



Black Rock HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Black Rock
Riverside
Grant Amherst
West Hertel

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Dairy Products at Your Door and Beyond

By Doreen DeBoth



1941, Gibas Dairy workers, 586 Amherst Street. John Gibas, owner, second from the left.

At the turn of the twentieth century the population of Black Rock was developing at a rapid rate. The beltline that circled Buffalo facilitated settlement in this area as industry increased and made available more jobs. Other smaller businesses also opened to meet the demands of residents. Two dairies operating within a block from each other prospered simultaneously: Gibas Dairy and Taylor Dairy.

Karl Gibas began delivering milk at the age of eighteen at the dairy his grandfather, John Gibas began in 1917. It was first located on Germain St. then six years later it moved to 586 Amherst Street where they would now have dairy processing facilities.



Tony Gibas with delivery truck, 1935.

Milk was delivered with horse-drawn wagons and customers would bring their pitchers to get filled. At that time there were 8 or 10 dairies in Black Rock but only

Gibas' Dairy had their own processing plant. Milk would come in ten gallon cans from farms in the Arcade area. It would be strained, clarified, pasteurized then in the 50's it was homogenized.

Tony Gibas, Karl's father became owner in 1946 and later the dairy was sold in 1969 to Aurora Meadows in East Aurora after being in business for 52 years.

Karl still has brand new bottles from 1923 and new cartons but most of the lot was sold to a buyer for about \$3,000 in 1989. The cartons are famous as they've been in movies such as "Stranger Within" with Kate Jackson and Rick Schroder where a carton sits on a coffee table.

In another crime thriller, "LA Confidential" with Kevin Spacey, Russell Crowe and Kim Basinger, a carton sits on a table while Basinger eats cereal. More recently one appeared in "Dream Girls" with Danny Glover and Jennifer Hudson. Another was included in a documentary on Howard Hughes and one appeared on the cover of an issue of American Health Magazine. Other Gibas milk bottles are used for syrup in restaurants as far away as Italy, France and California. You never know when another will pop up in a movie as many cartons and bottles were also sold to Universal Studios.

A milk carton and bottle are now in the collection of the BRHS. Who would think that milk bottles and cartons made right here in Black Rock would become famous?

Source: Interview with Karl Gibas, February 21, 2010. Mr. Gibas, a graduate of Riverside High School and a musician, resides in Pendleton with his family.

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Taylor Dairy

Around the corner from Gibas Dairy another dairy was also operating in high gear. Taylor Dairy opened in the early 1920's by



Taylor Dairy, Louis Taylor on truck, 74 Bridgeman

Louis Taylor and his wife Lottie at 74 Bridgeman. He migrated from Hungary and Lottie, of Polish descent was born and raised in Black Rock.

Taylor dairy produced milk, cottage cheese and orange drink, sour cream, butter-milk, etc. that was distributed throughout Buffalo and surrounding areas. First products were delivered by horse drawn wagons, then electric powered trucks, a very first in the area, and later by a fleet of trucks powered by gasoline. Milk was even delivered to Grand Island via the Grand Island Ferry.



Some of the products made by Taylor Dairy that are in the BRHS Collection.

Five years after they married, Louis died and his wife was left to raise and support their three children. A very strong and resourceful woman, she took over the business at a time when it was very difficult for woman to succeed in business, especially supervising seven or eight dairy men.

She kept the business going and continued the successful enterprise that her and Louis began. In a decision to modernize her business, trucks were changed to gasoline operated trucks and she installed a gas station on the premises for convenience.



Fleet of trucks lined up ready to make home deliveries, c.1920's.

In an interview conducted with Norma (Taylor) Wedlake in May, 2010, she talked about the difficulties her mother experienced operating the business after her father died and said that she couldn't of managed it without the support and friendship of the people in the neighborhood of Black Rock. Her mother retired at the age of 60 and sold the business but stayed in Black Rock until she died.



Photo of Norma Wedlake standing on a crate at age 3 on Bridgeman St.

Source: Interviews with Norma Taylor Wedlake in 2010 and 2011, who resided in Tonawanda until her death on February 17, 2016.

Photos courtesy of the Black Rock Historic Photo Project sponsored by the Grant Amherst Business Association



Recent Acquisitions

Nuchereno Bros. Auto Parts: They Sold what People Wanted

New to our collection is a magazine, *The Super Service Station*, a merchandising magazine for one stop gas stations from February, 1938. The magazine features Nuchereno Bros. Auto Parts that has serviced the Riverside and surrounding areas since 1929.

The business was begun by James and Anthony Nuchereno, who together owned a grocery business until they decided to open a small tire and battery shop at 1021 Tona-wanda St. at Esser Avenue. At that time Riverside was a bustling industrial area and every-



James Nuchereno is in the driver's seat, his brother Anthony is seated on the running board, Louis Nuchereno and Fritz Struza in truck bed (photo submitted by Derek Skura).

one owned a car so gasoline and repair products were in demand.

As the business grew, a gasoline island was installed on Esser Ave. and a two-stall service wing was built and later doubled to increase tire and electrical service facilities, a radio service department and a display room that faced Esser. Catering to the demand in the neighborhood, their inventory consisted of convenience items such as electric bulbs, paints, brushes, gardening items, washing machines and refrigerator bulbs and other household items.



Gas was a real deal in the 1930's-eight gallons of gas for \$1.00 that included tire, oil and radiator checkups and a windshield-washing.

Located across from the park and playground they saw a need for bicycles, so added parts and service including bearings, pedals, grips, chains and other accessories that a bike rider would need.

Their business steadily increased, even during the depression. In 1938 (according to the magazine article)



they grossed around \$85,000-90,000 a year. They knew what the consumer needed and how to keep them coming back.

One way they did this was establishing a check-cashing feature and a budget plan policy. They were aware that factories and other industries in the area paid by check so they could project what their credit capability was. When a customer came in to cash their check they could make a payment or perhaps purchase another item for sale. Records were kept on cards and the condition of it would reveal how often it was used.

The brothers' success can be attributed to their ability to recognize the needs of the public, seize the opportunity and fill that demand. The family business has been recently sold but you can still go there today and have your car serviced or pick up an auto part.

Special thanks to Derek Skura for contributing the magazine and photo, and Danielle Nuchereno for photo identification.



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Museum Hours:

Friday 10:00am-4:00pm
Saturday 11:00am-3:00pm

For any inquiries please contact us at

info@blackrockhistoricalsociety.com

Find us online!

www.blackrockhistoricalsociety.com



**The BRHS
Seeks Volunteers**

Your expertise, interest and/or love of history are good reasons to volunteer.

Students, seniors and everyone in-between are welcome to volunteer in various areas of interest: office/computer, education, outreach, maintenance, etc.

You can strengthen your community, learn about preservation, and meet new people.

Every volunteer can make a difference. To

volunteer, contact us via email on our website or call 716-510-4007.

Artifact Donations

If you think you may have items or photos that tell the story of our area. you can bring them to the museum, or we will gladly pick them up (call 716-510-4007).

BRHS Seeks Artifacts

In the 1920's **Pratt & Lambert** commissioned the great American illustrator Norman Rockwell to do six paintings for their advertisements. These were later made into prints as a set for acquisition by their employees.

If you happen to have in your possession a set and would like to donate it to the museum, or know someone who has a set, please contact the museum at :(716)510-4007.

Prints would include:

- Grandpa's Gift
- Man Varnishing Doll's Bed For Little Girl
- Master and Apprentice
- Elderly Gentleman Reminded of Past Love
- The Banjo Player
- My Favorite Picture

Upcoming Events

2016 Fall Speaker Series

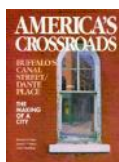
October 20



Maurice A. John - President of the Seneca

Nation will discuss the Unity Island name change and how devastating any derogatory terminology can be to whole nations of people.

November 3



Edward Patton - Historian and author will show unseen high resolution photos of Black Rock from the 1930's and how historic information can be revealed in details.

November 10



Warren Hoy - Plant Manager at DuPont will discuss the history of the plant, it's importance to the community, growth and expansion, and its plans for the future.