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Warner's Dairy

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The oldest dairy business on the Main Line between Paoli and Bryn Mawr was located at Berwyn; it was known as the C.H. Warner and Brother Dairy and was operated by Clyde H. Warner and his brother Maurice E. Warner. It was a direct descendant of a business operated by the late Gardner L. Warner, uncle of the present proprietors, which was widely known throughout Berwyn, Devon, Strafford, Wayne, and Radnor.

The G. L. Warner Dairy, as the business was originally known, was founded by Gardner Warner just about seventy years ago. Located on Sugartown Road, Strafford, of which community the Warner family was one of the best known and most prominent residents, Mr. Warner owned a mixed herd of about fifty head which he supplied many residents of this section of the Main Line. Delivery was of course entirely by horse and wagon and his little yellow milk wagon was a familiar sight on nearly every road in the district.

The present business is a combination of two well-known local dairies. On September 1, 1914, Clyde Warner and his brother Maurice bought out the route operated by Luther Tavenner of Berwyn, which was known as the Lindenhall Dairy. Mr Tavenner owned a large farm near Berwyn and also operated a plant and office near the ice plant. His trade equalled about 150 quarts daily.

Four years later the brothers bought out their uncle whose trade then amounted to 400 quarts, and removed their headquarters to Strafford. Gardner L. Warner removed to Sunny Creek Farm at King of Prussia where he maintained a large herd and sold his milk wholesale to his nephews. This farm was later purchased by J. Howard Mecke, Jr., and is now a part of Colonial Village.

At the time they bought the Tavenner business, the brothers retailed Brookmead Guernsey milk from the Frank Thomson farm at Devon. They handled this milk for three years, at the end of which time the Brookmead Farm established its own service, which became widely known throughout this region.

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After being at Strafford for eight years the growing business demanded larger accommodations, and the brothers began looking around for a suitable site to establish their headquarters. In 1926 they purchased the Hester Price property on Kromer Avenue, Berwyn, where they installed a complete modern dairy. The old homestead at Strafford continued to be occupied by L. Evans Warner, father of the brothers, until his death. Since that time it has been sold, and Mrs. Warner until her death made her home with her third son Harry, who was occasionally associated with his brothers.

The Berwyn plant was one of the best equipped and most up-to-date of its kind on the Main Line. It had mechanized refrigeration, mechanized pasteurization and sterilizing and bottle-filling equipment. Seven motors were required to operate the various machines.

The business had been increased from approximately 550 quarts in 1918 to 1800 quarts in 1931, and at the time the business was terminated in 1955 some 3000 quarts per day were produced. The route ranged from Paoli to Villanova, and was maintained by seven trucks and a total force of some fifteen persons. There were from twelve to fifteen suppliers but the Warners themselves supplied approximately fifty per cent of the raw product. The first farm was bought in 1942 and was located at Honeybrook. The second farm was two miles north of Exton and was known as "Midship Farm" (being located between the two sections of Ship Road); the third was "High Meadows", located just off Route 401 on Route 113. This they still own.

The usual line of dairy products were handled, milk, cream, and buttermilk being the staple items. Quality

of products together with prompt and courteous service which was unflinchingly maintained over the years earned the business a splendid reputation. It was one of the largest industries in Berwyn.

In 1955 the company was sold to the Foremost Dairies, and at present writing the farm is also for sale. The dairy buildings were sold to the Mack Oil Company.

Material for this paper obtained from a 1931 copy of "Wayne Suburban", and Mr. Clyde H. Warner.