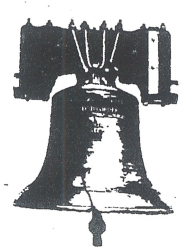


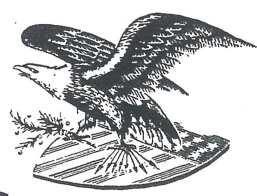
MADRID

AREA



BICENTENNIAL

1776-1976



"Rememberances of Days Gone By"

Perrier Food Markets: A Family Business Tradition

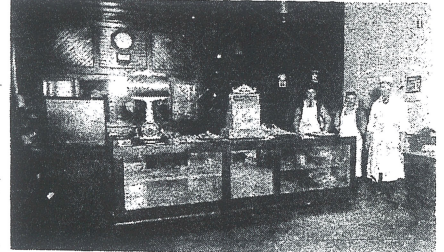
A name long associated with the community of Madrid has been the Perrier family. This family has owned and operated a grocery or meat-marketing business for well over 55 years in the Madrid area. Armand, Sr. and Armand, Jr. have teamed up to give the community many years of faithful service.

His parents, John Baptiste and Octavie Perrier, were French immigrants who settled in Iowa around what is now What Cheer. John was a member of the French Army and upon arrival in Iowa sent for his wife. They were blessed with three sons, Johnny, Olampe and Armand, born in 1890. Armand attended school in What Cheer through the eighth grade and shortly after, the family moved to Sievers, a coal mining camp located by Colfax. It was here that he married Hulda Jane Danks in 1913. Armand was employed by the coal company as a butcher and driver. He hauled groceries from Colfax to Sievers, by horse and wagon to the supply store there. He did this until they moved to High Bridge around 1915. While in Sievers, Armand Jr. was born and the family home consisted of two bedrooms, a living room and kitchen. Rent was \$6.00 a month. During the early years in Sievers, Armand Sr. was employed in the mine for a couple of years as a trapper, and this job consisted of raising a curtain when the coal cars came through.

As mentioned, Armand Sr., Hulda and Armand Jr. left Sievers in 1915 settling in the High Bridge area. It was here that their second son, William was born. While at High Bridge, Armand Sr. was employed at the Company store as a butcher.

They later moved to Madrid in 1917 and have remained in this community ever since. A meat store was purchased from Pete Ingwald in 1918 and at this

time the store was located in the empty lot beside Iowa Electric. It was here that the long tradition began. Assisted by his brother, John and a Mr. Halsey, the



Armand Perrier, Sr., brother Johnnie and Mr. Halsey, a hired hand are shown in the store that was located in the vacant lot beside Iowa Power and Light. The Perrier family has long been associated with the grocery business in Madrid.

Perriers embarked in the meat marketing business. Mr. Perrier butchered his own cattle and hogs and this was done in a little shack on the creek near Castle Cemetery, west of town. Here, they cleaned and removed the hair from the carcass and the final preparations were completed at the store.

Complex refrigeration systems were non-existent at this period of time, so ice boxes were used at the store to keep the meat cold. Ice was purchased from a store located off the railroad track beside what is now the Copper Dollar. Shortly after, an ammonia plant was installed and it worked on the following principle. The ammonia served as a cooling agent, similar to what

freon is today. The gas was compressed into tubes and as it expanded, the area was cooled. Compressing machines were used to recompress the gas daily. These tubes were attached to a big tank in the top of a walk-in cooler. This tank contained salt water and was where the meat was stored.

Lard was also rendered at the Perrier market in the back part of the store. It was cooked in big vats and placed in cans for selling. Sausage and bologna were also homemade. They had their own smokehouse where they smoked many meats and did custom smoking for many area farmers.

Business continued to prosper for the Perriers, but in 1938 disaster struck. An evening fire destroyed the market along with the Register-News building next door. The blaze wiped out all records, accounts, and possessions in the store. This happened on a Wednesday, but by Saturday the family was back in business.

The business was relocated into an empty building across the street where Glenn Allen now is and new equipment was purchased from a closing market in Jamaica.

When the store reopened, it was stocked with a complete line of grocery products and continues to do so today. They soon began making deliveries twice a day to area customers due to the lack of refrigeration in the homes.

During the depression and pre-World War II time period, times grew hard for everyone. Beef was in short supply and that which could be obtained came in by train each evening from Des Moines. Times continued to worsen and ration cards were issued with limits being placed on the amount of coffee, sugar, eggs, etc., that could be purchased. Meat too was rationed and in an attempt to remedy the situation,

Mr. Perrier contacted area farmers and purchased chickens. He then slaughtered them and sold them unlimitedly.

Times began to improve and soon things were back to normal. Business prospered and times were good. The store hours were somewhat different than today with the business staying open late on Wednesday evenings because of the band concerts and also on Saturday nights so farmers could pick up their orders.

Eight other grocery stores existed in town at this time, Carlson-Sandburg, Charlie Kinsey, Red Arrow, Shames, Johnson and Johnson, Lepovitz, Konchar's and Carlson's Grocery, but each had its own special customers and some occasional browsers so all went well.

Armand Sr. passed away in 1946 while on a hunting expedition in South Dakota. In 1948, Armand Jr. bought the store and moved it to its present location in 1955. Up to this time, the store was known as Perriers, but in 1955 it became known as Foodland. Then, this year it was changed back to Perriers.

Mr. Perrier was active in civic affairs such as Odd Fellows, City Council, Lion's Club, past president of the school board, member of Methodist Church where he was Sunday school superintendent and teacher, elder and deacon. He enjoyed sports of all kinds such as slo-pitch softball, hunting, golfing and fishing. His favorite golfing location was west of Hillsdale Cemetery between it and the railroad track and south of Edgewood Park near Mine number 4.

The Perriers have five children, Armand Jr., still in the grocery business, William, who has been with the post office for 39 years; John, involved in grain buying and handling for over 17 years and Joan, a head orthopedic nurse at Veterans Hospital in San Fernando Valley, Calif.

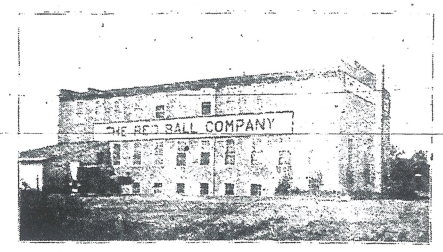
York Company Sent Products Nationwide

Cosmetics, chemicals, barber supplies, and the railroad helped make Madrid a thriving and prosperous community. The manufacturer of these products, originally known as the Red Ball Company and in later years the G. W. York Company started in Madrid in 1918.

The original founders of the company were primarily men who had been associated with the J. R. Watkins Company of Winona, Minn. Changes in business policies caused these men to leave. They thought greater opportunities were available by establishing a new company.

It is not known why Madrid was chosen as the company's new headquarters. Perhaps it was because Madrid was a central location for the former Watkins sales representatives in Iowa, many of whom were involved in the venture. Madrid also had excellent rail services in all directions in early days and most of the shipments were made by rail.

The York Company as it was later known, was located in a large two story building along the railroad right-of-way just east of the present Highway 17 viaduct. This previously was the home of the Sutherland Wagon Box Factory.



This is the Red Ball Company as it looked when they opened in Madrid back in 1918. It later was renamed the York Company and was located along the railroad right-of-way just east of Highway 17 viaduct.

The Company manufactured a line of about 200 farm and home specialty items such as flavoring extracts, spices, soaps and cleaners, cosmetic items, and even a few home remedies. It was under the guidance and direction of a former Madrid pharmacist that most of

the products were made. Some of the farm items produced included dips and disinfectants, fly sprays, and livestock and poultry tonics.

In addition to the varied line of products manufactured and sold under the Red Ball label, certain items were manufactured as "private label brands" for other companies. One of these was the McRay Company, which later moved into their own manufacturing plant in the south part of Madrid where they are still located today.

For many years, raw materials and bottles were shipped in by the carload. Bottle collectors today are thrilled to find an 11 ounce panel bottle embossed by the Red Ball Company. The early bottles used cork stoppers but by 1928 these had been replaced by the metal caps.

Company products were marketed exclusively by route or wagon men who used their cars as stores on wheels to run regular routes farm-to-farm. Back in those days, many of the spices on the grocery shelves wouldn't keep long, so instead of running the risk of getting a bad bunch of spices, the farmers just purchased their needs from the traveling wagon men. Each route man called on farmers in an area of 1/2 county or more at intervals from 4 to 8 times per year.

At its peak, the company had hundreds of route men distributing Red Ball Products in all Midwestern and Southern states, with scattered outlets in nearly every state of the Union. The Madrid factory served as the home office while a branch was established at Memphis, Tenn., to better serve the route men in the South.

The first president of the company was John Southworth. In 1925, after the death of Mr. Southworth, the late G. W. York became president of the firm, bringing with him, many years of experience with the Watkins Company. He had been one of their first route men, and had managed the company's southern division for a number of years.

Under G. W. York's leadership, the Red Ball Company grew and prospered. When his health and age began slowing him down, he turned management of the company over to his son, Willis B. York, who succeeded him as president in 1935. He remained at this position until 1955. York was a leading Madrid businessman as well as being one of the Midwest's leading Republicans for many years. He was Republican state chairman for five years during the



G. W. YORK

1940's and also attended several national conventions during his time. He and his wife Jeanette are still living in Des Moines today.

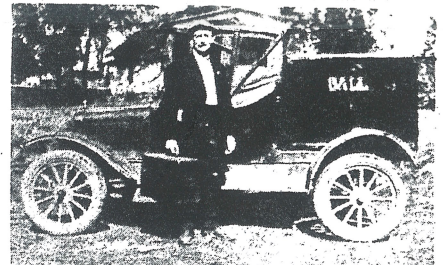
When the great Depression hit the country in the early 1930's, many businesses failed completely and the Red Ball Company had to struggle to keep its existence. The Memphis branch was closed in an effort to economize.

The name of the company was changed during this time to the "G. W. York Company" after the use of the Red Ball trademark was challenged by the company making Red Ball shoes. It is the belief that this name change may have been responsible for the difficulty faced by the business.

Before the company had fully recovered from the depression effects, World War II brought crisis to the country and many businesses as raw materials were in short supply. Gas and tire rationing cut sales ac-



WILLIS B. YORK



Art Fread of Madrid was a route man for the Red Ball Company in the early 1920's. His model T plowed many miles of mud as he traveled door-to-door selling the Red Ball products.

tivities of the route men. By the end of this time, the effects of World War II were easing, and supermarkets were catching on, making it extremely difficult for the wagon men to compete.

In an attempt to bolster sagging sales, the York Company, in 1955, purchased the Ward Company, the oldest company of its kind, dating back to 1849.

In 1959, the McNess Company of Freeport, Ill. purchased the local business and merged the operations. The building at Madrid was then vacated. It stood empty and deteriorated until it was torn down about five years ago, leaving only the memories of what once was a thriving business that made Madrid known throughout many states by the products that bore the label "Red Ball Brand" and later "G. W. York Products."

The company employed an average of 20 people many of whom are still living in the Madrid area. Some of the employees of the Red Ball or York Company include Darwin Anderson, former secretary-treasurer of the company and employee for almost 18 years; Darwin Berglund, Ethel Tassi, Cherie Rees, Dorothy McFarlane, Katherine Goodman, Correne Lackey, Irene Morning, Mrs. Charles Williams, Garrett Galetich, Gloria Lamb, A. K. Johnson, Mrs. A. K. Johnson, Willis and Jeanette York, Dwayne and Helen Jenkins, Dick Stanley and Villa Kenison.

Others who were connected with the business were Art Fread, Homer Evans, Frank Graves, Harry Simpson, Lee Halsey, Byron Halsey, Ernest Tassi, Phil Gibson, C. G. Johnson, John Hornick, Angus Barclay, Gertie Bosworth, Marilyn Edwards, Mildred Peterson, John Southworth, Byron Mowell, Joe Mowell, Zephyr Williams, Sylvia Butler, Margaret Shaw, Bernadeane Carlson, Anne Galetich, Lucy Hornick, Mrs. Joe Guinn, Edna Parsons, Edna Anderson, Ruby Peterson, Mrs. Harold Hook, Pat Gibson, Eugene Johnson, Jack McGeeney and Irene McGeeney.