

Glass milk bottle celebrates 100th birthday

ROSEMONT, Ill. — Even though George Orwell didn't mention it in his prophetic book, "1984," this is the 100th anniversary of the first successful glass milk bottle. Actually, the first glass milk container was patented in 1878 by George H. Lester of Brooklyn, New York. Properly called the Lester Milk Jar, it was a glass container topped with a rubber gasket and a thumbscrew to hold down the glass cover.

But the first nationally-known milk bottle was patented by Dr. Hervey D. Thatcher of Potsdam, New York, in 1884. A druggist and inventor, Thatcher worked to develop a total system of milk handling. He invented several "milk protectors" to keep milk clean during milking and filling processes.

The first Thatcher quart-bottle was similar to other bottles of that time. It was 10" high and 4" in

diameter. The words "Absolutely Pure Milk/The Milk Protector" and a Quaker milking a cow were embossed on the front of the bottle. The original bottles weighed 30 ounces and cost more than 10 cents each.

The glass cover peaked about an inch above the bottle's rim and was kept closed with an eccentric lever and bail or yoke pivoted to it. In 1886, Thatcher invented a paper washer to seal the milk bottle that

often leaked.

He further modified his bottles to include a capseat and a tin top. Then, in 1889, he devised a disc closure procedure that is still being used.

Glass bottles were available in all sizes and in colors ranging from light green to varying shades of amber. The Thatcher bottles had a small mouth and a short neck. Soon its sides were tapered to lower the creamline, as milk with lots of cream was favored. Because housewives poured off the cream for cereal and coffee, some dairies used cream separator bottles. They had a pronounced dent at the bottom of the bottle neck that held back cream while allowing the skim milk to be poured. Others used cream-top bottles and provided cream spoons to pinch off milk while cream was poured off.

Before glass bottles were available for home delivery, milk was poured or dipped from cans or vats into customer's containers. Then glass was used exclusively for home delivery, the main sales route for milk, for nearly 50 years. Glass bottles were also used in "Ma and Pa" stores until the Robinson-Patman Bill created

supermarkets in the 1930's.

Today only 1 percent of the fluid milk sold in the United States is packaged in glass bottles.

Disposable paperboard cartons and plastic containers replaced returnable milk bottles. Paper is used for 42 percent of the milk packages and plastic molded containers for 57 percent. Twenty years ago, glass was used for 31 percent of milk containers, paper for 64 percent and plastic for barely 2 percent.

Sizes of milk packages have also changed. The original glass milk bottles were quart size. In 1964, only 13% of milk containers were quarts, while today the number is less than 5 percent. In 1964, 54 percent of milk was sold in half-gallon containers. By 1981, 57 percent of milk sales were in gallon containers.

Increasing sales of larger-size containers fits with other lifestyle patterns: fewer trips to the store, greater use of refrigeration, and changes in milk packaging.

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Maryland 4-H kicks off fund drive

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — The Maryland 4-H Club Foundation has kicked off its annual fund drive with a goal to raise \$50,000 from businesses and industries throughout the state.

If achieved, this would be the most successful fund drive in the foundation's 15-year history, according to Amy F. Leber, Extension resource development coordinator at the University of

Maryland.

Last year, the foundation raised \$35,000, Leber reported. It topped \$30,000 for the first time in 1982, and in 1980 the total was \$13,200.

The 1984 fund drive represents the finale of a three-year campaign to help expand financial support for the statewide 4-H youth program administered by the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension Service.

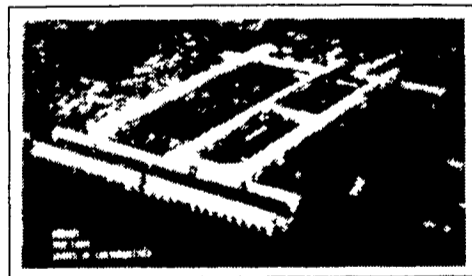
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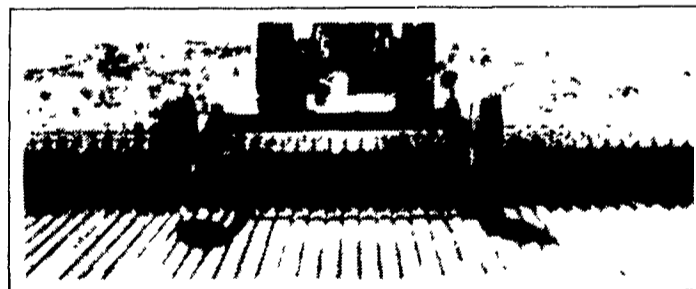
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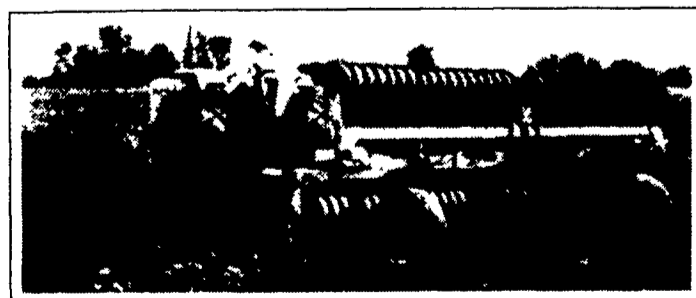


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