

# Donation of the Month

## Sunbeam Dairy Milk Bottle



Milk bottle, 1975.164.9,  
Donor: Jeff Bryan;



Photograph, 1976.515.29,  
Donor: Rogers Chamber of Commerce

Milk, cheese and eggs, three of the most popular items bought at any grocery store across the county. Imagine a time when neither of these items came from a store. Many families had their own cow or goat and a few chickens. If you didn't odds are you could purchase the items direct from a local farmer or you had milk delivered to your doorstep every morning or every other morning. The first milk delivery was done by the farmers themselves who had extra milk from the morning milking. As regulations took over, Dairies which pasteurized and then bottled the milk opened.

With no refrigeration milk went sour very quickly; therefore, milk was delivered daily, sometimes twice a day to the customers door step. The New York Dairy Company is credited with using the first factory produced milk bottles. The first patent for a milk container is the Lester Milk Jar, Jan. 29, 1878. Today, milk bottles like this one are collector items; as well as reminders of the bygone era.

Benton County received their first established dairy, Sunbeam Dairy in 1932. It was located at 421 West Sycamore in Rogers for its entire 36 year history. The dairy received milk from local farmers, pasteurized and then bottled it. The bottling steps are shown in this photograph. Once filled and capped the milk was ready for delivery. First deliveries were twice a day, but by the 1950s it was once every other day.

Sunbeam closed its doors in 1968 as competition from larger dairies caused the smaller companies to close.

Like Sunbeam Dairy, most dairies by the 1950s only delivered milk every other day and they began to have a smaller clientele. With the popularization and convenience of supermarkets and reliable power refrigeration many households no longer relied on the milkman. Milk and other perishable foods could be bought in greater quantity and kept longer without spoiling. It would appear that the refrigerator caused the milkman to hit the unemployment line; however, today in some cities the milkman is making a comeback.