



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2016

Spring

Plymouth Farms

Farming was the primary occupation of the residents of Plymouth Township up until the 1950's. Most of them were the typical family farm where everybody worked hard to make a better life for their family. A previous newsletter highlighted "Ben Avon Farm" by Parkers Lake. It was owned by J. B. Gilfillan who was a "Gentleman Farmer". This was very popular endeavor of the "rich and famous" of Minneapolis to see who could build the best farm and have the finest herd of milk cows. The owners typically only lived there during the summer months if at all but had a full time farm manager and hired help. There were many built near the Lake Minnetonka area and other outlying areas around the Twin Cities.

In Plymouth another wonderful farm was built and it was called "Freedom Farm". It was located where the Ferndale North development is today, north of Wayzata. People tend to associate that area as being part of Wayzata but it is actually Plymouth.

"Milling magnate Fred G. Atkinson in the late 1920's bought the old G. A. Chaffee farm north of Wayzata Boulevard on Ferndale Avenue. After adding a couple of neighboring farms, he named his project "Freedom Farms" for a product of his mills called "Freedom Flour". He also bought out George Hill's milk delivery routes and soon had three Freedom Farm trucks delivering milk around the Lake and in Minneapolis.

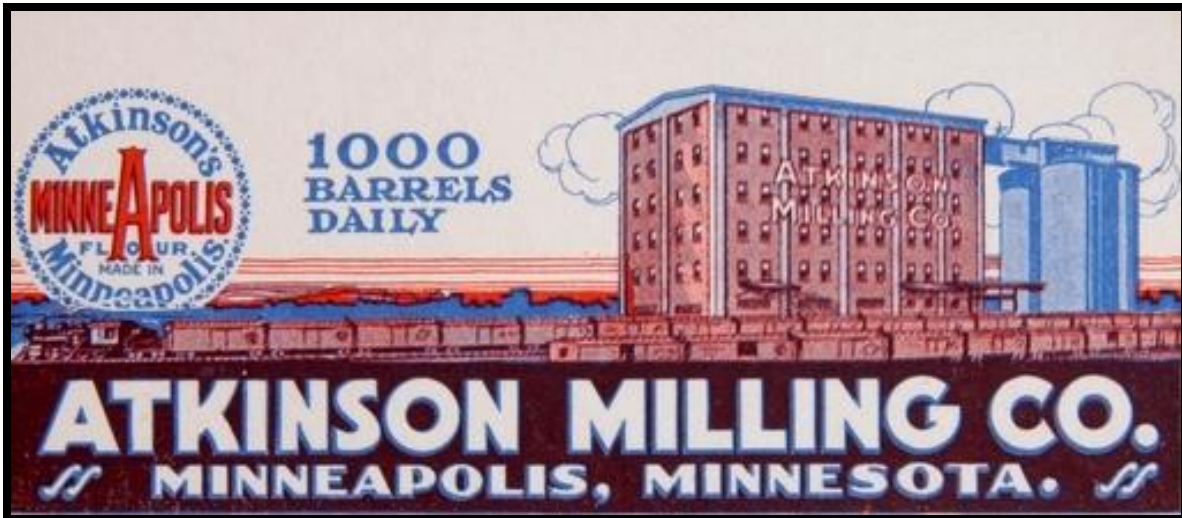
Assisted by farm manager Ernest Forde and herd manager Peter Risoen, Mr. Atkinson began to build a purebred herd which soon numbered over 150 Jerseys. Among the animals he imported direct from the Isle of Jersey was Lord of Les Jardins, "one of the greatest Jersey Bulls in the world". Winner of Silver and Gold awards plus the "Medal of Medals", this majestic bull, with about twenty other prizewinning Jerseys, made up the Atkinson show herd which competed in various state and national shows and the Pacific International Exposition when it was held in Portland, Oregon.

Back at Freedom Farms, dairying continued during the 1930's. They washed and sterilized their own bottles and pasteurized milk for their customers. Later they sold through the Franklin Cooperative Creamery, under the "Jersey Creamline" trademark." (From Dairying Around Lake Minnetonka by Ellen Wilson Meyer)

He was a very successful business man starting at the "bottom rung" at Washburn Crosby and working his way up to Vice President. He died July 22, 1940 and the herd was auctioned off. In the following year Larry Elwell bought the land and buildings. His primary business was raising turkeys as he also had a

turkey farm near Hamel. The buildings were still standing in the mid 1970's before the development of Ferndale North.

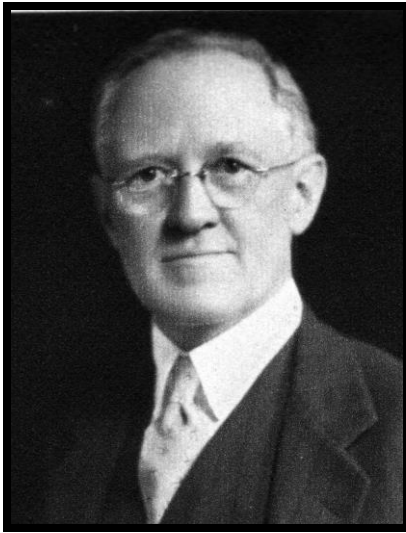
If anybody has information, pictures or an old milk bottle from the Freedom Farm, the Plymouth Historical Society would be very interested in hearing from you.



Flour Bag



Atkinson Mill on Hiawatha Ave in Minneapolis



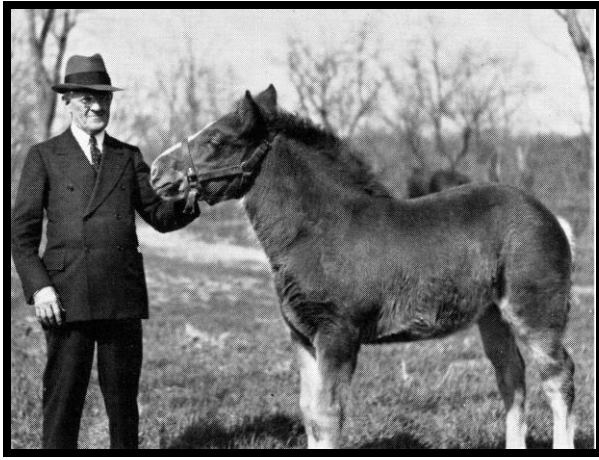
Fred G. Atkinson
Born 26 Nov 1864
Died July 22, 1940



Home at 104 Groveland Terrace – Mpls
The home was built by W, H, Dunwoody in 1905 and he died in 1914.
F. G. Atkinson purchased the home in 1918.



Freedom Farm was on a grand scale
(View looking to the northeast)



A true Gentleman Farmer
circa late 1930's



Freedom Farms - group gathered is
salesmen for the Hinman Milking Machine Co.



Freedom Farm now Elwell Turkey Farm shown on 1945 aerial map
Top of map is north with Ferndale on left (old Cty Rd 99) and Hadley Lake upper right
No cattle in the fields and difficult to pick out any turkeys!!

Sources:

1. Hennepin County Library
2. "Dairying Around Lake Minnetonka" by Ellen Wilson Meyer
3. University of Minnesota John R. Borchert Map Library
4. "A Fascinating Game" Fred G. Atkinson memoirs

It is interesting to note in the 1913 Farmers Directory for Plymouth that there were a number of family farms listed with farm names. They are in the southern area of Plymouth fairly close to Wayzata. They may have tried to emulate the prestige of some of the big farms around Minnetonka. Here are several examples:

- “Clover Hill Farm” - William Gates
- “South Shore” - Will Erickson
- “Devils Knob Farm” - Merlin Camp
- “Spruce Grove Farm” – Alex Frick and then later lawyer George E. Hoke bought the land and called his farm “Thunderpump Farm”. He had a herd of 20 high-producing Guernsey’s; the farm was located where Wayzata Middle School is today.

Blodgett-Guernsey Dairy

Wayzata's Own Dairy

Blodgett-Guernsey

WILL BEGIN DELIVERIES OF PASTEURIZED AND RAW MILK ON MONDAY, MARCH 18TH

Our capacity is only 400 quarts daily. By the way customers are coming in even before we start service, this supply won't last long.

So if you want the **FINEST** in whole Guernsey milk — either pasteurized or raw — at regular prices, call Wayzata 66 or 377 **SOON!**

PRICES:

MILK	11c per quart for 2 quarts or more 13c per quart for single quart delivery
32% WHIPPING CREAM	13c per half pint 25c per pint
CHOCOLATE MILK	12c per quart
COTTAGE CHEESE	13c per half pint 25c per pint

BUTTER AND EGGS AT REGULAR MARKET PRICES

DAIRY AND FARM PHONE Wayzata 66 Theo J. Almquist Farm and herd mgr.	RESIDENCE PHONE Wayzata 377 Robert O. Blodgett Owner and Distributor
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Pictured (left to right) are: xxx, Art Oare, Arne Nelson, Norman Meyer, Cliff Oare, Gregory Blodgett, Robert Blodgett, and Ted Lock.

Robert Blodgett built this dairy barn in 1925 in Plymouth Township. It was located north of Wayzata on Hwy 101 where the NSP Sub-Station and Harmony Circle are today.

“Robert Blodgett had moved his business to a new location – the Blodgett-Guernsey Dairy Farm north of Wayzata on Highway 101. People driving by the glass front of the barn could watch the entire milking operation, beginning with three cows at a time ascending the ramp to the first “milking parlor” in the area.”

“Mr. Blodgett sold his retail business, in 1938, to Ohleen Dairy of Minneapolis and auctioned off the cows and plant machinery.” (From Dairying Around Lake Minnetonka by Ellen Wilson Meyer)

The reason - disaster struck in 1937



Photo was taken standing on Hwy 101 – barn is a total loss

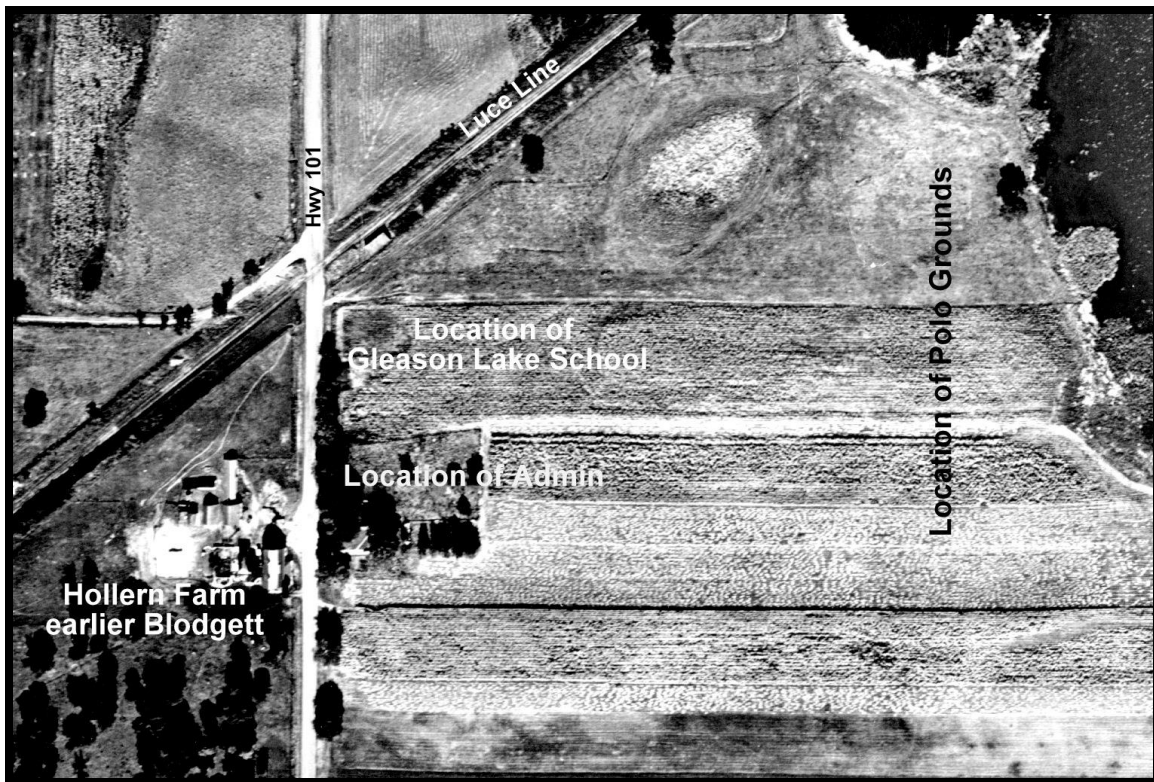
“John H. Hollern of Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Company, already owned a farm – Hollybrook, near Watertown, when he decided to buy the old Blodgett farm on Highway 101, north of Wayzata, in the late 1930’s. There he put up a barn for 40 pedigreed Jerseys said to have come from the foundation stock of the Vanderbilt “Biltmore Farms” in Asheville, North Carolina. He also bought nearby property, fifteen acres of

which he later gave to the Wayzata School District for their new administration building. He still owns the polo field.” (From Dairying Around Lake Minnetonka by Ellen Wilson Meyer)

Mr. Hollern moved his herd and operations out to his farm in Watertown. The land on the west side of Hwy 101 was being developed. Northern States built the initial substation on Hwy 101 on a portion of the land starting in 1950. Homes were built around Harmony Circle and that area was annexed by Wayzata in the early 50's (?). This was one of the factors that prompted Plymouth to become a Village in 1955.

John and Pauline Hollern donated 15.56 acres to the Wayzata School District to build an Administration Building and later Gleason Lake school. The land was transferred Jan 1, 1960 per the information in the Quit Claim Deed. The district apparently used a house on the property for the administration function until the new building was built. The Administration building was built in 1969 and the Gleason Lake Elementary School in 1988.

Meadowlake Farm Corporation was founded by Edmund and George Pillsbury and they put up the money to buy land from Robert & Rose Meech and Caroline & Ernest Mahler and probably John Hollern for a Polo field in June 1946. It was east of the 15 acres that would be later given to the school district. The Polo Ground was right next to Gleason Lake for a number of years. Dennis Jacobson (Pres. of Plymouth Historical) mentioned that the moving force behind the Polo Grounds was Edmund Pillsbury. Edmund Pillsbury, who was 37 and two others were killed in a private plane crash on February 22, 1951 in Nebraska. After some time that land was then developed in the late 70's for housing called Kingswood Farm.




Aerial Photograph 1945 with added notations of changes in years to come.

Sources:

1. Pictures of the burning barn courtesy of Wayzata Historical Society.
2. "Dairying Around Lake Minnetonka" by Ellen Wilson Meyer
3. University of Minnesota John R. Borchert Map Library
4. Wayzata School District Administration


Real Estate Flyer –Look what you could buy for \$19,500 in 1945

1945



SAM W.
BATSON

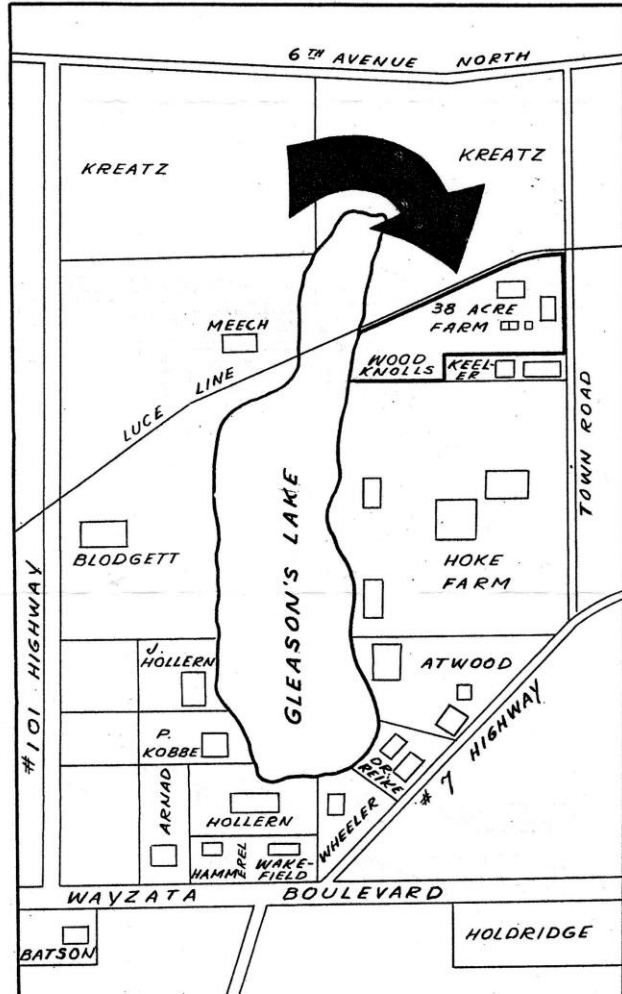
SPECIALIZING in FARMS, MINNETONKA & SUBURBAN PROPERTIES
 MINNETONKA OFFICE: WAYZATA, 110 WAYZATA BLVD., PHONE: WAYZATA 123
 MINNEAPOLIS OFFICE: with GENERAL MANAGEMENT CO., Room 1132, 608 2nd Ave. S.
 Minneapolis Office Hours: 10 A. M. to 3 P. M. Phone: Atlantic 6491



*Sold 4/15
J. Keller*

15-1000

**38 ACRE SHORE FARM ON GLEASON'S LAKE
NEAR WAYZATA
WOODED KNOLLS**



IDEAL FARM FOR HORSES - DAIRY - DOGS

On the Wooded East-shore of this beautiful and popular lake lies this CHOICE FARM.

Many large shade trees form a natural canopy over

THIS WHITE COLONIAL HOME of 3 Bedrooms, very Modern Kitchen. Hot-water heat, Water softener. Heated NEW UTILITY ROOM on grade, with Laundry Tubs, Shower and Lavatory

NEW BARN, 32'x50' with complete modern Box-stalls, fully equipped.

NEW 3-Car GARAGE and DOG-KENNEL, Poultry Bldgs.

WAYZATA SCHOOL BUS passes this location.

ALL QUALITY EQUIPMENT

PRICE - \$19,500.

SHOWN ONLY BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT BY

SAM BATSON - Wayzata

Note:

1. Susan Sorrentino donated copy to PHS, her grandfathers was Sam Batson.
2. The house (dates to 1895); is still standing and has been remodeled several times.
3. Believe barn was converted to home in 1966 which is next door.
4. Today - Town Road is Vicksburg Lane and #7 Hwy is Gleason Lake Road.
5. 1913 Farmers Directory map shows this property owned by Merlin Camp and he called it "Devils Knob Farm".
6. Land developed for houses in the 1960's.
7. Hoke Farm was previously the A. Frick farm and is now the site of the Middle School.

Website

The Plymouth Historical Society website is:

www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com

Check us out!

Note: All past newsletters dating back to 1986 are available on-line in PDF format for viewing or printing.

Donations

Donated by: Marlene (Schiebe) Schell:

- \$500

Donated by: Sue Sorrentino

- Real Estate Flyer 1945 from her grandfather Sam Batson

Donated by: Antiques & Collectibles Club:

- \$50



Meetings

The Museum is also open the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month in the afternoon from 1:00 to 3:00 PM during the Spring, Summer and Fall.

The monthly business meetings are held on the 4th Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN.

Open by special appointment in January, February & March.

Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Dennis Jacobson	763-972-0988
Vice President	Kay Bertrand,	763-249-0138
Secretary	Betty Jacobson	763-972-0988
Treasurer	Gary Schiebe	763-473-4889



Mailing and Membership List

If you are not a member and want to sign up or if you have any questions, please call: Kay Bertrand, 763-249-0138.

New Life Time Members;

- Nicholas & Noelle Roehl - family
- Catherine S. Fischer - individual

The 2016 annual dues are:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00

If you would like the newsletter delivered via E-mail please notify Kay Bertrand or send an e-mail to: info@plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com

If you do, it is a plus for both of us. When you receive via e-mail it will be in color. When sent by mail it is in black and white and costs PHS about \$2.00 per copy to print and mail.



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com

Dear Member:

If you haven't paid this is a reminder that you're **2016 Annual PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY Dues** are payable starting in January 2016 unless you are a Life Time member.

We hope you enjoyed the events, newsletters and website of your Society during the past year, and we thank you in advance for your continued membership and participation.

Please tear off the lower part of this sheet and send it with your check in the enclosed envelope. If you itemize deductions on your income tax forms, you may qualify for a deduction.

Yours truly,

Kay Bertrand
1154 Black Oaks Lane
Plymouth, MN 55447
763-249-0138

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Name _____ Tel. No. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-Mail _____

I am interested in helping with:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Cataloging | <input type="checkbox"/> | Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collecting Art-facts | <input type="checkbox"/> | Programs for meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Interviews for oral history | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Annual Dues:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00