



Back Story

Footprints from the Past

January 2017



Welcome to 2017! Here we are, starting a whole brand new year, while looking behind us to the past. I'm all for living today and celebrating the twenty four hours that is 'now'. Yet, I believe we also need to look forward to the future and plan and anticipate, while also looking behind to honor and learn from.

Past. Present. Future. All three combined create the totality that is our life.

Here's to a blessed year ahead, while we remember the past and those that came before us. Happy New Year!

Trisha Faye

texasrishafaye@yahoo.com

[To receive each monthly newsletter delivered to your inbox, subscribe HERE.](#) (Or go to www.trishafaye.com)

Publication News

Skirt! magazine accepted an essay for their January issue—Brave and Magnificent Steps. (For those online, here's a link: <http://www.skirt.com/skirt-essays/brave-and-magnificent-steps/>)

Good Old Days magazine accepted a Strange Easter in 1942. It's based on Iona Mae (Jones) Burk's story about Easter morning in 1942. Traveling to Missouri, the family was camped by the side of the road. Little Mae was worried that the Easter Bunny wouldn't find them. But it did, courtesy of mother Bea Jones. A paper-mache rabbit, filled with candy was left by the sleeping girl – clear out in the middle of nowhere. This Easter tale will be in the April 2017 issue.

Purpose magazine accepted a story, Mildred's Sweet Spirit. The theme was 'Fruits of the Spirit' and a story about my Grandma Cline was what came to mind when I thought of fruits of the spirit. It will be in the July 2017 issue.

Butter Molds

From Old & Interesting



The wooden spatulas/paddles (above) used for manipulating the butter have several different names - Scotch hands, butter pats, butter paddles, beaters, clappers, spades among others. They can be put to use in various ways. As well as doubling up as scoops for taking butter from the churn, they can stir, cut, slap, lift. They can cut and shape the butter into a block, and then

mark its top with a local design of crosses or grooves. Or they may be used to press butter into a mould. (See right)

In grocers' shops in Britain the "hands" were used well into the 20th century to cut a piece of butter from a large block, on request from a customer. In the kitchen they were used to make individual butter balls for serving at table - just roll a small lump around between the two wooden pats.



In England butter might be formed into various shapes. This 18th century stamp was designed to keep a rounded top on a lump of butter. During the 19th century half-pound bricks

became a standard shape, even though bulk buyers bought barrels or large blocks. Patterns, stamped or cut, might mark the original source. The patterns varied by region - with cross designs associated with the north-west and thistles with Yorkshire. In the US both pounds and half-pounds of butter were common, sometimes wrapped in good quality dairy cloths, not just in thin butter muslin/cheesecloth.

Butter-moulds, or wooden stamps for moulding fresh butter, are much used, and are made in a variety of forms and shapes. In using them, let them be kept scrupulously clean, and before the butter is pressed in, the interior should be well wetted with cold water; the butter must then be pressed in, the mould opened, and the perfect shape taken out. The butter may be then dished, and garnished with a wreath of parsley, if for a cheese course; if for breakfast, put it into an ornamental butter-dish, with a little water at the bottom, should the weather be very warm.

Isabella Beeton, Book of Household Management, 1861

Making Butter



1904—Churning Butter with Old-fashioned Dasher Churn, Creamery, East Aurora, N. Y., U. S. A.

Delishably.com has a good page about [How to Make Butter in a Jar](https://delishably.com/dairy/How-to-Make-Butter-in-a-Jar). (<https://delishably.com/dairy/How-to-Make-Butter-in-a-Jar>) Her recipe calls for using a few marbles in the jar. If you don't have any, they're not necessary, although they do help the butter form easier and quicker.

Here's the recipe, but be sure to check out her page (those of you with computer access). She also has a nice video on her page and more butter information.

Cook Time

Prep time: 5 min

Cook time: 10 min

Ready in: 15 min

Yields: 1/4 cup cream equals 2 Tb. butter

Ingredients for Butter in a Jar

- 1/4 cup Heavy cream, (or whipping cream)
- 1 glass or plastic jar that holds about a cup, (make sure it has a tight lid)
- 3-5 marbles, (clean with soap and water)

Instructions for Making Butter

1. Pour 1/4 cup of heavy cream into a jar. For kids I often use a plastic jar so that they don't have to worry if they drop it.
2. Add the marbles. Most recipes I've seen don't use the marbles but these act like mixers and make the butter form faster. Also, they imitate the mixing paddles in old-fashioned butter makers.
3. Shake the jar. You may want to take turns shaking since it can make you tired.
4. Generally, my kids like to check on the butter every 30 seconds or so. Depending on how hard you shake, it takes between 3 and 10 minutes to make butter.
5. When you see the balls of butter separating, then pour off the buttermilk (for pancakes!) and take the butter out of the jar with a spatula. If you want you can add a little salt.

Making More Butter

Amount of Cream	Amount of Butter	Size of Jar
1/2 cup (4 oz.)	1/4 cup=1/2 stick of butter	8 oz. or larger
1 cup (8 oz.)	1/2 cup=1 stick of butter	16 oz. or larger
2 cups (16 oz.)	1 cup= 2 sticks of butter=half pound	Use two batches in 16 oz. jars
4 cups (32 oz)	2 cups=4 sticks of butter=1 pound	Four batches in 16 oz jars.

My recipe is just for a small individual serving of butter. If you want to make butter for a crowd, here is what you will need. To allow the cream room to foam up before it turns into butter, make sure the cream is only 1/2 as much as the jar holds

Want to know more? Here's a web site that has everything you'd ever want to know about making butter (and probably more), along with a video at the bottom of the page. Countryfarm Lifestyles posted: [How to Make Butter by Churn, Beater or Jar with Recipes](#). This page is the best! If you want to try your hand at making some fresh butter for the family, you'll want to see what Countryfarm Lifestyles writes. There's all kinds of tips for making great butter, and also some troubleshooting tips in case your batch of butter doesn't turn out as expected.



A Mold Like No Other

As promised in December's newsletter, in 2017 you get a short story in each issue that reflects that month's theme. For this month's 'Butter Mold' theme, we bring you the following fictional tale.

Henry reined the horses to a stop in front of Campbell's Mercantile. Setting the hand brake on the wagon, he hopped down to the slushy road and scurried around the back of the wagon to give his wife a hand stepping down.

Anna carefully moved the wicker basket from her lap to the wooden seat she sat on. Standing, she unwrapped the heavy quilt from around her shoulders and laid it on the plank seat. She stepped down with Henry's burly hands guiding her.

Once Anna was safely down and standing on the general store's narrow porch, he retrieved the basket from the wagon and handed it to his wife. "You get on inside where it's warmer. Do your trading with Mr. Campbell while I run the team over to Graham's blacksmith shop and get Topper a new shoe. Hope he'll take some cotton in trade."

Pulling her woolen scarf tighter around her neck, Anna nodded. "I should think he'll take the cotton. Poor Mrs. Graham can weave all the cotton she gets trying to keep those eight boys clad." She shivered and turned towards the shop's door. "I'll probably finish up first. I'll linger around the stove until you're done, warming my hands for the trip home."

"Have a seat and enjoy a few moments rest. If you can get a seat."

Anna's lilting laughter wove its way through the air. "I may have to push Mr. Jenkin's out of the way and away from the checkerboard."

A rare smile flitted across Henry's face as he lifted himself to the wagon and headed to the opposite side of Batesville. The small burg had been named after Josiah Bates, who'd purchased a large land grant earlier in the century. As he began selling off parcels of his land over the years, new neighbors brought commerce to the area. Besides the blacksmith and the mercantile, the town had a cooper, a butcher, a lumber yard and four churches. They'd recently been graced with the first physician they'd ever had, Dr. Owens. But the biggest buzz around the community at the moment was news that the new railroad was going to pass by the edge of town in a few years.

A bell tinkled over the door as Anna entered the store, a gust of cold air blowing in behind her.

Mr. Campbell stood over by the potbellied stove, supervising the frenzied game of checkers taking place between Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Blake. Wiping his hands on the white canvas apron that covered his girth, he nodded and made his way towards the counter. "Mornin' Mrs. Klein. What brings you and your husband to town on this chilly day?"

"Need to get a few sundries. I'm hoping you have a good stock of thread." She lifted the basket she carried in front of her. "I brought two dozen eggs. I'd be obliged if you could take them in trade."

"I'd be happy too. Why, just last night the Mrs. was lamenting the lack of eggs. Laying sure slows down this time of year with all the snow and ice."

"Usually our hens almost stop laying too. But this year Henry built a smaller winter coop right up against the side of the house. The wall with the cook stove on the other side. It's more sheltered there and I think the extra warmth from the stove helps." She lifted a corner of the linen cloth that lined the basket, showing off the speckled brown eggs inside.

Mr. Campbell reached out to take the basket. "I much appreciate these. Let me go transfer them to one of my baskets and I'll credit your account with them."

While he was busy with his task, Anna browsed around. She found the thread and picked out two spools, along with a packet of shiny new needles. She stopped at a rack of new buttons. Sorting through the hanging cards with their pearlescent offerings, she sighed. *Wish I had enough for some of these. They'd surely look pretty on a dress made of that cotton sitting back there.*

She moved on down the counter, knowing there wasn't enough for such finery in their life right now. Surviving the Pennsylvania winter was their first priority.

Stepping back to the counter, Mr. Campbell cleared his throat to announce his return. "Here's your basket, Mrs. Klein. Credited your account with thirty five cents."

"So much?"

"Yes. They're worth more this time year, when eggs are dearer to come by."

"I appreciate that."

"You know..." Deep in thought, Mr. Campbell stroked his chin with his thumb and fingers. "If you're needing to trade...you still make that butter that's so tasty?"

"Mrs. Klein's butter?" Mr. Jenkins shouted from the far side of the room where they thought he'd been deeply involved in his beloved game. "If you carry Mrs. Klein's butter, I'll buy it. Shore tastes a lot better than that runny, tart concoction my wife calls butter."

Anna suppressed a pleased grin. "She probably doesn't work the buttermilk all out," she murmured to Mr. Campbell.

He winked at her. "And that's why I'll happily take any and all the butter you bring me."

She frowned as a thought passed through her mind. "I'll have to bring it in pats or rolls though. My mold broke last year and I haven't gotten a new one yet."

"You in need of a mold? Come take a look at the catalog that came in the post last week." He motioned her to follow him to the counter running the length of the other side of the room. Moving behind the counter, he pulled out a black and white bound catalog stamped Mace & Company, 1883, on the front. He leafed through several pages before he found what he was looking for and laid the open catalog down in front of her.

Anna moved her finger down the page. "Lots of butter stamps." Her finger came to rest on a grainy picture of a round formed cup mold, the plunger embellished with an acorn design. A soft sigh escaped her lips as she lightly brushed the image. "That's beautiful."

"Comes in different sizes too, if I remember correctly."

She peered closer at the tiny print that described the object. "It does. From one ounce to one pound." Raising

her hand away from the page, she shook her head. “How I’d love one of those. But not right now. As long as you’ll accept the butter in pats or rolls, that is.”

“Pats are fine. It’s the flavor I’m concerned with. You have a reputation for some of the best butter in the county.” He picked up the catalog and moved it back to its resting place underneath the counter. “Offer still stands if you ever change your mind.”

Henry stepping through the door and stomping his wet boots on the floor ended the conversation. Anna sat her items on the counter as the merchant recorded the transactions in his ledger.

“I hate to leave the warmth of your cozy store here. I’d rather stay and chat. Maybe take a game from Mr. Jenkins.” Henry laughed as the crotchety neighbor snorted in reply. “Need to get Topper and her new shoes home before dark.”

On the wagon ride home, Anna reported how Mr. Campbell was pleased with the eggs and that he’d take all the Klein’s could bring him. She also told him about the request for her fresh butter.

“Ja. That we can do. Eggs and butter. Well done.”

Anna tentatively mentioned the butter mold in the catalog.

“Not at that price.”

“That’s what I told Mr. Campbell. But it sure was a pretty piece, Henry. Looked like dark walnut. All polished and handsome. Sure would be nice to have.”

“Someday, dear.” He nodded his head.

Someday as in never, Anna thought to herself. But she bit the inside of her cheek and didn’t voice the words.

The next few days went on as usual. Household chores for Anna. Barnyard chores for Henry. With the cold, Henry was busier carrying in armloads of firewood, but with no crops in the ground there weren’t any planting or harvesting tasks to occupy his time. He did his usual morning and evening rounds of milking and feeding. Meanwhile, Anna started gathering all the cream she could to make up all the butter she could before their next trip to town in a few weeks.

Anna noticed that Henry was taking longer with his morning chores. That wasn’t like him in the cold winter months. Typically he milked and fed the chickens and hogs, hurrying back inside as quickly as possible. For several days in a row he’d lagged, coming in for his noon time dinner late. She’d started watching his face for signs of anything wrong. His complexion looked healthy. No cough or signs of sniffles; symptoms of an oncoming illness that would slow him down.

On the fourth day, dinner was cooked and waiting for him. Hours later, he still hadn’t returned. Anna looked at the potatoes starting to dry out from cooking in the cast iron skillet for too long. She gathered a thick, knit shawl around her shoulders and braved the biting wind on a trek to the barn.

I hope he’s okay and not hurt.

After a neighbor’s young and untimely death in a threshing accident a few months earlier, Anna worried more than usual when Henry was out and about on the farm all by himself. Hunching her shoulders against the push of the cold wind, Anna was almost to the barn when the door opened and Henry appeared.

“What’s wrong?” He rushed to his wife.

“Nothing. Just coming to check on you. You’d been out here so long.”

“Just working on a project. Sorry, dear. Time got away from me.” He held out his arm for Anna to nestle under on the walk back to the house.

“What project?”

“Oh...nothing important...just dilly-dallying...just fiddling...with farm stuff...” Henry stammered.

It seemed odd, but it was too cold for Anna to worry about much.

The next day Henry appeared back in the house while Anna was still preparing the meal and continued to do so for the next few days. Her husband’s odd behavior was soon history and Anna never gave it another thought.

A few days later, the community was surprised with an unexpected thaw that teased them about spring soon to arrive. Anna didn’t expect to see much of Henry that day. She assumed that he’d be all over their two hundred acres checking on winter damage and planning the crops for the next few months. When she heard the back door slam shut, she looked up in alarm from the table where she stood kneading the bread dough.

Henry stood halfway between the door and the table with his hands behind his back and a quirky smile on his face.

“Henry?” Anna was confused.

He moved closer to her. “Finish what you’re doing. I just have a little something for you.”

“For me?” Anna formed the dough into a ball and dropped it into the floured wooden bowl. She covered it with a handwoven towel and sat it on the Dutch oven on the far edge of the cook stove. She wiped her hands on her apron and brushed a floury cheek off on her shoulder.

Henry held out the hidden object – a rectangular wooden box. “Happy Birthday, mein Liebste – my love.”

Anna looked at the proffered gift and a tear formed in the corner of her eye. Hope swelled up in her chest. “A butter mold?”

“Ja, a butter mold. Made by her husband who loves her.”

Taking the handcrafted gift, Anna turned it every which way, admiring the handiwork that had gone into this special gift. “It’s beautiful,” she whispered. “Such care you’ve taken with it.”

“Look inside. A special stamp. Just for you. The butter lady of Kaufman County.”

Anna pulled up the plunger to reveal a hand carved impression of a sheaf of wheat surrounded by a decorative border with a letter ‘A’ nestled in the corner.”

“It’s not the one you wanted from the catalog.”

“This one is better. The best I’ve ever seen. Made by my husband, the finest craftsman in the land. Made with your heart and your love. I’ll treasure it forever.”

