

# The E.L.M. Dairy

by Lynne Belluscio

Ann Slaven called the other day to see if we would be interested in a portrait of her grandmother, Lenore Metcalf. I told her to bring it in and we'd take a look.

Lenore was Charlie Metcalf's first wife. Charlie was well known in LeRoy. He was involved with the Jell-O Company. He owned the Red Osier in Stafford, the Elm Dairy and the Elm Dairy Bar on Route 20. After Lenore died he married Adalaide Woodward, whose first husband was Don Woodward. Charlie was originally from Portville near Olean. He was born in 1891 and became a traveling salesman for Orator Woodward and the Genesee Pure Food Company.

In 1914, he became a purchasing agent for the company. When Thomas Wilson retired, Charlie became a sales manager. With the merger of Jell-O and Postum Cereal in 1925, which became General Foods, he became the company's purchasing agent and soon became the corporation's vice president in the New York office. After a few years he left General Foods and moved out of town and went to work for the Schenley Liquor Corporation. Later he became president of Clinton Industries and organized the orange juice division. When he returned to LeRoy he became interested in agricultural and the dairy business.

On November 1, 1943, he began operation of the Elm Dairy. He wanted the most up to date facility and built a new facility which he opened two years later. It was considered the cleanest, most sanitary and modern dairy of its kind and size in the region. (It was located where the Med-Ex Billing Company is located now on East Main Road.) The Elm Dairy was the first to introduce the cellophane-covered bottle cap in Genesee County as well as the first to introduce the square bottle.

In addition to processing milk, the Dairy became known for its ice cream. The Red Osier Restaurant in Stafford, which was established in 1940 by Mr. Whitlock, had closed during World War II. Charlie Metcalf



bought the Osier and reopened it on October 11, 1949, under the management of Harold Lytle. As much as Metcalf wanted to change the name to the Elm Dairy Restaurant and Dairy Bar, it was still called the Osier. It was open 8 am to midnight and was known for its 90 cent chicken pot pie which included a salad, hot rolls and all the coffee you could drink. A full course turkey dinner was \$1.85. Metcalf also opened the Elm Dairy Bar on Route 20 where the specialty was a light lunch or pancakes served with ham or sausage.

When Ann gave me her grandmother's portrait, I asked her to tell me a bit more about her. "My grandparents lived in what everyone calls the Vic Blood house on East Main Street. (Now

the Garden View facility.) Many people called my grandmother Norrie. I know that Lenore wasn't her first name, but I guess I never knew what her first name really was, except that it started with an "E." You know the Elm Dairy was named for her - - her initials were E.L.M - - Elm Dairy." So I went to find out what Lenore's first name was and there in the 1940 book, we discovered that her first name was Emily.

She was originally from Painted Post and her maiden name was Cowan. She died in 1958. Then

Charlie married Adalaide. He died in 1964. The Elm Dairy was purchased by the Upstate Milk Cooperative in 1972. When we came to LeRoy in 1969, we soon discovered the Elm Dairy and its wonderful ice cream.

In 1985 the Elm Dairy was destroyed by fire. It was the smallest of the milk processing plants of Upstate Cooperative and they decided not to rebuild the facility. Parts of the old building were standing until they were adapted for use for the Med-Ex facility.



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