

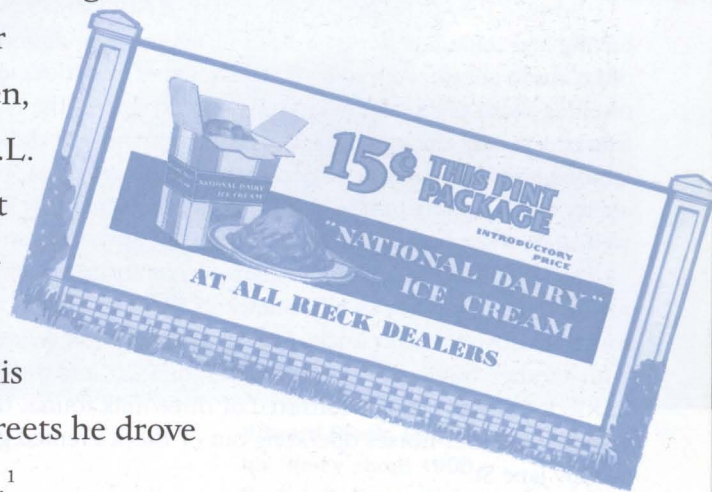


# Milk Man

Sealtest and the National Dairy Empire of Edward E. Rieck

by Bradley Fisher

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH the beginnings of food giant Kraft Foods Inc. usually think of J.L. Kraft, brought to life by early TV advertising. He was pictured as a hard-working entrepreneur who drove a cheese wagon through the streets of Chicago at the turn of the century. But there was another wagon-driving entrepreneur back then, one whose success preceded that of J.L. Kraft and who helped found the giant corporation that made Kraft a household word. That entrepreneurial wagon driver was Edward E. Rieck, his product was milk, and the cobbled streets he drove were on the South Side of Pittsburgh.<sup>1</sup>



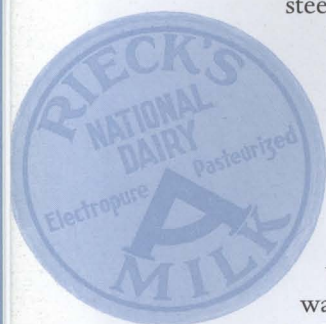
The Rieck family about 1883 at their first store at 1809 Jane St. on Pittsburgh's South Side. From left: Edward E. Rieck, Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Rech (Edward's mother and stepfather), Mrs. Steineke, and Oscar Michel. In windows, from left: Minnie Shaffer, unknown, and Sara Lusken.

This is the story of how Edward Rieck (pronounced Rick) put together a dairy empire that dominated Western Pennsylvania for more than 50 years, and how that company had a founding stake in what was probably the

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first national dairy company. Incorporated in 1923 as National Dairy Products and known during most of its history as Sealtest, the company now known as Kraft Foods Inc., has become one of the world's largest food companies.



In the days when the milk business was growing as fast as steel, Edward Rieck was a milkman. He was born in 1864, the youngest of three children, a few miles south of Pittsburgh in Library.<sup>2</sup> His father Samuel Rieck was an immigrant from Prussia and his mother Wilhelmina Mollenauer came from a German family in Six Mile Ferry, near Pittsburgh. Samuel, a Gettysburg veteran, was killed by a draft horse when Edward was just a year old. Wilhelmina remarried and the family moved to Temperanceville, now Pittsburgh's West End.

Milk was the family business. Edward's stepfather started a delivery service in 1872. Edward spent his summers on his uncle's dairy farm in Library; in 1880 the uncle bought a dairy route and 16-year-old Edward went to work delivering milk from Library to customers on the South Side. Without pasteurization or refrigeration, freshness and speed were of the essence. Rieck got up at five every morning to drive his wagon up Sarah Street, drawing fresh milk into customers' pails from a brass-bound wooden tank mounted on top.<sup>3</sup>

Edward Rieck was one of those people naturally drawn to the buying and selling of things. Stories of his early childhood are often about commerce: Edward buying paper and sticks and reselling them as kites; Edward selling extra eggs to the neighbors from the family chicken coop. But these were no idle childhood lemonade stand projects — Rieck made money at them. His ability to see opportunities and his work ethic would serve him well later, when he was buying and selling whole companies.<sup>4</sup>

In 1886, Rieck found himself with an opportunity and the means to seize it: with an inheritance of \$376, he bought the milk route he drove from his uncle. Shortly thereafter, he followed it with another, buying out his stepfather for \$800, and the Edward E. Rieck Co. was born. It consisted of three milk routes, three wagons, and four horses operating out of Rieck's rented grocery at 1809 Jane St.<sup>5</sup>

The milk delivery business was on the verge of booming in the late 1800s. Industrial growth was changing the face of Pittsburgh, gobbling up space and attracting hungry workers and their families by the thousands. But the same industrial growth that was creating a huge demand for fresh milk was degrading the quality and safety of the local product. City land with fresh grass for grazing cows was disappearing fast. Pittsburghers, like city dwellers around the country, were getting much of their milk from cows kept in back of groceries and in brewery yards, fed on mash and slops from distillery operations. Grocers and dealers commonly added water and chalk to it to stretch profits.<sup>6</sup>

Adulteration and bad taste weren't the worst aspects of city milk. Unpasteurized milk produced in cramped, unsanitary city

feedlots was a deadly carrier of tuberculosis, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, dysentery, Bang's disease, and other serious diseases, killing scores of babies in American cities every summer.<sup>7</sup> To minimize the chance of infection, mothers in the 1800s boiled the milk they bought — even from country sources — and stored it in the cellar or some other cool place.<sup>8</sup>

Edward Rieck saw the crying need for fresh country milk as more than an opportunity: he made it his lifelong passion. In 1889, newly married to Aemilie Junge of Pittsburgh,<sup>9</sup> Rieck built his first country receiving plant at Enon Valley, about 45 miles northwest of Pittsburgh on the Pennsylvania Railroad. One of the first such plants in Western Pennsylvania,<sup>10</sup> it was more than just a place for collecting, processing, and shipping milk into the city in metal cans. It gave him a way to make butter and turn surplus spring milk into cheese that could be stored and sold in winter. Its cream separator enabled Rieck to enter the wholesale business by supplying cream to the bakers, confectioners and ice cream parlors of the city. It extended the Pittsburgh "milkshed" further than ever before, echoing developments in New York and other parts of the country and securing a vital resource for the city's growth.

As Pittsburgh's thirst for milk and cream grew in the 1890s, Rieck began a course of ambitious expansion by acquisition. He bought a local creamery, leased refrigerated storage space in the basement of a building at Fourth and Liberty avenues, and nicknamed himself the "Cream King of Pittsburgh." He moved the business Downtown from the South Side in 1894, leasing office space at 528-30 Grant St. From this spot, eight men and five teams of horses delivered 500 gallons of milk and 400 gallons of cream a day.<sup>11</sup>

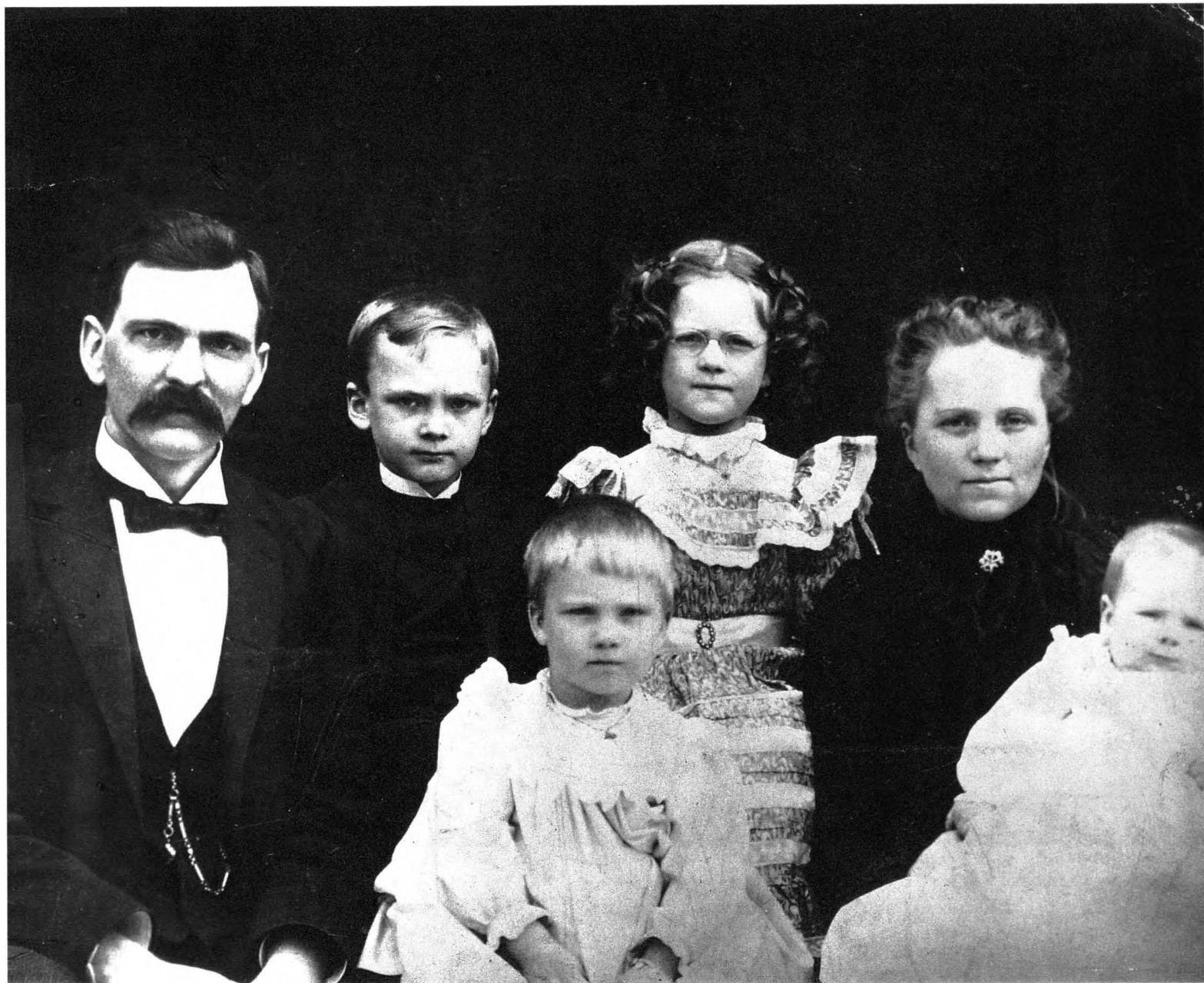
### *From buckets to bottles to ice cream*

A new phase of growth in dairy products began in 1892<sup>12</sup> with the introduction of pasteurization, which provided dairy distributors a cheap method of sterilizing milk; it quickly became the standard method for assuring safety and lengthening shelf life.

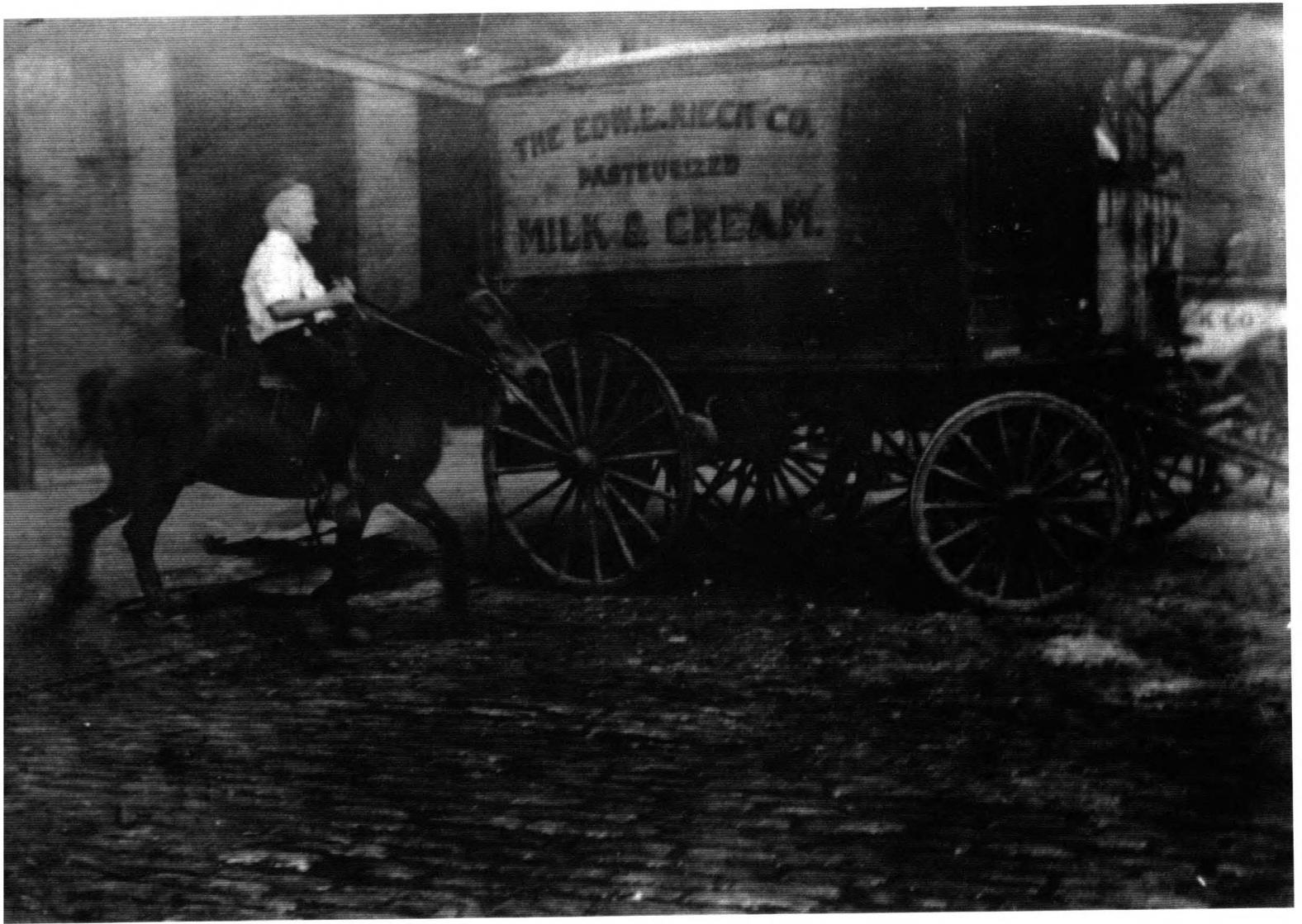
Edward Rieck adopted the process in 1896, through his favorite means: he acquired a company, Purity Milk Co., one of the first companies in the area to pasteurize milk and put it into sterilized bottles. The new process and the growth it promised pushed Rieck into another new plant at 1401 Forbes Ave. (at Stevenson Street.) in 1896. Rieck installed pasteurizing and bottling equipment, and the site became the center of operations and corporate headquarters as well as a city landmark for more than 50 years.<sup>13</sup> By the 1920s, major cities like Pittsburgh were following the lead of New York City in requiring that nearly all milk sold to consumers be pasteurized.<sup>14</sup>

Ice cream, first manufactured commercially in the 1850s, was beginning to capture the palates of Americans everywhere as the century closed. It received a big push with the invention of the ice cream cone in 1896, and an even bigger push when the waffle cone became the sensation of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.





Edward Rieck, left, with his family about 1900. From left, Edward, Carl, Alma, Edna, wife Aemilie, and Albert.



Edward's son  
Albert with his  
dad's milk wagon  
about 1913.



Between 1899 and 1919, ice cream consumption in the U.S. grew from 50 to 150 million gallons.<sup>15</sup> Edward Rieck was determined to be part of it.

Pittsburgh had its share of ice cream makers, many of whom bought their cream from Rieck. When one of these businesses collapsed in 1898, Edward received the company's equipment to settle the debt, and found himself with an old-fashioned freezer, an ice breaker, a collection of cedar tubs and ice cream cans, and two customers. It was the beginning of what would become a mainstay of Rieck's business for the rest of his life. He quickly made a name for himself in the ice cream business, advertising aggressively and making it available in corner drugstores and other convenient locations. Rieck soon had 35 wagons delivering daily to Pittsburgh customers. The ice cream was legendary for being Pittsburgh's freshest and tastiest, and it was safe, as one business writer assured the public in 1908: "All the cream is pasteurized, thereby destroying all disease germs ... [A]ny child or invalid may eat it without the slightest danger of harmful effect."<sup>16</sup>

Steel made Pittsburgh a boom town in the early 1900s, and Edward Rieck capitalized on it. He grew his business aggressively, buying two dozen dairies between 1890 and 1924. In 1915, Rieck acquired a controlling interest in the McJunkin-Straight dairy of Pittsburgh, a well-established rival whose founder had recently died. The two companies merged completely in 1917 and became the Rieck-McJunkin Dairy Co., the name by which most Pittsburghers remember it. By 1923, the company was operating three plants in Pittsburgh and others in McKeesport, Butler, New Castle, Charleroi, and Altoona.<sup>17</sup>

The company itself is remembered by former employees as a solid place where generations worked side by side. Employee loyalty was typical of the Pittsburgh work ethic; careers lasting three or more decades were common.<sup>18</sup>

The Rieck-McJunkin name was everywhere in Pittsburgh in the 1920s and '30s — drugstore awnings, billboards, neon signs, the sides of milk trucks and wagons. Novelist Marcia Davenport used it to evoke the city and inspire a heroine in her 1942 novel *Valley of Decision*.<sup>19</sup> Painter John Kane used the Rieck milk wagon as a motif in at least three of his paintings, including "From My Studio Window," part of the collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>20</sup> Rieck, who loved radio so much that family gatherings would be timed around his favorite shows, was an aggressive radio advertiser, sponsoring Pirates broadcasts and variety shows. The company even had its own radio program, "The Rieck Revelers," a 15 minute gospel music show broadcast on KDKA at dinnertime throughout the 1930s.<sup>21</sup> And of course the Rieck name graced thousands of milk bottles, ice cream cartons, egg cartons, butter boxes, and cottage cheese containers delivered daily to homes and stores in Western Pennsylvania.

Edward Rieck was also a figure on the Pittsburgh landscape, albeit a quiet and understated one. He is remembered as a tall, serious, kind and soft-spoken man who preferred to dress in gray.<sup>21</sup> He had little need and apparently no desire for personal publicity, and avoided it. Aside from business, his public life

consisted of charities, which he supported avidly but quietly. And he was a Pittsburgh man: even after hitting it big, becoming a millionaire, and taking a high-paid New York corporate directorship, Rieck continued to reside in his modest home at 5665 Bartlett St. and remained a proud and active member in the local Rotary Club.<sup>23</sup>

But not all was perfect. After 27 years and four children, Rieck's marriage to Aemilie had grown difficult, beyond reconciliation in fact. It ended in divorce in 1919 after a three-year separation. Aemilie moved to Los Angeles. Rieck later remarried, to Mary Caldwell of Pittsburgh.<sup>24</sup>

## *The million-dollar idea*

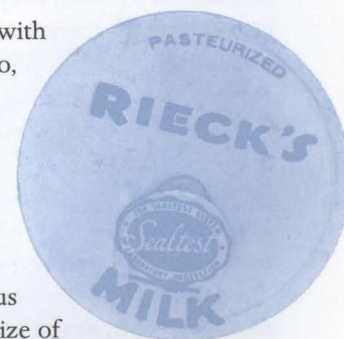
While the Twenties roared, Americans indulged in many new passions, two of which came together in 1923 to make Edward Rieck a multimillionaire. One of these passions was ice cream, and the other was the stock market. Both were booming with no end in sight.

In New York, investment bankers at Goldman Sachs believed they could use market capital and the public's seemingly bottomless appetite for ice cream to build a nationwide source for dairy products the way they had for steel, oil, and railroads. They set out on a quest for visionary dairy companies to form the nucleus of a nationwide company to serve this market. Very quickly they found two: the Hydrox Corp. of Chicago and Rieck-McJunkin of Pittsburgh.<sup>25</sup>

In 1923, E.E. Rieck's original Pittsburgh dairy route on the South Side had grown to regional dominance and had become one of the largest dairy concerns in the United States, reaching \$11.7 million in sales (equal to about \$110 million today).<sup>26</sup> At least 15,000 gallons of ice cream left the plant at Forbes and Stevenson every day in 50 trucks.<sup>27</sup> The company had a dominant share of one of the nation's largest and fastest growing consumer markets, making it an ideal foundation on which to build a national dairy corporation.

The money men began negotiations with Edward Rieck and his partners. In Chicago, they opened talks with Thomas McInnerney, chairman of Hydrox. His company had begun in 1888 as a manufacturer of ice, ginger ale, and other beverages. Its main product in 1923, however, was ice cream. Hydrox, which had no connection with Sunshine's famous chocolate cookie, was less than half the size of Rieck-McJunkin in sales.<sup>28</sup>

The deal was closed in New York on December 8, 1923. Rieck attended with his sons Carl and Albert. McInnerney came with his partners. One vote was taken, and it was unanimous. Investment banker Sidney Weinberg of Goldman Sachs handed out Belinda Fancy Tail cigars, and National Dairy Products Corp. was in business. Rieck, who with his partners held two-thirds of the stock, was made chairman of the board.<sup>29</sup> On December 12,



1923, National Dairy Products went public, offering 125,000 shares at \$33.

National Dairy's only serious rival for national dominance was Borden's, a growing concern from upstate New York which had entered the market by commercializing condensed milk. Throughout the first half of this century the two companies would tower over the landscape, controlling much of the pricing and business practices of the dairy market.<sup>30</sup> They also created many of the brand names that are today's classics. One of National Dairy's first and most famous brands, Sealtest, was created in 1935 to serve as a nationwide standard of laboratory-tested quality for dairy products.

Though it is known today as a brand name, Sealtest was originally much more to National Dairy Products. It began as a non-profit division of the corporation which the company described as "a laboratory organization extending throughout the entire country dedicated to scientific research and the betterment of all dairy product."<sup>31</sup> National Dairy created Sealtest, the first such organization anywhere, from the 275 laboratories of its subsidiary companies, and gave it a national charter: to improve the product beyond what could be done through independent means. To meet this order, Sealtest created something that had never been made before: a set of company-wide quality standards against which the dairy products of the company's subsidiaries would be measured. The red Sealtest label was added to all NDP dairy products, including those of Kraft and Rieck-McJunkin, when they met the standards. In a market where mass transportation and distribution systems distanced dairy products from farm freshness in the eyes of the consumer, the Sealtest label was reassurance and certification that these products were fresh and good. Sealtest ultimately became the name for NDP's entire dairy division, drove much of the company's radio, print, and TV advertising, and was the name by which millions of consumers knew the company for many years.<sup>32</sup>

National Dairy acquired many famous brands, such as Breakstone's (1928), Breyers Ice Cream (1926), and of course Kraft (1929) through mergers. Famous brands created by the company include Velveeta, Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Miracle Whip, Parkay, Cheez Whiz and Light n' Lively.

National Dairy would go on to achieve its goal of creating a nationwide market for dairy products. The new corporation, powered by market capital, went on a huge buying spree, absorbing dairy companies throughout the Northeast and Midwest and barely slowing down when the Depression hit.

One such acquisition was the Kraft-Phenix Cheese Co., founded by J.L. Kraft in 1903. Kraft heirs had sold out to a consortium of investors in 1929, and National Dairy bought the company that same year.<sup>33</sup> The Kraft-Phenix acquisition added a full cheese line to National Dairy Products, including process cheese, whose longer shelf life meshed well with a market strategy based on nationwide (later worldwide) product distribution. Over the decades Kraft cheese, because of its ubiquitous distribution, became the best-known product of National Dairy. This notoriety may have influenced the company's thinking in 1969 when, having

become the largest food products company in the world, National Dairy Products changed its name to Kraftco. By 1980, the company had become the 27th largest industrial firm in the country. Known today as Kraft Foods Inc., it was acquired by Philip Morris Cos. Inc. in 1988.<sup>34</sup>

## *"Bottled on the Farm"*

But this corporate giant made its mark on history with someone other than Edward E. Rieck as its chairman of the board. Two years after National Dairy's formation, he stepped down from his position as chairman, leaving it to co-founder Thomas McInnerney. No novice at growth by acquisition, Rieck had the experience to hold the job, but not the desire. In 1925, he was 60 years old and not impressed with New York. National Dairy was already growing so quickly that it became necessary for him to choose between his largely administrative corporate post and the hands-on operation of the Rieck-McJunkin Dairy, now a National Dairy subsidiary. Rieck remained an involved and highly influential director of National Dairy, overseeing with McInnerney the company's aggressive expansion. It was a position he would hold for the rest of his life. But he chose to keep his focus on the operation that started it all.<sup>35</sup>

Back in Pittsburgh, Rieck retained his position as chairman of Rieck-McJunkin. He also turned his attention to other interests. And he began to go about the business of investing and donating his money. He established a family investment company with offices in the Diamond Bank building at Fifth and Liberty avenues, investing in real estate, orange groves, and a lumber business in Florida, as well as in South Dakota copper mines. As he grew older, he began spending winters in St. Petersburg, leaving the investment company management to his son Carl and his finance manager Frank Woodworth.<sup>36</sup>

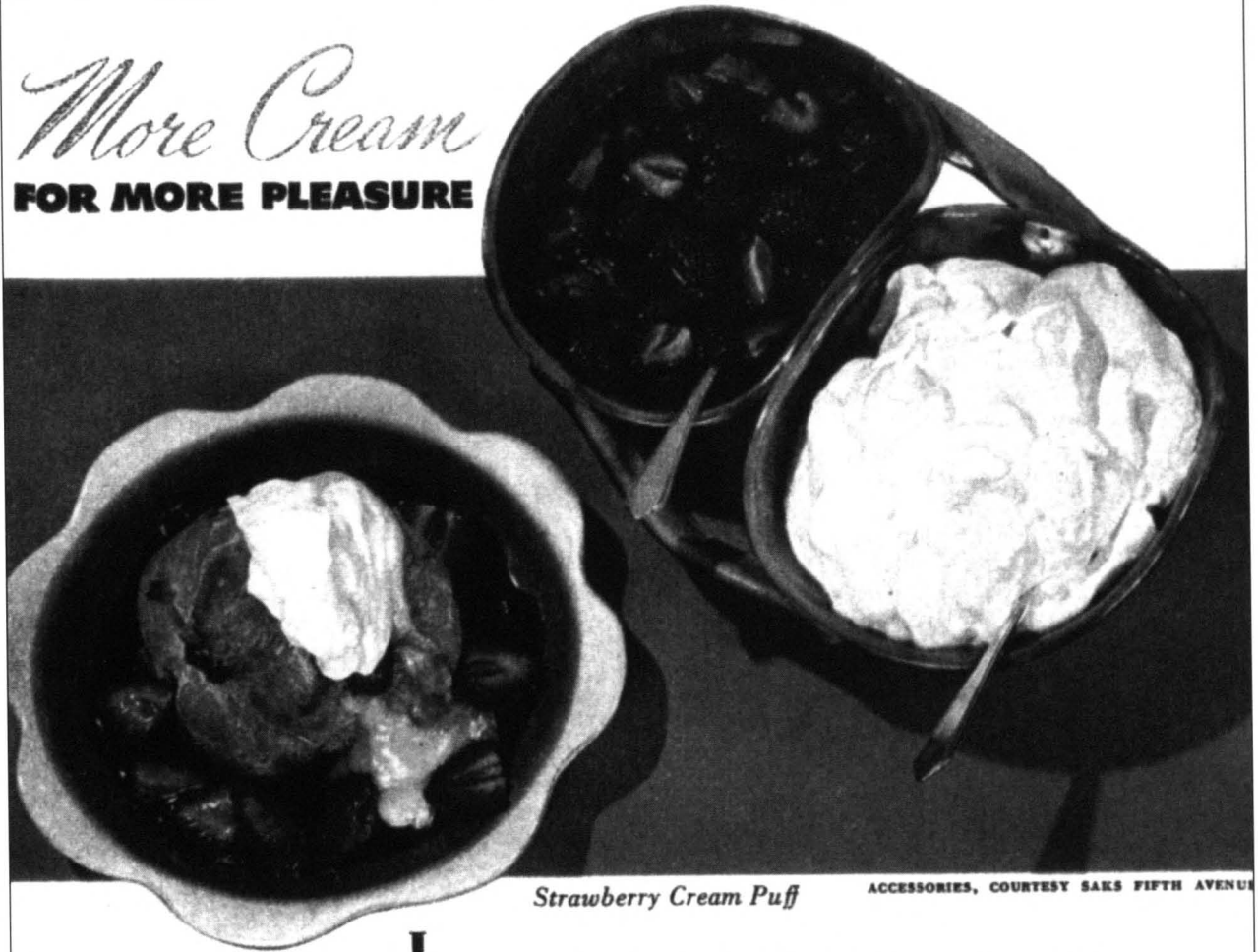
But going back to Pittsburgh wasn't enough — Rieck wanted to go all the way back to the passion that started it all, fresh whole country milk. He was a man who cherished the basics of his past, and his love for it showed in his daily life. Grandson Carl Rieck, Jr. recalls that one of Edward's main interests at this time was breeding dairy cattle. "Anyone walking into his office could hardly have missed the point, since the walls were covered with pictures of prize Holsteins. No doubt there were family pictures somewhere, but the cows and bulls are what I remember most. I liked to look at them, and Grandpa Rieck would be pleased to tell anyone, even a little boy, all there was to know about this or that champion."<sup>37</sup>

In 1925, along with employee Charles F. Nettletrout, Rieck bought the dairy farm of his dreams, a picture-perfect, 1100-acre tract of rolling hills and white wooden barns owned by John Bell of Moon Township.<sup>38</sup>

Bell Farm was no ordinary farm, and the milk it produced was no ordinary milk. Rieck ran Bell Farm as an experiment, a state-of-the-art showcase for bottling "certified" milk, that is, milk straight from the cow, unpasteurized, certified disease-free and with all its nutrients and cultures intact. At the time, this type of



*More Cream*  
**FOR MORE PLEASURE**



*Strawberry Cream Puff*

ACCESSORIES, COURTESY SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

Ads like this show the transition as Rieck's was being overshadowed by its own child, Sealtest.

**L**ET our luscious, thick Sweet Cream bring those Spring and Summer favorite dishes to a new appetite appeal. Keep a supply always on hand—order now!

**RIECK'S**

*Sealtest*  
**DAIRY PRODUCTS**



100% 

**TUNE IN — RUDY VALLEE SEALTEST PROGRAM EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT, N. B. C. RED NETWORK**





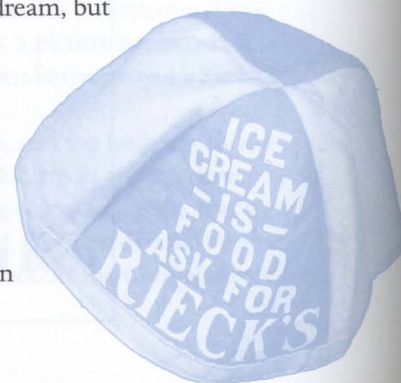
**Above and right: For two days in April 1942, hundreds of dairymen mobbed the 1,100-acre Bell Farm. The dairy's 365 pure-bred Holsteins were led to the auction block on the second floor of the huge horse barn while giant earth scrapers roared outside.**

milk was prescribed by doctors as infant formula. One of the aims of Rieck's Bell Farm project was to provide consumers of all ages with a viable commercial alternative to pasteurization. He believed strongly in the value of it. In 1933, he told a magazine, "Pasteurization became necessary to make milk safe for the masses, but, personally, I still prefer the raw milk just as nature made it. If you want the very best, get certified milk — especially recommended for bottle-fed babies."<sup>39</sup> Others also loved the taste of Bell Farm's milk. Grandson Carl Rieck, Jr. recalls that "it was delicious. I don't know where you could get milk like that nowadays. It was quite high in butterfat, which at that time was considered a benefit. Anyway, when you drank it, you knew it was wonderful stuff."<sup>40</sup>

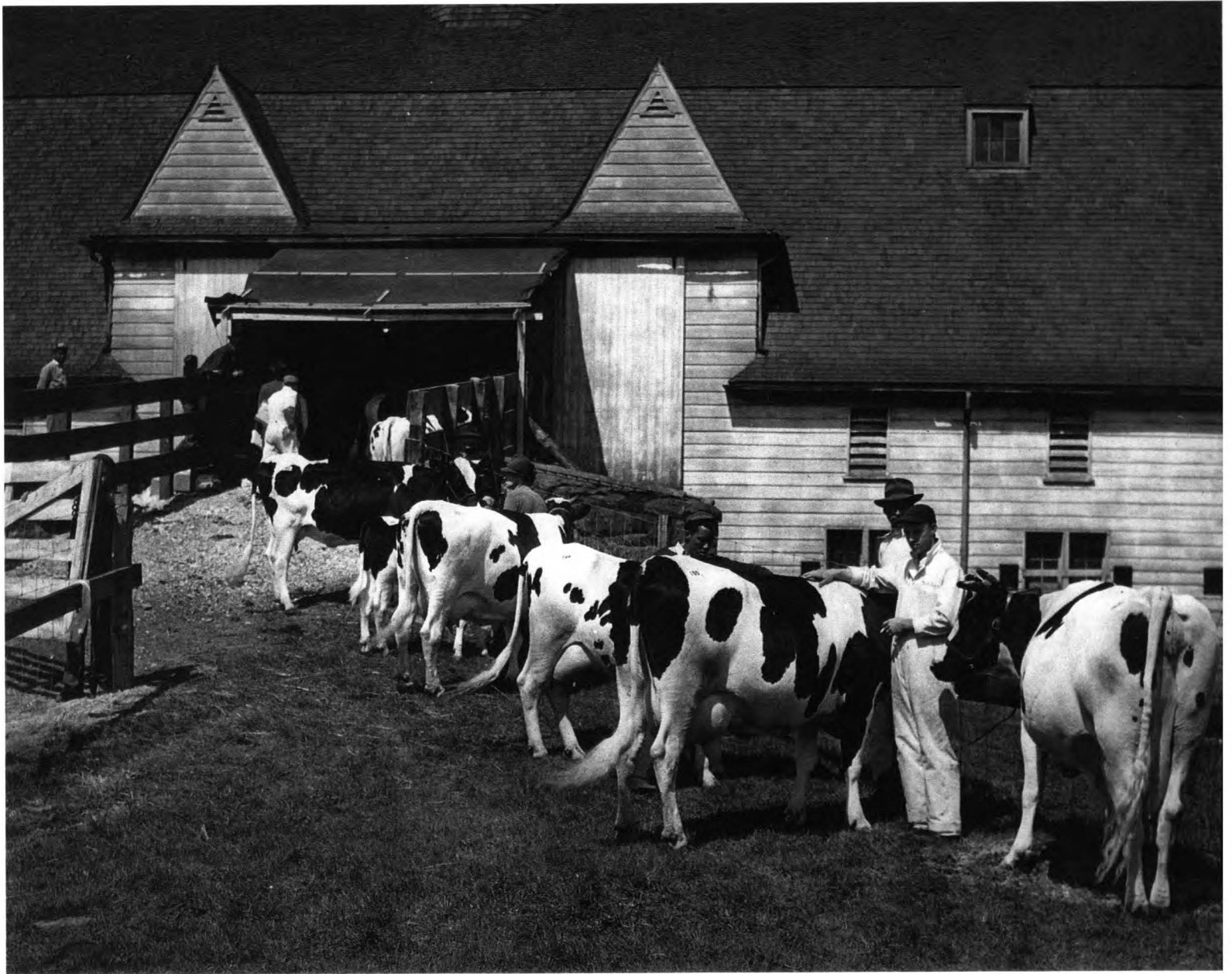
Bell Farm was also a place where Rieck could improve the Holstein breed. The farm's 365 disease-free prize Holsteins, the breed's *crème de la crème*, were pampered in spotless barns with special diets, piped-in running water and the best sanitation and veterinary care available. The herd was bred to champion bulls who were treated the same way. And to certify the disease-free quality of the milk, the entire herd was tested by veterinarians every 30 days.<sup>41</sup> Bell Farm's output was sold to Rieck-McJunkin Dairy Co. and other local milk distributors as well as directly from a bottling house on the farm. It was marketed as Rieck's Bell Farm Grade A Certified Milk, "Bottled On the Farm Under Medical Inspection." Nettrour managed the operation and Rieck drove out from his home on Bartlett Street every week during the summers, checking the herd.

Records don't show whether Bell Farm ever turned a profit. To judge by E. E. Rieck's close supervision of the operation and by his reputation for careful investing, it probably did.<sup>42</sup> Regardless, the farm was a unique experience for everyone involved. It was a community of its own. It was a site for family picnics, where grandchildren were treated to barrels full of a frozen novelty dubbed the "Rieckie," either a predecessor to or a rival of Isaly's Klondike bar.<sup>43</sup> It was a place where a nephew or grandson could get a summer job. It had a boarding house for single workers, homes for families, a softball team, even its own tiny church. Charles Nettrour's grandson, Paul Nettrour, Jr., first attended Sunday School at Bell Farm. He remembers it as a place "where everything was white. The painters never stopped working. It was so big that it swung the balance of power in Moon Township."

The grand experiment lasted until 1941, when the wartime government sought to buy the acreage for an air base, now the site of Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. Rieck, then 76, was reluctant to put an end to his dream, but he was also an unabashed patriot. Grandson Carl Rieck recalls how his grandfather, celebrating his 76th birthday with the family, joked about the spirit of '76 and spoke of the sale. "He mentioned that the Army wanted Bell Farm, and he said this: His own







father had been in the Civil War, his son in WWI, and his grandson (Albert Jr.) would be fighting in the Marine Corps. He himself had never been called on to serve his country in this way, and he felt that giving up his farm was the least he could do.”<sup>44</sup>

Rieck also knew that the era of milk direct from the farm was in its twilight, as was he. Looking ahead to the sale and aware of his own mortality, the old man told a grandson, “I’m relieved. I was afraid you wouldn’t know what to do with the place.”<sup>45</sup>

The sale was finalized in 1942. With typical wartime urgency, the bulldozers began their work even as the auctioneer’s gavel rang down on the last of the Holstein royalty. Buyers came from around the world and the auction took a week.<sup>46</sup>

On January 10, 1944, less than a year after selling Bell Farm, Rieck died of pneumonia and was buried in Pittsburgh’s Homewood Cemetery. At the time of his death he was still a director of National Dairy and chairman of the board of the

Rieck-McJunkin subsidiary. The board of directors of the company he helped found noted the loss “with sorrow and regret.... A pioneer in the dairy industry, Mr. Rieck contributed over half a century of fruitful service to it. His was a leading role in its development into one of the major industries of the United States.”<sup>47</sup>

His name lived on for more than two decades on the sides of thousands of bottles and cartons of milk, orange juice, and ice cream, trucked daily to homes all over Western Pennsylvania. The Rieck Ice Cream Co., a new division of Rieck-McJunkin, built a plant at 4634 Browns Hill Road in Pittsburgh in 1953.<sup>48</sup> Five years later National Dairy replaced the huge Forbes Street milk bottling plant with an even bigger Sealtest “Showcase Dairy” on Noblestown Road in Greentree. The plant was one of the first in the country to package milk in cardboard cartons instead of bottles.<sup>49</sup> But it wasn’t a Rieck plant. The new plant coincided



with a corporation-wide restructuring that absorbed subsidiaries, including the one that started the whole business. The Rieck name was phased out of the packaging and replaced by the Sealtest brand name shortly after the plant was completed.<sup>50</sup> Today, Rieck bottles, ads, spoons, and promotional souvenirs are a thriving part of the local collectibles scene.

Even this phase of the company was relatively short-lived. The era of home delivery was declining rapidly with the growth of supermarkets and better milk transport. The state government, which regulates dairy prices, allowed the price of store-sold milk to drop to the point where mass home delivery systems couldn't compete efficiently.<sup>51</sup> The Greentree plant, built to support a fleet of hundreds of milk trucks that became rapidly unprofitable and obsolete, was closed in 1972, and Sealtest milk has sold mostly in supermarkets ever since. By 1985, Sealtest milk was not in the Kraft product lineup.<sup>52</sup> In 1993, Kraft sold the Sealtest brand to Unilever, parent company of Good Humor (and Klondike), where it still serves as a popular brand name for ice cream and other products, and is franchised out to local milk producers around the country.

The ice cream plant on Browns Hill Road is now the home of a technical school. Ironically, in light of the man whose horse-drawn wagon helped replace brewery-mash city milk with fresh rich milk direct from the country, the Greentree site now houses a Beer World franchise. With it went the last "living" trace of E.E. Rieck's — and Western Pennsylvania's — role in founding one of the world's largest food companies. ☼

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kraft, now a subsidiary of Philip Morris Companies, Inc., tells the story of J.L. Kraft in *Kraftco at the Half Century Mark*, published by the company in 1973.

<sup>2</sup> George Thornton Fleming, "Edward E. Rieck," *History of Pittsburgh and Environs* (New York and Chicago, 1922) 250.

<sup>3</sup> "History of Rieck-McJunkin Dairy Company," unpublished manuscript in family papers collected by Carl Rieck Jr. and Edward E. Rieck II, Sept. 12, 1949.

<sup>4</sup> *Live Steam*, weekly magazine of the Rotary Club of Pittsburgh. As a Director of the local Rotary, Rieck was profiled in an issue some time around 1915.

<sup>5</sup> Sylvester Kirby Stevens, "Rieck-McJunkin Dairy Company," *Pennsylvania: Titan of Industry* (New York, 1948) 671.

<sup>6</sup> George M. More, *The Illustrated Story of Milk* (Cooperstown, 1945). The adulteration of milk, brewery-mash dairying and other unsanitary conditions of the early mass market dairy industry was also described in a speech by L.A. Van Bomel, President of National Dairy Products Corporation on Sept. 28, 1949.

<sup>7</sup> Chester Roadhouse and James Henderson, *The Market-Milk Industry*, (New York, 1950) 51.

<sup>8</sup> More, *The Illustrated Story of Milk*.

<sup>9</sup> Aemilie (later spelled "Emilie") was the daughter of Albert Gustave Junge. Grandson John Rieck and others remember that Junge "invented the inner spring mattress" and had a factory in Pittsburgh or on the North Side. Edward may have used a stake from Junge to capitalize his business. Edward and Aemilie had four children: Albert Gustave Rieck, Alma Rieck (Diebold),

Carl Rieck and Edna Rieck (Graham).

<sup>10</sup> Rieck papers, "History."

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Although Pasteur's discoveries in preservation were made in the 1850s, the process was not commercialized until the 1890s. More, *The Illustrated Story of Milk*, attributes

the US dairy industry's first pasteurizing plant to Sheffield Farms of New York.

<sup>13</sup> John J. Dillon, *Seven Decades of Milk, A history of New York's Dairy Industry*, (Orange Judd, N.Y., 1941).

<sup>14</sup> Stevens, 672.

<sup>15</sup> From baskin Robins internet site, <<http://wbs.net/baskin/beta/ages.html>> "Ice Cream Through the Ages."

<sup>16</sup> Henry Brownfield Scott, *Sesqui-Centennial and Historical Souvenir of Greater Pittsburgh* (1908).

<sup>17</sup> First National Bank At Pittsburgh, "Rieck-McJunkin Dairy Co.," *The Story of Pittsburgh*, vol. 1 no. 12, (1925) 294.

<sup>18</sup> Many family members interviewed for this story had worked for the company as summer employees or in some other capacity, as might be expected. The company's family-like personality was also described by Paul Nettrour Jr., whose father supervised milk drivers for the company and whose grandfather managed Rieck's dairy farm, Bell Farm. A profile of 42-year veteran George "Pappy" Stringert in "Sip Milk of Human Kindness," *Pittsburgh Press*, May 29, 1955, also pictured the company this way.

<sup>19</sup> Marcia Davenport, *Valley of Decision* (New York, 1944) 513.

<sup>20</sup> Leon Arkus, John Kane, Painte (Pittsburgh, 1971).

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Albert Gustave Rieck Jr., grandson, 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Letitia Rieck Isherwood, granddaughter, 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Edward E. Rieck II, grandson, 1996.

<sup>24</sup> The divorce was unusual for its time, especially for a man like Edward E. Rieck. It is still a sensitive topic for Rieck family members. They remember Aemilie as unstable, probably manic-depressive. After separating from Edward and moving to Los Angeles, she filed for the divorce in Reno on grounds of desertion. Aemilie is nevertheless remembered sympathetically, with fondness and respect. As one grandson put it, "Papa Rieck would never say anything against her," and his compassionate view prevailed. Terms of the divorce settlement are not known, although family papers show that Rieck continued to support Aemilie for most of her life.

<sup>25</sup> Kraft Foods, Inc., *Kraftco at the Half Century Mark* (1973).

<sup>26</sup> National Dairy Products incorporation papers, Exhibit B.

<sup>27</sup> Fleming, 251.

<sup>28</sup> National Dairy Products, in the corporation's initial public offering notice, published Dec. 12, 1923, listed combined 1922 sales of the two companies as \$14.1 million. Rieck-McJunkin sales for its fiscal year 1922 were \$10.8 million.

<sup>29</sup> 1996 interview with Carl Rieck Jr., grandson

<sup>30</sup> Roadhouse.

<sup>31</sup> Sealtest brochure from 1935, "An Explanation of the Sealtest System."

<sup>32</sup> "Golden Record," *Dairy Dialog*, published by Kraft, Nov. 3, 1985.

<sup>33</sup> As related in *Kraftco at the Half Century Mark*. The privately held stock of Kraft-Phenix, used as collateral for loans, had crashed with everything else in 1929, by the recollection of Carl Rieck Jr.

<sup>34</sup> In 1980, the company merged with Dart Industries to become known as Dart & Kraft, only to divest most of the merged businesses in 1986 and re-emerge as Kraft Inc.

<sup>35</sup> Family members recall Edward Rieck as exceptionally devoted to his family, most of whom lived in Pittsburgh at the time. Granddaughter Beatta Graham goes so far as to say that Rieck "couldn't stand New York" and far preferred the "more neighborly" atmosphere of Pittsburgh.

<sup>36</sup> Edward E. Rieck II, 1996 interview.

<sup>37</sup> Carl Rieck Jr., correspondence, June 19, 1996.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Nettrour Jr., grandson of Charles Nettrour, recalls that Rieck and Nettrour originally bought Bell Farm as partners. When the Depression hit, Rieck bought out Nettrour's share.

<sup>39</sup> Letter to *Live Steam*, 1933.

<sup>40</sup> Rieck, Carl Jr., letter of June 19, 1996.

<sup>41</sup> This was three times as frequently as required by law. Like all dairy operations, Bell Farm was constantly on guard against milk-borne diseases such as typhoid fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, dysentery, gastroenteritis, food poisoning, and tuberculosis. Since Bell Farm's milk was not pasteurized, the need for sanitation and inspection was much higher there than at conventional dairies. The biggest danger was Bang's disease, now known as brucellosis, because it is highly contagious among cattle and transmissible to humans.

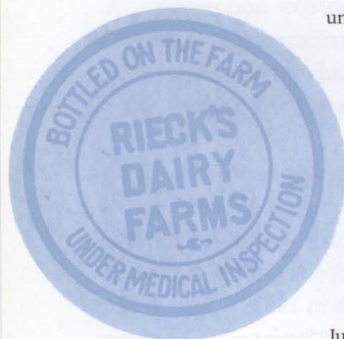
<sup>42</sup> Carl Rieck Jr.

<sup>43</sup> Doris Vidinghoff, daughter of Edward's daughter Alma Rieck Diebold, recalls that the family gathered for a huge picnic at Bell Farm every summer.

<sup>44</sup> Rieck, Carl Jr., letter of Oct. 7 1996.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Beatta Graham, wife of grandson James E. Graham, Jr., 1996.

<sup>46</sup> "Old Bell Farm Becomes an Airport," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 21, 1942.



- 47 National Dairy Products Corporation 1943 Annual Report, March 1944.  
 48 Company history published in its "Showcase Dairy" brochure, 1958  
 49 "Sealtest to Open New Super Speed Dairy," *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, Feb. 16, 1958.  
 50 Correspondence with Elizabeth Adkins, Kraft Archives Manager, Jan. 1996.  
 51 "Sealtest to Pull Out of District Nov. 29," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Nov. 15, 1972.  
 52 *Dairy Dialog*, November 3, 1985.

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### Milk Man

- 70 John Rieck  
 71 Edward E. Rieck II  
 73 Carl Rieck Jr.  
 74 John Rieck  
 77 Edward E. Rieck II  
 78 & 79 Paul Nettrour, Jr.  
 Milk caps from Kimberley Rieck Fisher collection

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