

Remembering Visitors to the Farm

I grew up on a farm during the 1950s and 60s. I am thankful for the wonderful family time and the work ethic that I gained from that experience. To say that I would not have been a good farmer would be a major understatement and that could be another entire column. I want to share information about some of the visitors/workers who helped to brighten the day for the youngster that I was then.

I remember riding on occasion with Dad in his truck while he hauled the milk cans to the old Kubly factory in the morning. The factory was about a mile away on what is now Deppeler Road (because Albert Deppeler later purchased the Kubly factory). As times changed, so did the way things were done on the farm. The factories would hire drivers to pick up the milk cans from the farmers so the farmers did not have to interrupt their work and so all of the milk would arrive at the same time. Cans were later replaced by bulk milk tanks. In those years, the milk man was a daily visitor to the farms and would be able to talk with any family who might be near the milk house while he was there. I remember both Bob Faith and Keith Berg as haulers while I was on the farm and have enjoyed getting acquainted with them again after moving back to Monroe.



This photo from the collection of John Ochsner, Albany, was taken in 1939 at the J. R. Watkins plant in Winona, Minnesota. Representatives of the Watkins company have traveled throughout the countryside selling their wares since Mr. Watkins started to sell liniment in southern Minnesota in 1868. John's grandfather, Charles Derendinger, is shown on the left in the back row. Charles' brother, John "Jack" Derendinger is shown in the middle row below

I also remember my mother baking six or eight loaves of delicious bread three times a week. With six of us in the house, it was obviously consumed quickly! After Mom became ill in the early 60s and

wasn't able to do the baking, somehow my parents found out that the Omar Bread man would deliver to our farm. I'm not sure if others in our neighborhood had him deliver. I remember that I got a large book that I could paste stickers from around the world into. Each week after that I'd receive new stickers when he delivered the bread. I had that book until "a few" years ago. I have no idea why I kept it so long! I remember that he'd often deliver about the time we'd get home from school and sit down at the dining room table and visit with us. He could draw the most perfect circle on a piece of paper without any kind of template!

Living in this area at that time, there wasn't much exposure to people of different ethnic backgrounds. I remember a black man coming to the farm to purchase scrap metal that Dad might have laying around the farm - an old shovel, a plow or disk, and more that had seen its better days. As I remember it, he would shake hands with Dad and pay with at least one silver dollar.

Green County had many traveling peddlers in the early days; Arabut Ludlow was one who first visited from Chicago to sell his wares. There is a photo in the Pictorial History of Monroe showing David Pfeiffer in the early 1900s with his horses pulling a wagon throughout the countryside from which he would sell Dr. Koch's products. I remember that Mrs. Dawson, who I believe was from Illinois, came to our house to sell McNess products. The products that she sold were probably similar to those sold by the Watkins and Raleigh salespeople. These people would know which houses were the ones to stop at and which ones not to bother. When my return from Vietnam was getting near, I remember that Dad talked to her about her automobile as he was on the lookout for what kind of car I should purchase when I arrived home. I ended up with a used 1965 Ford - nothing close to what she drove.

Paul "Pealy" Burke was a plumber from Monroe, who would come to the farm when we needed some work done. It seems he always had a pencil on his ear and some scraps of paper so we could play tic tac toe (which he called cat and rat). He was impossible to beat, but we always enjoyed the challenge!

I also remember having a repairman come to the farm to repair the television by replacing the tubes. Of course, the pictures on the television were not as brilliant as they are today, but the set was not meant to be disposable either. Many sets were actually enclosed in a wooden piece of furniture.

One summer day in the 1960s a young college student with a wonderful southern accent came to the house to sell books (possibly encyclopedias). He was a charming guy who I think my mom kept talking just so she could listen to him! Being dairy farmers we never had a family vacation where we would see someone who talked like him.

I think my favorite of all the visitors to the farm was the mailman (now called a letter carrier). His name was Wendell Brunkow and we would take off running to the mailbox as soon as we saw him coming. He always seemed to enjoy visiting with us and would have some balloons in the car to shape into something fun. He certainly made my day!

I am sure that each of you have similar memories that you can share with your own family. I think it is important to share these memories with children and grandchildren so they have some idea of how much times have changed. I cherish these memories of the people who spent time with me - even if it wasn't very long! They still made a lifelong impression on me. The times were much simpler (at least for the children) and we weren't as rushed then as we seem to be now.