

Millside Farms Remembered

by Karen Ruza

We had the great opportunity to interview Russell Laslocky, who was running a Bed and Breakfast in Middlebury, Vermont, and shared his family's story. Originally both born in Hungary, it was around 1919 that his parents, Stephen and Aurellia Laslocky, started their farm on Route 25 in Delran, NJ, with just a couple of cows. Today we know this stretch of road as Route 130. The farm was across from the current Millside Shopping Center. Millside Farms served the local areas and routes from Trenton to Cape May, supplying door to door milk service all based out of their Delran, NJ, farm. With a lot of determination the Laslockys grew their farm into a large family business with 175 to 200 employees at one time. They became the largest independent milk provider in the area.

Stephen and Aurelia had three sons, Robert, Emory and Russell, and one daughter, Mildred. As the farm grew so did the responsibilities. Son Robert ran the dairy operation and retail operations. Emory labored on the farm but later passed away in France while serving our country during World War II in the US Army. Mildred became a teacher so she did not participate with farm operations. Russell went to veterinary school and became the farm veterinarian, farm manager, and the Vice President of the dairy.

One day while Emory was out plowing the fields, where the Millside Shopping Center now lies, a US Navy plane landed and the pilot asked where Camden was. Emory directed him about 10 miles south down the road to the fairly large Camden Central Air Station located right at the Airport Circle in Pennsauken.

There were two hundred fifty to three hundred cows which crossed Route 25 twice daily to the current shopping center land and back. One thousand turkeys were raised annually for consumption. They had work horses and ponies, also ridden for recreation. During World War II there was a large pig operation, which was discontinued after the war. The demand for meat was very high during war time and they helped fill the need. Campbell's Soup in Camden, NJ, had surplus scraps available from their soups. During the war, things were short so the scraps were used to feed the cattle. Russell advised that the soup scraps and carrot tops made great milk.

Over time the Laslocky family expanded and opened a restaurant and dairy bar in the main Delran location, plus there were two other dairy bars down on Long Beach Island. Famous sundaes originated in Delran such as the huge banana splits, "Hangovers",

“Lost Weekends”, and other suitably titled sundaes. If you were able to finish the huge sundaes then you earned yourself a free one next time!

They stopped crossing the cows in 1964 when the offer came in for the Millside Shopping Center. In the later years there was an effort to diversify. In 1968 they merged with Ranier Dairy in Woodbury and Sterling-Davis in Fort Dix as a government contractor. The family thought it would be a viable diversification however, it was not a good merger. They were the victim of a raid when they were looted, a strike occurred, and later an arson which burned the main Delran plant and the business collapsed in 1970.

Many area residents share their memories of the good times. Whether they were employees or customers, it is the positives they will tell you. We wish to thank Russell for sharing his family’s story. In the future we plan to continue with an article covering his and his wife Fleur’s next step as they opened the Barn Arts Center also located in our town. Stay tuned.

Millside Farms, Inc.

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