



KNOX BAKERY
540 EAST STATE STREET, KNOX, PA 16232
(814) 797-1154

This month I wish to put the spotlight on another one of the great legacy businesses in our town, the KNOX BAKERY. Folks from our vast area have been coming to Knox for nearly a century now getting their baked goods from this staple in our community. EVERYONE LOVES the KNOX BAKERY!

Lots of history with this bakery over the years. I must say when I went into the work area for this interview process, I was amazed seeing all the baking equipment & the HUGE vintage oven that was built in Battle Creek Michigan by the Bennett Oven Company. This oven dwarfs the entire back wall, it actually makes up the backside of the building. The inside of the oven is 12 feet by 12 feet square, it's really something to see! I could just feel the energy in that room, a great vibe....very impressive seeing all the tools of the trade there, some vintage / some new, all in a very clean working atmosphere. There has never been any other source of heat for the building other than the actual baking oven itself. That oven heats the entire building year round.

William Henry (Harry) Dascombe established the Knox Bakery in 1921. Harry baked Bread, Rolls, & Cinnamon Rolls which he delivered to the Knox, Fryburg and Oil City areas in his truck that had "Knox Bakery" painted on the side. It's been told that Harry actually delivered bread to the flood victims of the second Johnstown Flood in March of 1936. Later in the 1940's, Harry rented this bakery out to the Grady family, who operated the Knox Bakery until 1951, then Carl Allmendinger comes into the picture.

Carl Allmendinger was a German Immigrant who came to Knox from the Pittsburgh area. Carl operated the CLOVER store in Wentlings Corners when he first came to the area, then in 1951 he bought the Knox Bakery from Harry Dascombe. Carl was a master baker who worked the craft in Pittsburgh with his

friend Bill Henderson, another master baker. Carl owned & operated the Knox Bakery until he retired in 1969. The Knox Bakery then was closed for 6 months until Ed Bagley Jr. came into the picture.

Ed Bagley served in the Coast Guard in his early years, then went to Baking Trade School in Pittsburgh and ended up working for Bill Henderson, the same Bill Henderson who was friends with Carl Allmendinger. Bill alerted Ed that the bakery in Knox was for sale, and it was then on Bill Henderson's word to Carl that Ed Bagley was a worthy man to sell the business to. By this time Ed was also a master baker and proved to be a great owner / operator for the Knox Bakery. It should be noted, there was an apartment upstairs in this bakery thru these years, a woman named Nell Monrean lived there for many years. When Carl sold the business to Ed, he told him "Nell" is part of the deal! She continued living there for years.....

The Knox Bakery under Ed Bagley grew over the years, many may remember some of the local people who worked there with Ed. The short list includes Peggy Wetzal, Louise Switzer, Bonnie Hahn, Soni Mays and on September 2nd 1981 a young lady named Leonore Landers responded to a "help wanted" sign on the bakery there, and two days later Leonore was hired. This was her first job after graduating in June - 1981 from AC Valley High School. The first thing Ed told Leonore was: "That Name Is TOO Long" and promptly renamed her "Lee" and it stuck ever since. This Leonore Landers I'm referring to is now the present day owner and operator of the Knox Bakery we all know as "Lee Landers Stewart"

Lee puts in many hours of hard work owning & operating the Knox Bakery these days. She typically goes in around 1AM and is usually there till 3:30PM on her workdays. Lee still uses the same formulas, mixes and exact art technique she learned from working with master baker Ed Bagley Jr. as an apprentice. Lee showed me the "Butter Cookie Dough" recipe they have used at the Knox Bakery since the early 50's with Carl, she makes all her specialty holiday cookies from this recipe and folks come from miles around to buy them. When you talk with Lee about baking, she really believes in the "old school" master baking technique and applauds her mentor Ed Bagley who taught her this fine art. Daily she features a nice variety of yummy stuff there, the breads, cupcakes, cookies, buns...The Knox Bakery has made hoagie buns for the Pizza Shop here in Knox since the Pizza Shop opened in 1977. Lee always takes special orders for any of her items, she tells me no order is too small, or too large. She has continued the great legacy of service & quality this bakery has been famous for since it opened in 1921. Every year around Christmas time the Knox Bakery still produces the Hand Drop Chocolates, and all those other specialty seasonal items. Lee does close the Knox Bakery every year from Christmas Day, till the Valentines week in February.

In April of 1989, Ed Bagley Jr suffered a heart attack and sadly died later that year on July 12th, 1989. It was during this time frame that Ed & Lee discussed the bakery's future. They had a great professional working relationship with lots of respect for each other. Ed Bagley's wish was for Knox to continue to have this great bakery with Lee owning & operating it. We are all glad it worked out, Knox is a better place with Lee Landers Stewart & the Knox Bakery.

We all say THANKS to Lee for being the great merchant you are in our town. Long Live the KNOX BAKERY!