

# Buckhart's Has Long, Honored History As Producer Of Candy

By Wally Trabing

If the residents along a certain section of East Cliff drive have a sweet-tooth it's probably because of the delightful aroma which floats now and then like an invisible chocolate lined cloud from the back rooms of Buckhart's 2-1231 East Cliff drive.

Buckhart's is more than a candy store. It is also a candy "factory".

When the supply runs low in front, the huge copper vats are set on the fire in the small back room and a fresh lot is on the way.

Behind the name is a tradition of candy making.

Harry and Dick Buckhart, both now deceased, opened a store in Watsonville in 1903. Harry was a native of Watsonville and worked in the candy business from the time he was 12 years of age.

In 1922, he and another brother, the late Will Buckhart, moved to Santa Cruz and opened a candy store on the corner of Pacific avenue and Lincoln street.

In 1936 the store and factory set up at the present East Cliff drive address.

Over the years the Buckharts have developed their own recipes, the majority of which they have guarded well.

A nephew, Thomas H. Regan, bought the business in 1953. He has been in the business eight years and was well trained in the Buckhart candy making methods.

Most of the candy sold there is made at the store. It is sold only at the store.

Regan said that they tend to stick with the old fashioned sweets.

Their largest item along the candy line is chocolates. They produce about 30 different kinds of chocolate candy.

Mrs. Lorena St. Clair, 126 Third avenue, has been kept busy dipping the chocolate candy for the last 10 years.

In other candy lines the store makes three different kinds of nut rolls, English toffee, old fashioned molasses taffy, two kinds of peanut brittle, an apricot nougat and lemon drops.

For their taffy a huge hook is fastened on one wall to serve as a "puller".

Around the Christmas holidays, the store always makes up a few barrels of the old fashioned Christmas "mix" which includes nine different flavors and shapes.

Remember the round hard candies with flower patterns in the center? Or the hard rectangular pieces with several stripes on top?

Regan explained that the patterns that go into this type of candy are laid on top or between layers of short blocks while still very hot, and then stretched.

The patterns spread evenly as the candy is elongated. Then it is cut into short bits.

"We make a few barrels of it and when it's gone we don't make any more until the next Christmas season," he said.

Back in the early 40s the Buckharts featured an annual taffy pull for the public. Large crowds would gather at the store to have a pull at the snaky candy.

Mrs. Elsie Buckhart, who worked some 48 years in the business with her husband, Harry, recalled that the festivities grew so large in three years that at one time she counted over 460 people trying to find space to pull taffy in the small candy making room.

"We just had to give it up. We still have youngsters who come around asking when we were going to start it up again. Their fathers must have told them about it," she said.

One of their specialties is the Victoria chocolate bar. It was developed by the Buckharts and at one time Za Zu Pitts, the famed movie star raised in this area, offered them \$2500 for the recipe.

She wanted to start her son off in a candy business, according to Mrs. Buckhart, and wanted the bar to make and sell.

Regan said that all the ingredients used in his candy making are pure. The candy is made in huge copper kettles to obtain even cooking temperatures.

Over the years the customers have found themselves yearning for Buckhart chocolate even though they are in far corners of the earth, and Buckhart's often pack boxes for different spots of Europe and Asia.

Regan buys the chocolate in 10 pound cakes. It is melted down for dipping. Each piece is individually rolled or dipped into chocolate by hand.

It is hand packed in boxes, about 30 to 70 pieces to a box depending on the size.

Regan said that the Santa Cruz area offers ideal temperatures and humidities for candy making.

He figures that over five tons of candy is made in the back room each year.

## COUNCILMEN HAVE

### "MIKE FRIGHT"

Gloversville, N.Y. (AP).—Among the New Year's resolutions adopted here was one in which the city council resolved it would not permit further radio broadcasts of its meetings. The sponsor of the resolution said members had suffered from "mike fright" and fear they would make embarrassing grammatical errors.

## SHOP IN THE GREATER SANTA CRUZ TRADING AREA

## Chocolate Dipper Keeps Busy



Mrs. Lorena St. Clair has been a chocolate dipper at Buckhart's for 10 years. She

helps with the turning out of some 300 different kinds of  
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chocolate candies. They are made in the back of the store as the demand arises.

## Gift Boxes Are Prepared



Mrs. Sadie Thayer of Buckhart's is expert at packing the attractive gift boxes with an assortment of from 50 to 70

different kinds of chocolate pieces. Her supply is spread along the top five shelves.  
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About five tons of candy is made each year by the concern which has been in Santa Cruz since 1922.