



# Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave. Kansas City, MO 64108 ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

## **Introduction: American Butter Company Building, Kansas City, MO**

Construction of the American Butter Company's new facility at 2438 Broadway began in 1922 and was completed by May 1923. The Fogel Construction Company, with H. Von Unwerth as the structural engineer, constructed the building, designed by prominent Kansas City architect Frederick E. McIlvain (see below). The five-story curved building was built of reinforced concrete, finished in tapestry brick and trimmed in polychrome terra cotta. The total cost of the building was estimated at \$250,000.<sup>1</sup> The company was formerly located at 517 Delaware Street, Kansas City.

After moving to their Broadway facility, ABC was reported to be the largest and best-equipped creamery plant in the Midwest. The site, only a few hundred feet south of the loading platforms of Kansas City's Union Station, was ideal for the expedient receiving of cream and shipping of ABC's final products. The butter company was granted a right-of-way to extend a rail line under the Broadway/Pershing Viaduct to the baggage and express platforms through special arrangements with the Terminal Company. A special switch track to the butter company was also built for icing and loading refrigerated cars. Although Kansas City was the home of American Butter Company, 85% of its product, ABC Butter, was sold in the eastern and southern states.<sup>2</sup> Lynwood H. Smith served as the company's president from 1922 through 1952.<sup>3</sup>

ABC also made significant contributions in the field of nutrition and set standards in which the modern cereal market, as well as the development of the modern vitamin supplement, was founded. The fact that the dairy company retained intellectual properties on the research of cereal grass nutrition was in itself, unusual, as Lynwood Smith pointed out, the research could very easily have been sent to a pharmaceutical firm for further development. Nutritional supplements have found a renewed market that favors the use of natural substances over synthetically produced supplements.

## **Historic Overview and Significance**

ABC established their business in Kansas City in 1908, with Martin Brown, president and James De Coursey, De Coursey Creamery, vice president. Martin Brown retained the presidency of

---

<sup>1</sup> "Butter," *Kansas City Post* 6 April 1923, n. p. Microfilm, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "American Butter Company," *Polk's City Directory: 1905-1960* (Kansas City: Gates Publishing Co., 1905-1960). Various pages, Microfilm, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City Missouri.



## Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave. Kansas City, MO 64108 ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

the company until 1915 when James S. Carpenter replaced him. While these men played an important role in the establishment of ABC, it wasn't until after the company moved into their new building at 2438 Broadway that it began expanding into the successful and diversified business that would make historic contributions to both the agricultural and pharmaceutical industries.<sup>4</sup>

As stated above, ABC began planning the construction of a modern creamery facility at 2438 Broadway in 1922, at which time, Lynwood Herbert Smith, an employee of ABC since 1919, became president and manager.<sup>5</sup> He remained at the helm of ABC until the early 1950's.<sup>6</sup> When the building opened in 1923, offices for the ABC Butter and Egg Company, a subsidiary of the ABC were also located in the new building.<sup>7</sup>

In 1928, Smith took a primary role in the "merger of several Midwest dairy companies which led to the formation of American Dairies, Inc., with widespread operations in Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas."<sup>8</sup> This merger brought American Butter Company together with James De Coursey of De Coursey Creamery Company. Other Kansas City area dairy concerns included in the merger were Aines Dairy, Arctic Dairy Products, and Meriden Creamery Company.<sup>9</sup>

From the beginning of American Dairies, Inc., Smith served as a "member of the board of directors and principal executive officer, serving as president from 1928 to 1952 and as chairman of the board from 1950 until his retirement in 1954..." just one year before his death.<sup>10</sup> Smith's leadership spanned over three decades during which time the company began diversifying its interests and research became an integral part of American Dairies, Inc. under Smith's guidance.

### *Cerophyl Laboratories, Inc.: Research Division of American Dairies, Inc.*

On April 15, 1933, Charles F. Schnabel, a former feed mill chemist, applied for a patent for a 'feed' product that he developed for both animal and human consumption.<sup>11</sup> The patent was for

---

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> "American Butter Company," *Kansas City Star* 8 April 1923, n. p. Microfilm, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>6</sup> "Lynwood H. Smith Dies," *Kansas City Star* 28 October 1955, n. p. Microfilm, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>7</sup> "American Butter Company," *Kansas City Star* 8 April 1923.

<sup>8</sup> "Lynwood H. Smith Dies," *Kansas City Star* 28 October 1955, n. p.

<sup>9</sup> "James H. De Coursey," *Leaders In Our Town* (Kansas City: Burd & Fletcher, 1952), 97.

<sup>10</sup> "Lynwood H. Smith Dies," *Kansas City Star* 28 October 1955.

<sup>11</sup> "Grass Goes on the Diet List," *The Sunday Star* 18 October 1942, Washington, D. C., n. p. Schnabel was given an honorary degree from Rockhurst College for his services to humanity on May 31, 1942.



## Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave. Kansas City, MO 64108 ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

processing young grass shoots from wheat, barley and rye crops as a dietary supplement that provided unique health benefits from the chlorophyll. A patent in Schnabel's name was granted on January 9, 1934 under No. 1,942,94 (see Appendix C).<sup>12</sup>

Schnabel's experiments into the nutritional value of cereal grasses came from a strong belief that the young grass shoots had a higher nutritional value than vegetables. Schnabel's research was innovative.

Schnabel studied many aspects of growth and nutrition associated with cereal grasses. He found that some soils were not suitable for providing high quality cereal grasses, and that the nutrients provided by these green plants varied with the stage of growth of the grasses. He gave the dehydrated grasses, an economical and practical food supplement, to his family of seven. As reported in the *Buffalo Courier Express*, none of his children ever had a serious illness or a decayed tooth.<sup>13</sup>

Schnabel's research led to one of the more interesting developments at American Dairies, Inc. In 1935 Schnabel, then an employee of American Dairies approached Lynwood Smith to request the use of an unused drying machine. When Smith asked Schnabel why he wanted to use the machine Schnabel answered "...to dry grasses." His answer led to a three hour discussion in Smith's office.

Schnabel explained to Smith how he had begun experimenting with the nutritive value of young grass shoots from wheat and barley. Once the shoots began "jointing," their nutritional value began to dissipate as the plant reserved all of its food value to send into forming the seed kernels. Schnabel continued to explain that he was looking for a way to preserve the nutritional value of the young grasses to increase their shelf life. His experiments had indicated that the young grass shoots had to be dried quickly, which was the reason behind his request for the unused drying machine.<sup>14</sup>

Smith saw a potential in further development of Schnabel's research. As Schnabel discussed his search for a preserving agent, Smith quickly thought that buttermilk held the key. During their initial meeting, Smith decided to use his own farm, just outside of Stanley, Kansas, as a testing laboratory for Schnabel's research. During the day Schnabel dried grasses, mixed them with

---

<sup>12</sup> Charles F. Schnabel, "Feed," *Patent No. 1,942,943*, January 9, 1934 (Washington, D.C.: United States Patent Office, 1934).

<sup>13</sup> Ronald L. Seibold, *Cereal Grass: What's In It For You* (Lawrence, Kansas: Pines International, Inc., 1990), Chapter 2. Available on the web at: [www.wheatgrass.com/book/chapter2.html](http://www.wheatgrass.com/book/chapter2.html) Accessed January 12, 2004. Also available in hardcopy format.

<sup>14</sup> American Dairies, Inc.: Cerophyl Laboratories (Grass Industry), *Kansas City Star* 8 October 1939, n. p. Microfilm, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.



## Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave. Kansas City, MO 64108 ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

buttermilk and fed the mixtures to Smith's farm chickens. In the evening Schnabel and Smith discussed the results of the day's experiments. The result was first known as "*Greenmilk*," a combination of grasses preserved in buttermilk and produced by American Dairies, Inc.<sup>15</sup> Along with the improved preserving agent of buttermilk, Schnabel applied for a second patent on October 18, 1935. On October 18, 1938, Patent No. 2,133,362 (see Appendix C, which includes a re-issue of this patent) was granted and listed Schnabel as the assignor to American Dairies, Inc., Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>16</sup>

With the success of Schnabel's research, Smith began introducing the products to agricultural experts at the University of Missouri, Kansas State University, and the University of Wisconsin. Under controlled experiments, the experts confirmed Schnabel's findings for agricultural applications of the new product. However, Smith felt that it was crucial to receive approval from the medical profession before introducing their product for human consumption.<sup>17</sup> Although the first use of *Cerophyl* for both human and animal consumption occurred in August 1937, it was not trademarked until August, 1960.<sup>18</sup>

By 1939, *Cerophyl* had been thoroughly tested. Articles confirming its properties began to appear in publications such as: *Journal of Nutrition*; *Journal of the American Medical Association*; *Kansas City Medical Journal*; and *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, as well as the British medical publication, *Lancet*. Schnabel had also delivered papers before the Proceedings of the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine.<sup>19</sup> All publications concerning the benefits derived from *Cerophyl* pointed to the high nutritional value derived from its vitamin content which exceeded those of ordinary green vegetables.

*Cerophyl* contained vitamins A, B-complex, C, G, E and K in abundant quantities. Further attributes were that these vitamins were present in their natural state and the product was relatively inexpensive. One unique factor in the use of *Cerophyl* came as a result of its hemoglobin like properties and its vitamin K content. An early use of the product was in surgical application as a coagulant. The product was shipped to hospitals for use during emergency surgeries. In one such case,

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* *Cerophyl* from Latin **cerealis**, "of grain" and Greek **phyllon**, "leaf" was chosen as the name for the dehydrated cereal/grass food as early as 1937.

<sup>18</sup> "Cerophyl, Trademark No. 0702162," Assignee: *Cerophyl Laboratories, Kansas City Missouri*, Trademark Electronic Search System, Online, Accessed January 30, 2004. <http://tess2uspto.gov>.

<sup>19</sup> American Dairies, Inc., *Kansas City Star* 8 October 1939, n. p



## Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave. Kansas City, MO 64108 ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

a connecting flight was delayed for nearly two hours as it waited for a shipment of *Cerophyl* being shipped to Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. In another incident, a patient discharged from the Mayo Clinic drove to Kansas City to purchase several cases of *Cerophyl* which he took with him on his return to his home in Iraq.<sup>20</sup>

The development of *Cerophyl* also marked the beginning of American Dairies contribution in pharmaceutical research. Smith concluded that it would have been easy to turn the product over to a pharmaceutical company on a royalty basis. However, Smith was looking beyond the pill and powder products. His interest was in developing the grass factor to include all forms of food products.<sup>21</sup>

To assist the company in furthering *Cerophyl*'s potential, Smith recruited two young scientists: Dr. William R Graham Jr. from Toronto, Canada as director of research, and Dr. George Kohler from the University of Wisconsin, who was well known at the time for his work with grass juices. In 1930 Charles Schnabel remained in research and development working alongside Graham and Kohler. The laboratory employed 125 people in addition to the regular dairy payroll.<sup>22</sup>

In 1943 American Dairies purchased the building at 2420 Broadway, on the north side of Pershing Road, to expand their operation. By this time, Cerophyl Laboratories, Inc. had excelled in development of their product and was jointly owned by the Quaker Oats Company.<sup>23</sup> Cerophyl Laboratories remained at 2438 Broadway into the 1950s.<sup>24</sup> However, product appeal declined as the chemical and pharmaceutical industries began playing a role in food production, where:

[d]uring the 1950s, chemical and pharmaceutical industries began to play a bigger role in the production and delivery of American foods. It was the beginning of the promotional idea of "better living through chemistry" with a fertilized, crop-sprayed "green revolution." Agrochemicals began accumulating in our soils and on our food crops. Synthetic nutrients were added to foods and pressed into vitamin pills. As multi-vitamin pills became more commonplace, food-based nutrient supplements such as Cerophyl became less popular.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* George Kohler was actively researching the "grass juice factor" and its nutritional impact on guinea pigs in 1937. In his paper for the *Journal of Nutrition*, Kohler cited the research and earlier findings made by Charles F. Schnabel. See George O. Kohler, *Journal of Nutrition*, Vol. 15 No. 5, November 24, 1937, 450. Dr. Kohler is currently living in Inverness, California and is still actively advising researchers on his life's work.

<sup>23</sup> American Dairies, Inc., *Kansas City Star* 30 May 1943, n. p. Microfilm, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>24</sup> *Polk City Directory*, 1923-1960, n. p. Microfilm, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>25</sup> Seibold, *Cereal Grass*, Chapter 2.



## Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave.      Kansas City, MO 64108      ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

A total of five patents and three trademarks have been found in relation to the research and development that took place at Cerophyl Laboratories, Inc., during the 1930s. By 1956, American Dairies became a subsidiary of Foremost Foods, Inc., and remained at 2438 Broadway. After 1960, Cerophyl Laboratories became a subsidiary of Agri-Tech, Inc., which is no longer in business.<sup>26</sup>

The important research that took place at ABC between 1930 and 1950 has experienced a resurgence of interest in the nutritional value from young grass shoots grown in a chemical free environment. The book, *CEREAL GRASS: WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU*, written by Ronald L. Seibold, M.S., in 1990, extols the virtues and nutritional values of wheatgrass as well as other grass varieties. The book was dedicated to Dr. Charles Schnabel and Dr. George Kohler for their dedication and contribution to their research in the nutritional factor of cereal grasses.<sup>27</sup>

In 2004, the American Butter Company Building was demolished to make way for a new Internal Revenue Service facility located to the west of the National Register listed United States Post Office Building.

### *Lynwood Herbert Smith (1893-1955)*

Lynwood H. Smith was born in Slater, Missouri, in 1893 and moved to Kansas City when he was two years of age. After graduating from Central High School, Smith left Kansas City to attend the University of Wisconsin. During World War I, he served as an artillery officer. He married Arline E. Chandler of Kansas City in 1918. The following year, Smith began working at the ABC Butter Company and developed the firm into the largest butter making manufacturing industry in Kansas City. As stated above, in 1928 Smith took the lead in forming the American Dairies, Inc., a merger of several Midwest dairy companies. His son, Lynwood H. Smith Jr., joined him at American Dairies, Inc., as Vice President in 1952. Smith was an active civic leader having memberships in various organizations including the Kansas City Club, the 711 Club and the River Club. He died on October 28, 1955, from a coronary thrombosis at his farm just outside of Stanley, Kansas.

### *Charles Franklin Schnabel (1895-1974)*

---

<sup>26</sup> Cerophyl Laboratories, Inc., *Cerophyl*, Registration No. 0702162, August 2, 1960; *Protamone*, Registration No. 0413010, April 3, 1945; *Viet*, Registration No. 0390299, September 16, 1941 (Washington, D.C.: United States Patent and Trademark Office), n. p.

<sup>27</sup> Seibold, *Cereal Grass*, Preface.



## Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave.

Kansas City, MO 64108

ph/fx. 816.472.4154

[www.arh-kc.com/reports](http://www.arh-kc.com/reports)

---

Charles Schnabel was born in Ionia, Missouri, in 1895. He graduated from the University of Missouri, Columbia, with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1918 at which time he was also granted a lifetime teaching certificate in vocational agriculture and chemistry. He taught at the high school level in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, from 1920 -1922. From 1922-1928, Schnabel was a chemist for Standard Milling Company, Kansas City, where he first began his research into the proteins of leafy green vegetables and cereal grasses. Schnabel's discovery of the nutritional value of grasses as a food occurred in 1931 which led to his first patent application in 1933. By 1935 he was a research chemist for Cerophyl Laboratories where he stayed for the remainder of his career.

### *Frederick E. McIlvain (1873-1927)*

Frederick E. McIlvain was born on April 2, 1873, in Bloomington, Illinois, and moved with his family to Kansas City when still a young boy. During his teen years, McIlvain began studying architecture with the well-known Kansas City architect Louis Curtiss. McIlvain was eventually promoted to draftsman and remained in Curtiss' employment for nearly seventeen years. While with Curtiss, McIlvain assisted in plan preparations for the Willis Wood and Empress theaters, as well as the south section of the old Biltmore Hotel.<sup>28</sup>

By the early 1900s McIlvain began a partnership with Frank Jackson and in the years following, designed a number of local hotels, theaters, office buildings, stores and factories in Kansas City. McIlvain and Jackson also prepared plans for the original Elms Hotel in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. In 1916 McIlvain left the partnership and set up his own office and continued in active practice until his death on February 27, 1927.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the ABC Butter Company building, some of McIlvain's work includes: the Burnap-Meyer Building (1924-25); Palace Clothing Company (National Register, 1924); and the Bagby Building (1920-24). Also credited to Frederick McIlvain is the 1923 design for the Monticello Hotel, Longview, Washington, an integral part of the City Beautiful Movement of the 1920s, complimenting the Longview City plans as designed by Hare and Hare and George Kessler.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects: Deceased*, (Los Angeles: Hennessy and Ingalls, 1970 [c1956]), 407-408.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*



# Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave. Kansas City, MO 64108 ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

## Bibliography

“American Butter Company.” *The Kansas City Star* 8 April 1923.

American Butter Company. *Polk's City Directory: 1905-1960*. Kansas City: Gates Publishing Co. Multiple years published 1905-1960.

“American Dairies, Inc.: Cerophyl Laboratories (Grass Industry).” *The Kansas City Star* 8 October 1939.

“American Dairies, Inc.” *Kansas City Star* 30 May 1943.

“Butter.” *The Kansas City Post* 6 April 1923.

Cerophyl Laboratories, Inc. *Cerophyl*, Trademark No. 0702162. August 2, 1960.  
Assignee: Cerophyl Laboratories, Kansas City, Missouri. Trademark Electronic Search System. Online. Accessed January 30, 2004. <http://tess2uspto.gov>.

Cerophyl Laboratories, Inc. *Protamone*. Registration No. 0413010, April 3, 1945.  
Assignee: Cerophyl Laboratories, Kansas City, Missouri. Trademark Electronic Search System. Online. Accessed January 30, 2004. <http://tess2uspto.gov>.

Cerophyl Laboratories, Inc. *Viet*. Registration No. 0390299, September 16, 1941.  
Assignee: Cerophyl Laboratories, Kansas City, Missouri. Trademark Electronic Search System. Online. Accessed January 30, 2004. <http://tess2uspto.gov>.

“Grass Goes on the Diet List.” *The Sunday Star* 18 October 1942. Washington, D. C.

“James H. De Coursey.” *Leaders In Our Town*. Kansas City: Burd & Fletcher, 1952.

Kohler, George O. *Journal of Nutrition*, Vol. 15 No. 5, November 24, 1937.

“Lynwood H. Smith Dies.” *The Kansas City Star* 28 October 1955.

Schnabel, Charles F. “Feed.” *Patent No. 1,942,943* January 9, 1934. Washington, D.C.: United States Patent Office, 1934.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Feed and Method of Making the Same.” *Patent No. 2133362*, October 18, 1938. Washington, D.C.: United States Patent Office, 1938.

Seibold, Ronald L. *Cereal Grass: What's In It For You*. Lawrence, Kansas: Pines International, Inc., 1990.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects: Deceased*. Los Angeles: Hennessy and Ingalls, 1970 [c.1956].





# **Architectural & Historical Research LLC**

1734 Belleview Ave.      Kansas City, MO 64108      ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

## **Historic Overview:**

**The American Butter Company Building  
2438 Broadway  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri**

**Prepared for:  
The Department of Natural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Jefferson City, MO**

**and**

**DST Realty  
333 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, MO**

**Prepared by:  
Architectural and Historical Research, LLC  
1537 Belleview  
Kansas City, MO**

**August 2004**



# Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave.      Kansas City, MO 64108      ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

## **Appendix A:**

### **Photographs of the American Butter Company Building**

Exterior images by Len Fohn, Independence, Missouri

Interior images by Jeff Nichols, North Kansas City, Missouri

April 2004



# Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave.      Kansas City, MO 64108      ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
[www.arh-kc.com/reports](http://www.arh-kc.com/reports)

---

## **Appendix B:**

### **Footprints of the American Butter Company Building Level 1-4**

Architects: BNIM/CDFM2, Kansas City, Missouri



# Architectural & Historical Research LLC

1734 Belleview Ave.      Kansas City, MO 64108      ph/fx. 816.472.4154  
www.arh-kc.com/reports

---

## Appendix C:

### United States Patents

Charles F. Schnabel: No. 1,942,943, January 9, 1934

Charles F. Schnabel: No. 2,133,362, October 18, 1938

Lynwood H. Smith and Charles F. Schnabel: No. 2,189,438, February 6, 1940