

White Lake Creamery

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White Lake Historical Society



1914 – Those pictured are John Windler on the wagon to the left; Standing next was William Kasminski, Manager; Leaning on the rail was Al Bertram, Buttermaker at the time; and the man on the wagon with the white horse was William Dennis.

Ground was broken for the White Lake Creamery Company in late March 1911. The building was completed and opened for business on May 4, 1911.

The Creamery was located behind the Iron Works foundry, on River Street, near the old Pere Marquette Passenger and Freight railroad depot.

Laverne Cobb was selected as the first Buttermaker for the Creamery in March 1911. He was succeeded by R. T. Hopkins in January 1912. Hopkins of Grand Blanc had nine years' experience as a head man at various creameries, the last place being Wayland. Hopkins resigned in February 1913 to open a creamery in Tennessee.

John E. Feightner was selected as Buttermaker at the Creamery in March 1913. He was a graduate from the dairy department of Michigan Agricultural College and had been running a creamery at Amble for two years. He left in March 1914 to take a similar position in Big Rapids. Feightner was succeeded by A. A. Bertram of Otsego.

Contracts were let each year for ice to fill the Creamery's icehouse. In 1915, Peter Anderson's low bid of \$43.90 was accepted for cutting, hauling and packing 30 cords of ice in the house.

Fire threatened the Creamery in June 1919. The roof of the Creamery was discovered to be on fire and developed into a good-sized fire before the fire department arrived with their chemical truck and extinguished it. The origin of the fire was believed to be from either the Creamery smokestack or a passing locomotive. The damage was not extensive and was covered by insurance.

By June 1920 the business of the White Lake Creamery had increased to the extent that the collection of cream by horse and wagon was inadequate and necessitated the purchase of a large Oldsmobile motor truck. Instead of consuming a whole day the cream cans could now be collected in a few hours and the cream delivered to the creamery in much better shape, especially during the hot summer days.

In Oct 1920, after six years, A.A. Bertram left the White Lake Creamery and was replaced by B. Schmidt of Holton.

In November 1920 the White Lake Creamery installed a new up-to-date churn with a capacity of 1000 pounds.

Due to low patronage and too much overhead, it was announced that the Creamery would close in November 1926.

The Creamery Board met and authorized the sale of the property in March 1927, but the offer made by the interested party was not accepted.

A new creamery was opened on July 27, 1927, in the Kison Building by Ernest Meyers, who was leasing the building.

In September 1927 Mr. Meyers made an offer on the old Creamery, which was accepted, and he restarted operating there.

In May 1931 Ernest Meyers sold the White Lake Creamery to Wilson J. David, buttermaker at Claybanks Creamery. He took possession and continued the manufacturing of creamery products until 1935.

After the Creamery closed in 1935, the building was used as an icehouse by Rufus Hunt for about 10 years. Hunt then sold the building to Ferris Hale when he discontinued the ice business and Hale dismantled the structure.