

Laramie family dairy was a thriving business
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Just before the turn of the 19th century, Laramie businesses continued to pop up all around town. One long-lasting businesses that appeared during that time was the McCue Dairy.

The McCue family started their business in 1898 and ran it out of their home at 509 S. Second. Because of the confined space, it was small operation that sold milk on a limited basis.

In 1900 John "Jack" and Annie McCue began renting a place two miles west of Laramie from Cassius W. Webber of Fort Collins. They moved out the property to continue their business and a few years later, they purchased the property. This was the start of what would turn into a huge business.

"The early milk deliveries were made by a horse drawn wagon," John Surline, great-grandson and Maryann McCue Johnston granddaughter of the owners writes in an article in "Laramie Gem city: History of Laramie, Wyoming Volume I 1987."

Despite the fortune of having a bigger place, the dairy business was not without its problems. The horses were sometime scared by Union Pacific trains and tried to run away.

Other times, the snow and cold would cause problems for the dairy. Either the horses couldn't trudge through the snow, or the severe cold would cause the milk bottles to break when they bumped into each other.

The dairy worked through the problems together as a family.

"The McCue brothers and sisters helped their parents operate the dairy by performing their chores and assisting whenever they were needed," the article says.

George McCue and Marie McCue Hartman purchased the dairy from the Annie McCue estate after the death of their parents.

The dairy continued to expand until World War II, when they had to cut back due to a shortage of manpower.

Throughout its life, the dairy always produced its own milk but got its ice cream and cottage cheese from Poudre Valley.

At one point, the dairy was purchased by someone else in 1950, but George and Marie repurchased it a short while later.

The dairy continued its commercial and home delivery of milk continued until the 1960s.

"When operations began, there were two milk cows; at the height of operations, the herd contained one hundred head of cattle, and 200 gallons of milk were moved each day," the article says.

By the time it closed in the 1960s, it was the oldest family-owned dairy in Wyoming.

The dairy certainly wasn't the only business thriving in Laramie at the time. Although he was considered young, Will Graham started a market in Laramie.

"... he had proven that others besides old established firms can make a success of business enterprises in our town by skillfull management, cheerful and kindly treatment of all, even those unfamiliar with the strict priciples of trade, and attention to the smallest of details," according to an article in the 1901 Laramie Republican Industrial Edition.

Plenty of meats and fruits and vegetables were sold by the Graham brothers for several years.

Another thriving Laramie business was The Home Hospital. Mrs. Annie Burk, a graduate of Queen Charlotte's hospital in London, took her education and applied it to a home hospital in Laramie. The hospital, once located at 402 Garfield, had multiple wards and many modern amenities.

"The rooms are lighted by electricity and the building is connected with the sewer sytem of the city," according to an article in the 1901 Laramie Republican Industrial Edition.

Burk's hospital could tackle almost anything, even surgery, but she wouldn't accept patients who were contagious.

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