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Section Two

The Independent Record

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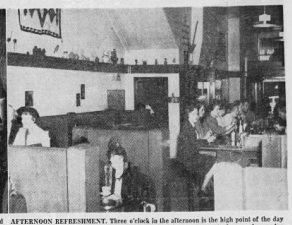
People All Over World Acquainted With Helena's Parrot

OPERATION FONDANT. Bill Post, who makes all the candy which comes from the kitchen of the Parrot, controls the massive beaters which turn cooked sugar mixtures into the creamy fondants. At the extreme left is a new type of candy cutting table. The steel slab can be adapted for either hard or soft candy as the temperature of the table is controlled by water running through pipes running underneath it. Prior to this addition in the Parrot kitchen, employes had to wait for the candy to soften or harden before paring it into bite-sized pieces.

CANDY COUNTER. Lena Peterson, right, is a friend of every Parrot candy customer and directs packing of the large number of boxed orders at the confectionary shop. She has been a Parrot employe since the store first opened here nearly 38 years ago at 32 North Main street. Finger prints on the glass show cases show the attraction the tempting displays have for children, as well as their parents, from the crisp brittles to the bonbons, caramels, fudge, chocolates, wafers and nougats. Orders are already being received for Christmas which highlights the store year.



AFTERNOON REFRESHMENT. Three o'clock in the afternoon is the high point of the day for the Parrot, when shoppers, working girls and students congregate for a soda, sundae or a cup of coffee. A portion of the green wooden booths at the Parrot were used in the former location and matched by Fred Salmen when the store was moved to its present site, following the fire of 1928. High school students have found the Parrot an ideal meeting place for many years and Mr. and Mrs. Post says the majority are courteous and considerate.

Firm Manufacturing Fine Candies Has Established Enviable Record Over Span of 30 Years

By Vi Lindley

Located on the sunny side of Main street for nearly 30 years, Helena's Parrot has retained the traits of its namesake—pride and personality.

During these years the reputation of the colorful confectionary has expanded throughout the country because of the high standards of products and service maintained by the personable owners, Mr. and Mrs. William Post.

The Posts have pride in the Parrot, as do the Helena residents who have patronized it, some for a quarter of a century. The Parrot was founded shortly after World war I, survived the major fire of 1928 and the earthquakes of 1925 and 1935 and the sugar shortages of World war II.

The personality of the Parrot is evident in the decor, which is gay, but restful. Each of the Parrot pictures throughout the shop is a story in itself, for they have been gifts from strangers and friends alike. The air of cheerfulness reflects on the customers who stop for morning coffee, an afternoon soda or a box of gift candy.

It was on April 28, 1922, that the Parrot's doors first opened at 22 North Main, a site now occupied by S&M Jewelers. Mrs. Post had had considerable experience in the confectionary business in Idaho and was working at Scott's in Great Falls, when they purchased the store here. Her husband was a telephone man, who became interested in making candy while watching the Scott employes.

The Parrot had been an epitome of Mrs. Post's since grade school days when she and her family left their ranch home for an occasional treat in a nearby town. "An ice cream and candy store was heaven and I said if I ever had my own, I'd call it the Parrot," she recalls.

Following the 1928 fire in downtown Helena, the Parrot moved to the present building, formerly occupied by Sheehan Brothers.

Some of the original booths and installations are still used and were matched at the time of the move by Fred Salmen to complete the appointments.

Even during the critical war years, there has never been a substitute in a Parrot product, the Posts can say proudly. They attribute the success of the Parrot to the fact that the best possible ingredients have been used generously—cream, butter, sugar.

Bill Post makes the entire stock of candy himself. Each day he prepares a new supply—Turkish paste, brittles, carmels and fudge, bonbons, wafers, chocolates, nougats, ice creams, syrups and even the chili which comes from the Parrot kitchen.

With installation of a type of cake-mixing machine, which will mix and cook candy at the same time, he has been able to supply items which he could not otherwise, such as the Turkish paste, which must be cooked and stirred continually for three hours.

The average batch of candy is based on 20 pounds of sugar, the veteran candy-maker reports, but in many cases the finished product will be double or closer to 40 pounds.

From the kitchen the finished candy goes to a refrigerated room, where the chocolates are dipped and all candies cooled and stored.

In another unit with controlled refrigeration the ice cream, nuts and other ingredients are kept. The owners say that candies made without butter or cream will keep as long as two years, while the chocolates remain in top condition about six weeks.

During World war II, when servicemen overseas held top priority on Parrot candy, the shop established an enviable record for satisfactory shipment to all parts of the world.

Operating on a close margin because of the sugar shortage, the Posts allotted a certain number of one and two-pound boxes each day and kept the candy counter open only a few hours. The two-pound boxes went overseas; the one-pounders were distributed on a "first come, first served" basis.

In the three decades there has been continual progress in perfection of Parrot products, their service and the plant.

Most of the progress, however, has developed from within the concern, because, as Mrs. Post says, "We were too busy to go out and see what others were doing."

CO-FOUNDER—Mrs. William Post dreamed as a small girl of owning a candy store and calling it "The Parrot." Since the store was founded here nearly 38 years ago, it has become an institution in the city for its exceptional products and service. A portion of an unusual and valuable doll collection, a hobby of Mrs. Post's, is shown in the glass show case.

DIPPING CHOCOLATES—Emma Larson, left, and Clara Woelffer have learned well the fine art of dipping chocolates. They work in a room where the temperature is controlled and after the chocolates are dipped they are dried there and stored with other candies. Without an hour one of the women can dip one of the large trays of centers. Markings on the tops of the chocolates identify the flavor for packers. The chocolate must remain at an exact degree during the dipping process to avoid greying from heat or cold.

Talks for Itself Is No Idle Motto for Parrot

The Parrot "Talks for Itself"—and in a loud voice.

In the past three decades the Helena candy has been delivered in nearly every nation of the world and during the last war, it was forwarded to servicemen from Heidelburg to Iloilo.

Mrs. Post reports that her shipping tags have been addressed to recipients in India, Germany, France, Arabia, Alaska, Wales, England, New Zealand and the Philippines.

At one time she was requested to send a box of candy air mail, special delivery in time to meet a liner leaving New York City. "The postage cost more than the candy," she recalls.

Competent Employes Are Bright Spot In Public Relations

One of the major reasons for the popularity of the Parrot is the cheerful, accomodating employes.

A favorite of Helena residents and a familiar figure at the Parrot candy counter is Lena Peterson, who has been with the Posts since they opened the first store in 1922 when she volunteered to assist in arranging the counters.

Mrs. Charles Meyer of Kenwood, then Gertrude Clark, was the first Parrot employe and Ruth Jorgenson was the first Helena High school student to be hired by the Posts under the trade relations program.

Since the Posts first started cooperating in the program about 1939, they have trained more than 25 girls and Mrs. Post says they have been disappointed in only two.

Agnes Hunter, who has been at the Parrot since about 1940, also is one of the most valuable employes with many vocations. During a week she can be found wax ing booths, painting shelves, packing candy, preparing a special sundae or parfait.

Youthful German Wants Letters From USA Family

"Yes, perhaps I am a strange boy to write a letter to you, but I think you will be a very good post office and help me," writes an 18-year-old German youth. "My greatest wish is to have a correspondence with the U. S. A."

The typewritten letter was addressed this week to Post Office Helena, Mont., by Rudiger Hoppe, whose address is: Aumuhle/Hamburg, Grauweg 1, Germany, British zone.

His letter reads in part: "You will suddenly receive this letter from Germany, you will be astonished very much and will laugh when you see why I wrote.

"My greatest wish is to have a correspondence with the U. S. A. I think you can help me. At first I must say that I am no Communist and no nominal of war. I did visit a high school in Germany and therefore I can write a little English.

"I could write a letter too in French and Swedish and of course in German. I wrote just your name and I saw on the map that you must live in a wonderful part of the U. S. A.

"I am now very interested whether you could find a pen friend for myself. (He suggests forwarding the letter to a school, a teacher or family "coming from as soon to Europe.")

". . . This year I have been in Sweden. . . . The people (there) are really very well and the Swedish girls are the most beautiful of all over the world. I think so.

"On my voyage to Sweden I met very often French, Dutch, Italian boys, but no American. Where do they travel? This year in October I will travel to Paris."

The lad later explains he is interested in technical and geographic things, all types of sports and in stamp collecting.

"But therefore I don't write this letter," he explains. "I wish to have a correspondence with a boy or a girl. The best would be with all members of an American family, I think, as I am interested in anything. Please try, I would be so glad."

Poppies were associated with the battlefields of Europe hundreds of years before World war I.

Supervised Play Suggested as "Problem" Cure

Supervised play with mothers taking turns watching small children has been suggested as an answer to "child problems" during winter women's club meetings, Florence Reissing, county home demonstration agent, said today.

Caring for small children during club meetings is a common problem, Mrs. Reissing said adding that it is necessary to give children under six years of age something to do during meetings. They can not be expected to sit quietly for several hours.

If there are several mothers in a club who have small children, each mother may take turns supervising play. Out-of-door activities for part of the afternoon is desirable. Even in cold weather children should be allowed to play outside if they are properly dressed.

A sand box, old kitchen utensils, a wagon, several small wooden or cardboard boxes and odds and ends of lumber free from nails were suggested playthings for outdoor activities.

Playthings for indoor activities should be of a quiet variety. Rubber balls, picture books, puzzles, spools, dolls and toy autos were suggested.

By contributing toys to a club toy kit, members may be assured of having ample playthings for the children at each meeting. An old suitcase or bag may be used to carry the toys. The hostess for the next meeting could take the kit home with her so they would be at the right place, Mrs. Reissing suggested. All toys should be washable, she added.

Ingredients for Creating Candy Masterpieces as Widely Representative as United Nations

Those tantalizing odors coming from the Parrot are a blending of flavors which represent as many areas of the world as the United Nations.

Sweet and subtle, the vanilla used in Parrot candy, syrups and ice cream comes from the deep interiors of Mexico and Madagascar, while the basic sugar to satisfy Helena sweet tooths is grown in Montana sugar beet fields.

Although the scores of nuts and flavors, which add that touch of distinction to each Parrot goodie, are purchased through a wholesale house, many of the products arrive in native-made boxes, such as the Brazil nuts which are shipped from South America in crude mahogany boxes or the cashews from the west coast of India which arrive in tin containers inside hand-sawed wooden crates.

Orange, lemon, lime, peppermint, walnuts, pecans and peanuts originate in the United States, but the pistachios find their way to the Parrot from Iraq and Iran and the filberts come from mystic Turkey.

Rich, creamy chocolate, light or dark, is a product of South Africa. Light chocolate, Bill Post explains, is the result of adding powdered milk to the dark variety.

Cocoanut used in a variety of Parrot products is grown in the Philippines and Samoa, while the rose flavoring used for rose bons bons is an expensive product of Turkey.

"You can see how world conditions effect the Parrot," Bill Post grins, gazing at the map of the two hemispheres which he keeps in the back room.

An outstanding example of the global influence occurred in recent years when the Posts received their orders of nuts from Arabia in Mobile oil cans. Washed before the return trip, the cans bore the legend "Motor Spirits, Product of North America."

Window Decorations Gain Nationwide Renown for Artistry

Indian summer with autumn leaves and native dells from the ozoil for the current window at the Parrot.

Cumulatively, the windows at the Parrot, which are decorated by Mrs. Post, are among the outstanding in the northwest and she has been asked by major concerns for her ideas and to obtain materials for replicas in larger cities.

With taste and originality, many of the leaves, weeds, cones and flowers of the Helena region are artfully blended by the artistic owner.

Always seasonal, the display varies from bridal scenes to ice skating parties, Oriental courts and scenes of spring.

Wesleyan Service Guild

Wesleyan Service guild of St. Paul's Methodist church will meet in the church at 8 o'clock Friday night. "Latin American Welfare" will be discussed and Opal M. Crook will lead devotions. Hostesses will be Elma and Fern Worthingham.

New Mexico ranks second in zinc production among the western states.

CANDY KETTLE—Turkish paste, one of the Parrot delicacies, must be cooked and stirred continually for three hours. This Hobart candy machine has made the production of such candies possible. Large beaters operate in the copper bowl and the flame underneath is on a swivel arm, so it can be applied or removed as the temperature demands.

Elephant Collection Always Attracts Visitors in Helena

The collection of elephants displayed at the Parrot should bring good luck to the scores of customers who view them each day. The majority of the four dozen pachyderms have their trunks turned upward!

Mrs. Post has always liked elephant miniatures and started her collection with only a few pieces. The remainder of the herd has been gifts.

Friends from all parts of the country have sent additions to the collection including ex-Mayor John J. Haytin and Jeweler Jack Chivers, who presented an 18 inch ivory specimen contained in a seal. The Price second hand store, the Rev. David Donnan, former pastor of the First Presbyterian church here, who has been a resident of Pasadena since the early 1930s, are other contributors.

20 Years Ago

What Helena People Were Doing in 1931

Appointment of James N. Templer, formerly assistant supervisor of the Deer Lodge national forest, as supervisor of the Helena forest was announced by Regional Forester Evan W. Kelley of Missoula.

Templer was to succeed L. C. Hartt, who had been placed in charge of range experiment work at Missoula regional headquarters.

St. Peter's hospital school of nursing graduated four students at its 19th annual commencement at the Episcopal church. Graduates were Mildred Anna Faurote of Great Falls, Margaret Edith Brundage of Butte, Lillian Bates Pierce of Denton and Dorothea Louise Miller of East Helena.

Norman Walker was the only Helena man to pledge a fraternity at the state college at Bozeman. He became a pledge of Kappa Sigma.

Colors had been chosen for Montana's 1932 license plates. The tags were to have white numbers on a black background.

Mrs. William Ashton Harrison, representing some eight Helena organizations. Mrs. George Cordey was re-elected president and Mrs. John Lagenbach, secretary-treasurer.

Billie Burke charmed her Helena audience when she appeared on the stage play, "The Vinegar Tree," at the Marlow theater. A Montanan, James Elliston, formerly of Valier and Stanford, was in the supporting cast.

On the screen at local theaters during the week were Constance Bennett and Joel McCrea in "Born to Love," Lew Ayres in "The Doorway to Hell" and Jack Oakie in "Sea Legs."

Two big news stories hit the front pages of Helena newspapers in one day, Al Capone, Chicago's notorious gang character, was convicted by a federal court jury on five of 23 counts charging violation of income tax laws.

And death ended the long career of a famed inventor, Thomas Alva Edison, generally conceded to be the greatest inventor of modern times.

The electrical wizard, who invented the incandescent lamp, the phonograph and moving pictures machines, died at the age of 84 at West Orange, N. J.

Channel Guild

The first study meeting of Channel guild of St. Peter's procathedral will be held at 2:30 o'clock tomorrow afternoon in the guild hall. Miss Blanche Newell will be program leader, discussing the prophet, Ezekiel. The current study course concerns the lives of prophets.

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