bureau, 1990.

Ruddick, J. *Cheese and Butter Factories*, Govt. Print, 1889.

Jubilee publications

Very few dairy companies have survived a century of operation, but many made the half-century mark and were proud of their achievements. The publication of anniversary histories was common, and among several of these held in the Hocken are these three southern examples:

Aparima Co-operative Dairy Factory Co. Ltd. 50th Jubilee, 1901-1951, Southland Times Print, 1951.

Henley Co-operative Dairy Factory Co. Ltd. A record of its establishment and achievements over 50 years of service to the farmers of the Taieri Plain, Laing & Matthews, Dunedin, 1965.

Taieri & Peninsula Milk Supply Co. Ltd. 50 years of co-operation and development in the dairy industry, 1884-1934, Dunedin, 1934.

Company Records

Hocken Archives hold a number of minute books and sets of records of various dairy companies. These primary sources are invaluable, as most researchers will be well aware of the pitfalls involved with secondary sources. The dairy industry is particularly problematic, because much that has been written has been interpretive rather than simply descriptive.

Harbour Cone Cheese Co., minutes 1877-1880.

Otago Peninsula Cheese Factory minute book, 1871-1884, Ms 186A.

Pukerau Dairy Factory Co. minute books, May 1909 to August 1941, Ms 655.

Taieri & Peninsula Milk Supply Co. Ltd minute books and annual balances, 1871-1942, Ms 186B-186F3.

Journals & periodicals

Dozens of journals and periodicals have been produced over the years dealing with some aspect of the dairy industry. These journals have had a wide variety of general foci, from agriculture to geography, to dairy science. Below are some sample articles taken from these sources.

N.Z. Farmer. ‘Co-operative Cheese Industry Reaches Its Century’, 9/9/1971: p.18

ibid. ‘Dairying’s David Tackles N.I. Goliath’, 8/4/1982: pp.82-90.

N.Z. Geographer. ‘American Influence on N.Z. Landscapes’, by A.H.Grey, v.40 (2) 1984: pp.66-77.

ibid. ‘A Survey in the Changes in Production, Manufacturing and Marketing in the N.Z. Dairy Industry’, by J.K.Bewley, 26 (1) 1970: pp.36-49.

N.Z. Journal of Dairy Science & Technology. ‘The Beginnings of the Dairy Industry in N.Z.’, by E.C.R.Warr, Vol.15 (1980) A109-A113.

ibid. ‘The First Co-operative Dairy Factories’, Vol.16 (1981) A14-A19.

ibid. ‘The N.Z. Dairy Industry: Some South Island Beginnings’, by E.C.R.Warr, Vol.16 (1981) A158-A165.

General local histories

Local histories can be the source of many snippets of information regarding small dairy factories. This list of southern examples in the Hocken Library should by no means be regarded as exhaustive even for Otago-Southland. Similar coverage is available for the whole of New Zealand:

Bennett, F.O. ‘Mary Cuddie’, in Griffiths, G. ed. *The Advance Guard, Series 2*, ODT, 1974. [Mosgiel]

Brown, L.C. & Barry, L.S. *In the Lee of the Hokanuis*, Craig Print, 1966 [Waimumu] Brownlie, May. *Kismet for Kelso*, the Author, 1992.

- Cairns, Marjorie & Plunkett, F.H. *Tales of the Turi*, Craig Print, 1984. [South Hillend]
- Dickie, Paula. *Land of Many Hills*, Gore Publishing, 1982. [Pukerau]
- Halliday, M. *Kamahi. A District History*, Craig Print, 1990. [Morton Mains]
- Hislop, K. & Parkes, W. *Taieri Mouth and Its Surrounding Districts*, Otago Heritage Books, 1980.
- Knight, Hardwicke. *Otago Peninsula*, the Author, 1979.
- Moore, C.W.S. *Northern Approaches*, Otago Centennial Publications, W&T, 1958.
- Muir, D.C.W. ed. *Mataura, City of the Falls*, Gore Publishing, 1991.
- Muir, D.C.W. & Dickie, L.W. *Tuturau. A History of the District*, Craig Print, 1995.
- Olssen, Eric. *A History of Otago*, John McIndoe, 1984.
- Scotter, W.H. *Run Estate and Farm. A History of the Kakanui and Waiareka Valleys*, Otago Centennial Publications, W&T. 1948.
- Shaw, M.S. & Farrant, E.D. *The Taieri Plain*, Otago Centennial Publications, 1949.
- Sumpter, D.J. & Lewis, J.J. *Faith and Toil. The Story of Tokomairiro*, Otago Centennial Publications, 1949.
- Tod, F. *The Kilmog and Environs*, Historical Publications, 1982 [Merton]
- Trotter, Margaret. *Early Woodlands & Today*, Craig Print, 1995.
- Tyrrell, A.R. *Catlins Pioneering*, Otago Heritage Books, 1989.
- Waite, F. *Pioneering in South Otago*, Otago Centennial Publications, 1948.

Theses

Few theses have been devoted to the dairy industry. Two can be noted:

- Huggett, J.P. ‘The Historical Geography of the Otago Peninsula’, MA Geography, Victoria University, Wellington, 1966.
- Petchey, P.G. ‘A History of the Coastal Otago Dairy Industry’, BA Hons Geography research essay, Otago University, 1991.

Reference

The *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* volumes issued at the turn of the century provide an invaluable (if slightly flawed) source of information on many facets of commerce, industry and general life, and most volumes contain material on dairy factories. *Vol.4, Otago & Southland*, published in 1905, has a specific entry on the Taieri & Peninsula Milk Supply Co. (p.300) and several of the people involved in the enterprise. It also contains references to small dairy factories under localities. Standard directories such as *Stone’s* and *Wise’s* may not contain a

LEFT: Drays line up at the Sandymount dairy factory — see Hocken Photographs copy negative E/2105/0. wealth of detail about any particular company or factory, but they do supply a record of the location of the various premises, and sometimes contain advertisements for dairy companies. The Hocken has comprehensive sets.

Newspapers

As always, local newspapers are a rich source of information. The dairy factory was an important part of life in many areas, and such significant events as openings and closures were generally reported, as were the celebrations of various anniversaries. Stock sales and farming notes provide an ongoing record on the farming side of the dairy industry, and there were occasional general review articles. The index to *ODT*

headlines, 1946-80, provides very good coverage of the industry in the period after World War 2.

Of particular note are the *Otago Witness* illustrations, the bound volumes not only being readily accessible, but providing a rich pictorial record of all aspects of New Zealand life.

Photographs

The Hocken Library holds a good selection of photographs relating to dairy factories and associated activities, features and products. Not all of these are listed in the index under 'Dairy Farming and Industry', and it pays to search files for specific locations. Remember that the relevant books, and particularly the *Otago Witness*, are also a valuable source of early photographs. Otago scenes held in the Hocken collection include:

Elm Grove Dairy Factory, c/n E2871/52.
Hampden Creamery, c/n E3957/42.
Kurow Skimming Station, c/n sheet93/2/c.
Maungatua Dairy Factory, c/n sheet 200/5/b.
Momona Co-operative Dairy Factory, c/n E4554/8.
Otakou Creamery, c/n E3257/24.
Owaka Co-operative Dairy Factory, c/n E4626/40.
Owaka Dairy Factory, c/n E2703/11.
Palmerston Creamery, c/n E2879/15.
Papanui Inlet Skimming Station, c/n 48/B/2 OPM.
Portobello Dairy Factory, c/n E637/35.
Ratanui Dairy Factory, c/n sheet 90/3/e.
Sandymount Dairy Factory, c/n E2105/0.
Taieri & Peninsula Milk Supply Co., c/n E1381/2A.
Taieri Creamery, c/n E4554/11.
Taieri East Dairy Factory, c/n E2879/14.
Waikouaiti Dairy Factory, c/n E4626/41.

CHEESE-MAKING vats in the early years of the 20th century. Note the mechanical agitators in the right-hand vat. [Hocken c/n E2878/4].

Dairy Farming Display, NZ and South Seas Exhibition, 1925-26, c/n E3166/30.
Interiors of milking sheds, c/n E5886/30A, c/n E1216/2, c/n
E2880/40.

Maps

Old topographical maps are among the best sources for locating the actual location of early dairy factories, as most other published sources give only a general vicinity, such as Goodwood or South Hillend. As they were an important feature, dairy factories were often specifically labelled, particularly on the early (Provisional and Interim series) NZMS 1 topographical maps. The Hocken has an extensive collection.

The Hocken Library offers excellent facilities for the safe preservation of community records. If you have personal papers of historical value relating to the subject of this Bulletin, or if any organisation you belong to is concerned about the future care of its records, the Hocken Library's Curator of Archives and Manuscripts will be pleased to offer advice or assistance.