

Brown & Haley and Johnson Candy Company

The co-owners of Brown and Haley Candy Company joined forces in 1912, as the founders of the Oriole Candy Company. Henry L. Brown originally owned a small confectionary and Jonathan Clifford Haley was a businessman with strong sales expertise. Eventually the company's name changed to Brown and Haley. While the name changed, the company has remained at 108-16 East 26th Street, a former shoe factory.

Sales were strong during World War I, but dwindled after the war, leading the dynamic pair to invent new products. Almond Roca, created in 1923, helped solidify the company's presence. The tin packaging made the treats easy to distribute and the company eventually signed a contract with the U.S. War Department to supply Almond Roca to soldiers stationed overseas. Almost 75 percent of their Almond Roca sales went overseas during the war.

The Johnson Candy Company, at 924 MLK Way, was started by Russell and Irene Johnson in 1949. The building is less than a block from an earlier (1918) Johnson-owned family ice cream store. When Ron Johnson took over the business from his father during 1925 he focused strictly on candy making. During the 1950s the company wholesaled to four states. Currently the majority of their candy is sold from the store, and they wholesale to a few local drug stores, McChord Air Force Base and Fort Lewis. Some of the equipment in the store is from the 1930s and many chocolates are still hand-dipped.



Brown & Haley Candy Company Manufacturing Building,
108-16 East 26th Street, circa 1948.

Tacoma Public Library, Chapin Bowen Collection, 6927



Candy packing machine at the Brown & Haley plant, 1946.

Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection, A32928-2

Cover Photo: Johnson Candy Company, 924 MLK Way.

Researched by:

Tarjei Bryn, Andrew Deem, Will Deuring,
Slater Kuykendall, Kelsie Moore, Ho Duoung Nguyn,
Andrea Peace, Joseph Perez, Peter Sebersen,
Caleb Seiler, and Sonia Singh

Under the supervision of:

Caroline T. Swope, Ph.D.,
Pacific Lutheran University

Designed and Edited by:

Erin E. Clarkson

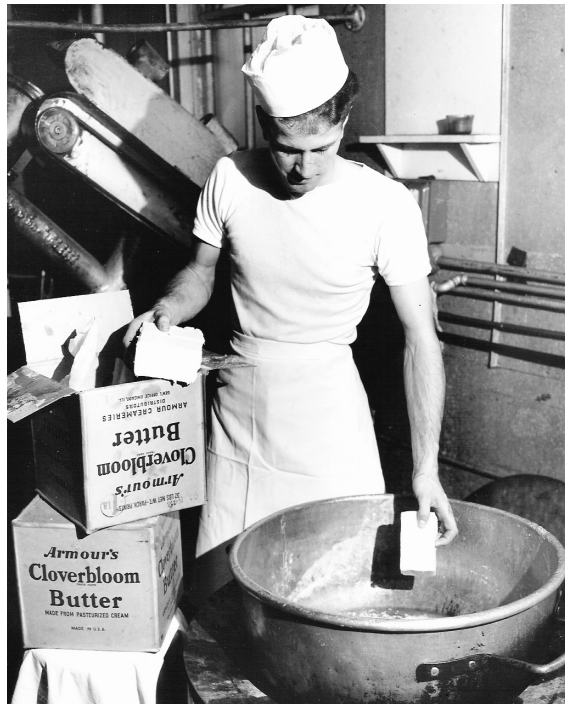
Sponsored by:

Historic Tacoma
&

Pacific Lutheran University
First Year Experience, Fall 2008

TACOMA SWEETS: A Confectionary History





Making candy at Brown & Haley, 1948.

Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection, D25094-5

Tacoma had several soft drink, candy, ice cream, and doughnut companies at the turn of the century. The Puget Sound area was a particular favorite of sweet makers in the days before climate controlled interiors, due to moderate winters, cool summers, and a sea level altitude. Another advantage for Tacoma confectioners was the Port of Tacoma, which could easily supply the sugar, spices, fruits, and cocoa beans necessary for the industries.

The close proximity of Tacoma to Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base helped numerous sugar based industries thrive in the early 20th century. During World War I the U.S. Army Quartermaster commissioned various American chocolate manufacturers to provide twenty and forty pound bars of chocolate that were shipped abroad, broken into smaller pieces and distributed to the troops. Eventually the confectionary companies created smaller bars and returning soldiers continued to fuel the demand for pre-made candy and other sweet products. During the prohibition years soft drink companies thrived as well.

Hoyt Doughnut and House of Doughnuts

Brothers James and Leshar Hoyt took the family doughnut hobby to a new level with the establishment of the Hoyt Doughnut Company in 1911. The company was originally located at 615 South Fife, but relocated to 2410 6th Avenue by 1917. The store produced both wholesale baked goods and had a retail counter. Hoyt Doughnut Company produced around 1,200 dozen doughnuts a day, with production peaking at more than 5,000 dozen doughnuts, 600 dozen cookies, and 4,000 cakes a day during World War II. Leshar used to joke that the 91st Division was so successful overseas because he filled the men with so many doughnut "holes" when they were at Fort Lewis that they didn't have room for any caused by bullets.

Dedicated employees helped the store's success—and Leshar worked for thirty-seven days straight with only one five-day vacation. Worker Ernie A. Rice held the world record for making 1,100 dozen doughnuts in one eleven-hour shift. A part of the company since its founding, Rice eventually purchased the company in 1947. When he retired in 1959 the company closed its doors.

House of Doughnuts, originally located at 1524 Tacoma Avenue South, was started by retired jet instructor, Kendall Clement. Kendall, believing that people buy more doughnuts when it rains, decided that Tacoma's misty Puget Sound climate would be perfect for his business venture. His first store was located at 1524 Tacoma Avenue South, where more than twenty different varieties were produced, including boysenberry and lemon filled, cherry, banana, orange, strawberry, and the always popular plain. Day-old products were donated to the Veterans Hospital, church organizations, rest homes, and the police and fire departments. Clement's business grew to include other franchises including one in Lakewood, three stores in Seattle and one in Renton. Did the rain make a difference? Hard to say, but during a particularly rainy month, his six franchises sold eight tons of doughnuts!

Whistle Bottling Company and Columbia Brewing Company

Brothers Phillip and William Cammarano established the Whistle Bottling Company in 1921. By 1926 the family-run business produced more than 30,000 bottles of soda a day. Some of their most popular flavors were ginger ale, a lemon soda called "Up," Double Cola, and Mission Orange. The company has occupied several sites, including 301 East 25th Street and 2314-18 A Street.

German immigrant Emil Kleise established the Columbia Brewing Company in 1900. The company, first located at South 22nd and C Street, originally sold both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. However production changed during the prohibition years, (1916–1932) and the company focused on non-alcoholic favorites including Birch Beer, Chocolate Soldier, Blue Jay (a grape drink), and Alt Heidelberg Ginger Ale. After prohibition ended the company resumed alcohol production. The Columbia name changed to the Heidelberg Brewing Company in 1949. The company's building complex, at 2120 South C Street, was constructed in 1900; a wooden building designed by well known Tacoma architect Charles Darmer. Substantial portions of the current building date from the 1950s and 1960s. The plant was closed in 1979.



Ernie Rice, owner of Hoyt's Doughnut Shop at 2412 6th Avenue, 1948.

Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection, D37141-1