

LEROY

Pearle Bixby Wait, (?-1915) was twenty three when he formulated Jell-O. The story has been told that he mixed it together on his kitchen table. No one knows for sure when Pearle Wait was born- even his descendants aren't sure. Pearle Wait was in the patent medicine business. *The Le Roy Gazette* of September 29, 1897 mentions that P.B. Wait "is soon to erect a medicine factory on the lot recently purchased by him on Lake Street ..." He introduced Jell-O in 1897, yet *The Le Roy Gazette* doesn't mention Jell-O until July 20, 1898: "P. B. Wait is putting up a preparation which is used for dessert. It is called Jell-O, and is meeting with a ready sale." Otis Glidden, an early salesman for Orator Woodward, claims that Pearle Wait wasn't making a gelatin dessert, rather, Jell-O was a pudding, but an early advertising piece, attributed to Pearle Wait claims that Jell-O is "prepared in four flavors, Raspberry, Strawberry, Orange and Lemon." There is little doubt that Pearle Wait was the originator of a gelatin dessert, known as Jell-O, however it is believed that his wife, May, coined the name Jell-O.

In April 1899, P.B. Wait sold his proprietary medicine business to his partner Stanley Pierson. In August, Pearle Wait bought a vacant house and "moved it to his lot on Lake Street, where he will use it as a factory for Jell-O" but a month later on September 9, 1899, Wait sold the rights to Jell-O to the Genesee Pure Food Company for \$450.

Pearle died in the Sisters' Hospital in Buffalo of complications from an appendectomy on July 23, 1915 and he was buried in Machpelah Cemetery, in LeRoy. May lived on West Main for thirty years and did sewing and took in boarders to make ends meet. She died on April 14, 1956.

Submitted by Lynne Belluscio, Director of the LeRoy House & LeRoy Village Historian

Orator Woodward (1856-1906) was born in Bergen on July 26, 1856. His father was Abner Tarbell Woodward, a carriage maker who sold books when the carriage business was slow. Orator quit school when he was thirteen. He went to work for A. F. Bartow, a LeRoy lawyer, who described the young Woodward as being "full of ideas, energy, talk, brimming over at all times."

Orator went into business for himself and in 1879 manufactured nest eggs and brittle target trap balls. (Trap balls were used in target shooting like clay pigeons.) Both were patented by Woodward and made of plaster of Paris. The eggs were impregnated with powder that killed lice on nesting hens. Woodward began production of the eggs in 1878. A year later, his company was manufacturing 2,880 eggs a day and they were being shipped throughout the United States, Canada and Austria. In 1881, Woodward bought the formula and the rights to a cough medicine known as Kemp's Balsam. In 1891, Woodward bought Raccoon Antiseptic Corn Plasters and then purchased the rights to a laxative known as Lane's Tea. He also bought patents for Lane's Cold and Grip Tablets, Sherman's Headache Remedy and Easy Shave Soap. Then in 1896, Woodward bought the patent for a coffee substitute known as Grain-O. Within fifteen months, Grain-O was known throughout the United States and production accelerated. By 1897, Woodward split the production of Grain-O away from the O. F. Woodward Company and put it under the ownership of a newly formed company known as the Genesee Pure Food

Company. In 1897, the Postum Cereal Company of Battle Creek, Michigan sued Woodward over the use of the Grain-O seal, claiming that it resembled too closely their product. Woodward changed his seal and thanked Postum for the free advertising. Then, he paid \$12,000 for a company that produced Ryo-O and put them out of business, eliminating another of his competitors.

On September 9, 1899, The Genesee Pure Food Company paid \$450 to buy the rights to a gelatin dessert product manufactured by Pearle Wait, which was known as Jell-O. In 1904, Orator Woodward launched the Jell-O campaign with the Jell-O Girl and watched the monthly sales of his new product grow. Woodward was 48 and had six children. The oldest, Ernest, was 21 and Helen, the youngest was only 5. But Orator's health began to fail and in July 1905, he suffered a mild stroke. He was slightly paralyzed, yet he decided to travel to Hot Springs, Arkansas in November. His health continued to deteriorate and on January 21, 1906, Orator Woodward died. (A year after his death Jell-O sales exceeded \$1 million.) He is buried in Machpelah Cemetery.

Orator Woodward had done more for the Le Roy community than promoting Jell-O. He was largely responsible for establishing the village water system in 1897. He served for two terms as a member of the first Board of Water and Light Commission. He was involved with the reorganization of his brother-in-law's business, the LeRoy Plow Company and served as director. He was also a director of the LeRoy National Bank. He was involved with the organization of the LeRoy High School and was a member of the LeRoy Methodist Church. He donated the parsonage that stood west of the church on Trigon Park.

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Dorothy Layne McIntyre (1917-) graduated from LeRoy High School in 1936 and in 2001 was recognized by the International Women's Air and Space Museum at the Burke Lakefront Airport in Ohio. She was also featured in the book "*Distinguished African-Americans in Aviation and Space*" (published by Oryx Press). In 1939 at the age of 21 she was accepted for a cadet flying program at West Virginia State College; which was rare since the program only allowed one female student for every ten male students. She earned her private pilot's license in 1940 and was the first African-American woman to earn her certificate under the cadet program. When she applied to become a WASP during World War II she was denied because of her race. She took a job teaching factory worker's about aircraft mechanics at the Baltimore War Production Training School. After the war, she and her husband moved to Cleveland and when her daughters were born she gave up flying. Dorothy worked as an accountant, a social worker and retired as a sixth grade school teacher in 1979.

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