

Our Dairy History Put Parker on the Map

By: *The Parker Historic Preservation Commission*

Pine Grove, as Parker was once known, was just a rural stop along the Denver & New Orleans railroad until the advent of the Littleton Creamery facility at Parker in 1897. The creamery was a hub of activity as local dairymen brought their milk here to be processed. Each morning, wagons would line up on the ramp leading to the creamery dock to deposit their loads of milk.

The Parker facility was one of many milk separation stations established by the Littleton Creamery Company up and down the Front Range and along the rail lines east into Kansas and Nebraska. At these stations, the company would purchase milk from local dairymen, separate the milk fat (butterfat) from the whole milk, and then ship the cream by rail to its facility in Denver. There the cream was made into butter, the company's primary product.

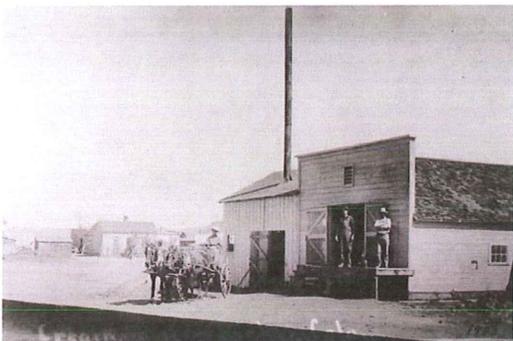
The Parker facility was tremendously significant to the local economy and by the turn of the century, Parker was more than a rural crossroads. The town boasted a hotel, bank, mercantile stores, church, lumber company, barber shop, school, saloon and many other businesses. It is safe to say that the dairy business put Parker on the map.

In 1908 a second creamery was established under the ownership of Otto Shatz. This new facility, called the Parker Creamery, was operated by a series of local entrepreneurs, the most significant being William DuRay. Initially, the creamery was just a milk station with a separator but soon thereafter, a refrigeration unit was added. They then began making and selling both butter and ice cream on site.

The Parker Creamery's turn-key establishment in conjunction with the availability and popularity of the home separator put the first creamery out of business in 1912. The Parker Creamery continued to operate until it was sold in about 1923 to the Bertrams who dismantled the building.

Although the buildings are no longer standing, you can visit the site where both of both creameries stood on Pilgrims Place, behind the Parker Center shopping center. There are two historic markers there that will give you more information about your dairy history.

To learn more about Parker's history, visit the Town's website at www.parkeronline.org. You can also pick up a Walking Tour Brochure from Town Hall and visit these and other historic sites in downtown.



Parker Creamery

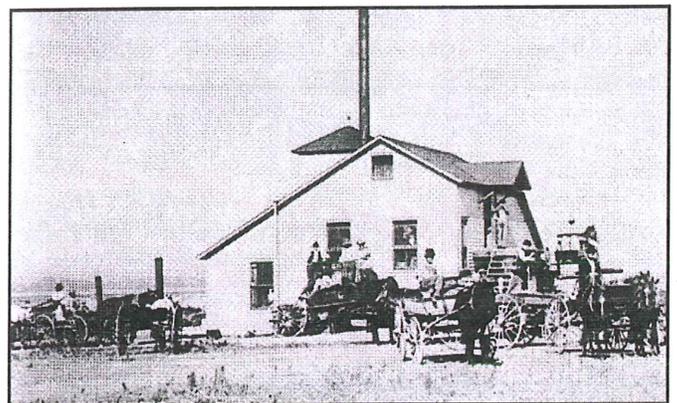


Photo #3. Littleton Creamery looking to the southwest c. 1900. Photo courtesy Colorado Historical Society #F21211.