CAMPBELLFORD CENTENNIAL MEMORIES

The Candy Factory

By Francis Long

Everything had to be carried upstairs at our store, 100 lb bags of brown or white sugar, and spanish peanuts or cases of walnuts. At the top of the stairs was a skylight, and a hallway 50' long with three rooms on each side. To your right in the hall was a starch bin, a wooden coffin-like box 3 ft. by 8 ft. supported by 15 inch legs. On shelves were 24 starch trays, 4 ft. by 16 in. and a row of sticks with 6 plaster moulds to make impressions in the starch to fill with soft candy.

Inside the door to the "boiling room" on your left was the candy hook, at eye level, and glucose barrel (heavy white corn syrup), and in the corner an assortment of 1 in. steel bars. On your right was the candy "furnace" an hour-glass stove, 2 ft. high, with 6-2 in. concentric lid rings, to accommodate different size kettles. There were 6 copper kettles 15 inches to 33 inches. Most used was the 24 inch one. Central over the stove was a large copper funnel hood that took the steam through the roof. Centre of the room were two slabs. The larger steel slab had a water pipe and water could be circulated between the top and bottom for cooling. The other slab was of marble. On the left wall was a section of tongue and groove bins for sugar, peanuts, etc. The hinged lids came down to make a perch for a young boy to sit and watch his father at work. Along the front wall at the two front windows was a work table 20 inches high. On the right wall was the spinning table, hardwood flooring, 2 ft. wide, with a metal covering at the left end, and a jacket heater with 4 electric toasters to keep the candy warm, if necessary. The candy was cooked over a coal fire, and poured on the greased steel slab with steel bars around it. When cooled, the fair taffy was bunched up and pulled on the hook, taken over to the spinning table and cut in bars with large heavy candy shears. Fudges were poured on paper on fudge boards. A candy thermometer was used-240 degrees for fudges and fondants, 260 for taffy and caramels, 295 to 300 for hard candies. To make candy canes, a 25 lb batch, one would use 2/3 white sugar, 1/3 glucose, and 2 quarts of water, and heat them to 300 degrees. The batch would then be cooled on the steel slab. Most of it was pulled white on the candy hook, with the remainder coloured red. Red strips were embedded in the white, and the candy spun out as desired and cut to size, giving a twist to the stripes. My mother was the candy cane "crooker" who moulded all of the candy canes we made.

A door at the front left led over the stair landing to the "dipping" room. On the right in this area was the "flavour cabinet" with flavours and colours. On the left were shelves of machines to make candy drops by cranking them through brass rollers.

In the "dipping" room was the dipping table, a wooden table about 5 foot square, with a centre well and double boiler heated by electric. The chocolate pan in the middle was about 8 inches deep. On either side of the table was a marble slab about 15 inches square, where you sat in a chair and dipped the candies. There were storage shelves all around the room, and a long table to spread the dipping papers of chocolates to set.

The third room was the “office” with a large desk, a typewriter desk, a day bed and filing cabinet, heated by electric radiator, and cooled by a window air-conditioner. Here is where I did my home-work, and dad practiced his magic tricks.

On the river side was the bathroom, the north store room with “the rack”, a wooden case of shelves and trays for candy. The south storeroom looked towards the water, and there was a set of trap-doors and a 6-rope pulley to pull up the 465 lb. barrels of glucose.

That is your tour of the rooms over our restaurant. As kids we put a lot of sticks into all-day suckers, and packed them into boxes of 72. It was said that when we had a store in Brighton, ‘we had the sucker trade’ of Brighton. Those were the days!

Remember all the things that happened in the past 100 years during the town’s Centennial Year in 2006.