

# The Historian

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## Historic Dairies of Fallbrook



Running Brook Dairy, Fallbrook, CA. This embossed glass bottle may be from the 1930s. Doug Porter Collection.



Loma Ranch Dairy, Fallbrook. This painted bottle dates from about 1940. Nile Peterson collection.



Story's Dairy, Fallbrook 1952. Fallbrook Historical Society collection.



Golden Arrow Dairy, Vista 1962. Fallbrook Historical Society collection.

Several dairies have been an important part of Fallbrook's history.

**Steward's Dairy:** The first commercial dairy in Fallbrook to offer daily home delivery to Fallbrook residents and wholesale dairy products to local stores was Steward's Dairy. Elizabeth and Charles Steward had a 40-acre ranch north of the Santa Margarita River. After her husband became an invalid, Elizabeth organized the ranch dairy operations to produce and deliver milk, fresh butter, cream and cottage cheese to Fallbrook homes twice daily, plus supplying dairy products to Keller's Pharmacy and Ellis Meat Market beginning in August 1923.

**Loma Ranch Dairy:** Since the 1890s, Dr. Pratt's Loma Ranch had been a significant producer of olive oil. The Loma Ranch olive orchards at the south end of Alturas Road, ran up the west side of Olive Hill. However, the olive oil market dropped off drastically after the end of World War One when European olive oil production and exports resumed. Loma Ranch still had its citrus orchards, but Dr Pratt's son, Herbert Pratt, recognized that changes were coming. Pratt reorganized the Loma Ranch company and built up its dairy herd on the south side of the Santa Margarita River where Loma Ranch had abundant water and alfalfa for grazing. (2) Loma Ranch Dairy launched its twice daily home delivery in April 1925. (3)

**Morse and Bray Dairy:** At the same time, in the face of this new competition, Steward's Dairy was taken over by new local investors. Robert N. Morse with his friend and partner Richard Bray had already been improving land on the north side of the Santa Margarita River, just northwest of the Loma Ranch. (4) Renaming the business as the Morse and Bray Dairy, they added more cows to the herd and lowered the price of whole milk to 10 cents a quart. Orders for home deliveries could be placed at the newspaper office.

**Running Brook Dairy:** Robert Morse sold his half of the dairy to his partner Richard Bray in October 1926. Bray renamed the business as the Running Brook Dairy. (5)

Being alongside the Santa Margarita River was good for the Running Brook herd. Milk cows need lots of fresh water and there was plenty of alfalfa for grazing. However, being close to the river had its drawbacks. Flooding was an occasional problem. Bray and his wife had to tear down the buildings and move everything to higher ground on the south bank in 1927. (6)

**Running Brook Dairy and Loma Ranch Dairy** both prospered through the 1920s and 1930s, providing jobs and dairy products to Fallbrook.

**Story's Dairy:** Clarence Story's farm was 3 miles south of Fallbrook on Hwy 395. In the 1940s, even as the bigger Loma and Running Brook dairies competed head-to-head north of town, Story's dairy, a family business, developed milk and dairy delivery routes south of town. Jack Story, Clarence's oldest son said that at different times the Story's Dairy employees included uncles, aunts, grandpas, and grandmas. (7)

**Dairy Consolidation:** In October 1945, Richard Bray announced that Running Brook Dairy had acquired Loma Dairy. (8) Barely a week later some outside investors announced that they had purchased Bray's Running Brook Dairy. (9)

Less than two years after the sale of Loma and Running Brook, Clarence Story in March 1947, announced that he sold Story's Dairy to Arlin Tomlinson and family from Spring Valley. The Story family stayed in Fallbrook, devoting all their time to the ranch and avocados. (10) Tomlinson retained the name Story's Dairy. Tomlinson increased the size of the herd and opened an on-site store to sell Story's Dairy milk and dairy products.

In 1948, Arlin Tomlinson, the new owner of Story's Dairy, purchased all the bottles formerly belonging to the defunct Running Brook Dairy and Loma Ranch Dairy. The Golden Arrow Dairy of Vista took over all of Running Brook's Dairy routes (which included the old Loma Dairy). (11)

In 1953, while still offering home delivery, Story's Dairy store on old Hwy 395 sold milk at 19 cents per quart and ice cream at 23 cents a pint.

In 1969, after 22 years, Arlin Tomlinson sold Story's Dairy to Golden Arrow Dairy of Vista. Tomlinson continued to live on the property, but Story's Dairy ceased to exist. (12)

Today, in 2025, the location of the old Story's Dairy store can still be seen from the road at 2756 S. Mission Road.



#### Footnotes

- 1) Fallbrook Enterprise, Dec 21, 1923
- 2) Fallbrook Enterprise, August 1, 1924
- 3) Fallbrook Enterprise, April 17, 1925
- 4) Fallbrook Enterprise, October 20, 1922. Morse registered 2 quarter section homesteads, witnessed by Bray, in township 9S Range 4W. on the northside of the Santa Margarita River.
- 5) Fallbrook Enterprise, October 15, 1926

- 6) Fallbrook Enterprise, March 4, 1927
- 7) Jack Story, Growing up in Fallbrook, Spring 2001, Fallbrook In Review
- 8) Fallbrook Enterprise Oct 13, 1945.
- 9) Fallbrook Enterprise Oct 19, 1945.
- 10) Fallbrook Enterprise March 7, 1947.
- 11) Fallbrook Enterprise June 25, 1948.
- 12) Fallbrook Enterprise April 24, 1969.

***The Fallbrook Historical Society's mission is to bring history to life by educating the community and others about Fallbrook's rich heritage***



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