

Unions

The baking industry in the state of New York has a long history, beginning with the formation of the Journeymen Bakers Union of New York formed in 1880. Approximately 3,200 bakers joined the new union including a large percentage of German bakers. The union was formed to improve the working conditions for the bakers which at the time had an average work week estimated to be 108 hours, or to break the days down, bakers usually worked 16 hours a day Monday through Friday, 23 hours on Saturday and 5 hours on Sunday (p. 1). Many bakers would sleep in the back rooms on beds made out of rags, and suffered from rheumatism, baker's asthma and other ailments due to the working conditions. A year after the formation of the Journeymen Bakers Union of New York the first strike started on May 2, 1881. As a result of this strike, bakers were able to reduce their hours to 12 hours a day during the week and 14 on Saturday. (p. 2) Less than three dozen bakers were unionized in 1884 (p. 5). By the end of that year the number of German bakers had increased to 700 in New York and Brooklyn. English speaking bakers had a separate union. A convention was held on January 13, 1886 to formally establish a national bakers union. The union was first called the "National Union of German Bakers" by the press. (p. 6). At the convention The Journeymen Bakers National Union of the United States was established with the goal of reducing the average workday (p.7). New York City became the seat of the National Executive Committee. The official journal of the organization was *Deutsche-Amerikanische Baeckerzeitung* which later changed its name to *Bakers Journal* and was published in both English and German. (p. 7). Today there are five locals of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Works and Grain Millers International Union in New York State. Local 3 representing Greater New York; Local 16 representing Buffalo New York, Local 50 located in Spotswood NJ representing New York; Local 69 – Porchester, NY; Local 116 – Syracuse, NY which merged with Local 802 – Cicktowaga, NY on May 1, 2003. Consolidation in the baking industry has caused membership in unions in the state to decline as non-union companies acquire union companies. (per conversation with James Short's secretary Patty).

Early baking companies

One of the largest baking companies at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ward Baking Company and its founding family the Wards, have deep roots in the state of New York. George Ward's father, Hugh started a one-oven shop in 1849, on Broom Street in New York City. He sold the shop when gold was discovered in California.¹ Fifty years later, in 1900 another Ward, Robert B. Ward organized The Ward Bread Company in New York, Brooklyn and Newark. Eleven years later the Ward Baking Company was organized merging the Ward Mackey Company, the Ward Corby Company, the Ward Bread Company, and the Ohio Baking Company of Cleveland.² The new company was incorporated in New York State.³ The Ward Baking Company was the original owner of the Arkady Yeast business that was sold to Fleischmann Company on April 26, 1924.⁴ In 1926, William W. Ward donated 160 acres of land and \$1,000,000 to the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. The property was named Ward Haven because it was donated in the memory of Robert Boyd Ward, the father of William B. The plan for the property was that it was to be used for the aged.⁵ Before the property was renamed Ward Haven, it had been known as Almont and included Cruger Island.⁶ <<William Ward launched United Bakeries in 1922. United Bakeries, acquired Campbell Baking Company of Kansas City, Shults of New York, and Ward Baking Company in New York. x p. 89-90, Kaufman, Stuart B. A Vision of Unity, c1986). In 1924, William Ward formed the Continental Baking Company of Maryland. The new company acquired General Baking Company and the name was changed to Ward Food Products Corporation but on April 3, 1926 Ward Food Products Corporation was dissolved by the Justice Department into three "independent corporations" Continental Baking, General Baking and Ward Baking Co.. (p. 90, A Vision of Unity).

In 1941, Ward Baking Company became one of the first companies to enrich bread. The company introduced New Tip-Top Bread on June 3, 1952. This new bread doubled the calcium content and contained 1/3 more milk solids. The company was able to change its bread formula with the addition of the new ingredients without increasing the product costs.¹¹ The New York City headquarters of Ward Baking Company was eliminated during a company reorganization in 1974.⁷ The company left the baking business entirely in 1981, when it sold the last of its baking operations to Interstate Brands Corp.⁸ In 1924, George Ward's son, Ralph, became the president of Drake Bakeries, a position which he held until his death in 1953.⁹ Drake Bakeries is another bakery that is now owned by Interstate Bakeries Inc. The company is known for their snack cakes including Devil Dogs, Yankee Doodles and Ring Dings.¹⁰

Other early baking companies incorporated in the state of New York include Tri-State Baking Company in 1919¹⁴, later absorbed by Purity Baking Co.;¹⁵ and Cushman Sons, Inc. in 1914 that combined 40 stores in the New York City area.¹⁶ *In 1924, The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company expanded its store delivery to 14,000 stores which included 60 stores that received deliveries from its plant in Rochester (Kaufman, Stuart Bruce. A Vision of Unity: History of the Bakery & Confectionery Workers International Union, p. 90.)*

Significant events to the baking history in New York was Adolph Levitt's invention of an automatic donut machine that formed Levitt's Donut Machine Corp, which later changed its name to DCA Industries.¹⁷ This baking milestone can be added to the 1673 opening of the first donut shop in New York City by Mrs. Anna Joralemon,¹⁸ and the 1949 retirement of Lt. Col. Helen Purviance, the Salvation Army's original doughnut girl who is reported to have handed out more than 1 million doughnuts to soldiers in France during World War I. Lt. Col. Purviance was appointed the chief aide officer for women at the training college in the Bronx.¹⁹

In 1931, there were over 600 Jewish retail bakeries in New York.²⁰ One of the largest then was the B. Manischewitz Co., known for its matzo bread. At that time the company sold 15 whole wheat matzos for the price of 16 cents a lb. Other products that Jewish Bakeries produce include bagels, hamanstach, and Passover cake. The company was founded in 1888, and has now become one of the largest producers of Kosher foods in the nation²¹ with annual sales of over \$60.5 million.²² Another Jewish Bakery with roots in New York is Lenders Bagel Bakery. The company was founded by Harry Lender, who arrived in New York in 1927. He took a job at a bagel bakery in Passaic, NJ and saved his money to bring his family to the United States from Poland ("Marking 30 Years in Frozens, Lender's Renews Quest to 'Bagelize America.'" Frozen Food Age, p. 33-34, 36, 38,40,42, 44-46). In 1938, Harry bought a bread bakery on Oak Street in New Haven which he called the New York Bagel Bakery the company later changed its name to Lenders Bagels. In 1976, Lenders acquired Abel's Bagels located in Buffalo marking the companies only acquisition. (ibid, p. 40). The company was the leader in the automation of bagels and was the first to freeze and distribute frozen bagels. Lenders Bagel Bakery was sold to Kraft in 1984, Kraft later sold the company to Kellogg in 1996 who sold the company to Aurora Foods Inc. in November 1999. (Aurora Foods Inc.'s website located at www.aurorafoods.com)

Over the past several years due to consolidation in the baking industry the number of wholesale companies have decreased. Nationally, there were 1,917 wholesale baking plants in 1986²⁵ with the number declining to 1887 in 2000²⁶ The top ten baking companies at the end of 2000 were Frito-Lay, Inc., National Biscuit Co., Interstate Bakeries Corp., Grupo Industrial Bimbo, S.A. de CA, Keebler Foods Co., Bestfoods, Baking Co, The Earthgrains Co, The Pillsbury Co., Weston Bakeries, Limited/ReadyBake Foods, and Flowers Bakeries²⁷ Two companies in the state that have been effected by these consolidations are the National Biscuit Company and Lender's Bagel Bakery.

The National Biscuit Company was formed during a meeting that occurred on February 3, 1898, in the New Jersey law offices of James B. Vredenburg. Attending the meeting was Mr. Vredenburg, his partner, Abram Q. Garretson, and Shelby V. Timberbake, the sales manager of American Biscuit & Manufacturing Company. The purpose of the meeting was to form a merger in the biscuit industry. It was decided that the new company would be named National Biscuit Company (p.56-67). Over 100 (114) bakeries from the New York Biscuit Company, The American Biscuit & Manufacturing Company, United States Bakery, the Decatur Biscuit Company, Hamilton company, and the National Baking Company merged to form the company. Nineteen of the bakeries in the newly formed National Biscuit Company were from the state of New York. The headquarters of the new business was at 205 LaSalle Street in Chicago, IL. The bakeries that had merged together had a diverse group of products that they produced. Alolphus W. Green decided that the first national product that his company would produce would be a soda cracker (biscuit). On September 6, 1898 he decided to call his soda cracker Uneeda. On December 27, 1898 he registered the name Uneeda with the United States Patent Office. Many changes have occurred at Nabisco over the years, the company was sold by the tobacco company RJ Reynolds to Kraft foods in December 2000. (Company capsule on Hoovers Online website located at www.hoovers.com)

Education opportunities

Educational opportunities for bakers in New York have been varied. In April 1929, The Fleischmann's Traveling School of Baking held classes in New York City. The traveling school held classes in larger cities in order to educate as many bakers in one location as possible. The school delivered classes over a two-week period of time. Students had to attend eight of the ten classes offered to graduate from the program.²⁸ Today, bakers can be trained at several facilities in the state including the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park; the Art Institute of New York City; The French Culinary Institute in New York City and the Artisan Baking Center in Long Island City, Queens.²⁹ Some individuals have left the state to receive their baking training. There have been 133 graduates from the resident courses in Baking Science and Technology and Maintenance Engineering from the American Institute of Baking in Manhattan, KS. 47% of those graduates were from the New York City area, the remaining graduates represent the rest of the state.³⁰

Trends

The state of New York has followed the national trend with a 34% decrease for jobs in the manufacturing sector observed from 1986 to 2000.³¹ While the number of companies in the wholesale baking industry have decreased, the number of retail companies have increased, with a 36% growth reported in the state of New York.³² By the end of 2000, there were 1,365 wholesale and retail baking companies employing 12,414 individuals in New York City.³³

Footnotes:

¹ "The public responsibility of the baker of bread," McClure's Magazine, June 1925, p. 86-99.

² <find source < - see Chronology of the Ward family and Ward Baking Company compiled by Tammy Popejoy AIB Information Services, November 1996 (updated October 1997)

³Alsberg, Carl L. Combination in the American bread-baking industry: with some observations on the mergers of 1924-25.

⁴ Bakers Weekly, April 24, 1924, p. 69

⁵ "Ward Haven," The Northwestern Miller, January 27, 1926

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "How a brand new development in the baking industry came to be." Press release from the J. Walter Thompson Company, New York City.

"Ward decentralizes baking operations," Milling & Baking News, December 31, 1974, p. 10

"Ward Foods completes its withdrawal from baking." Milling & Baking News, January 20, 1981, p. 8.

¹⁰ "Ralph D. Ward, 1889-1953." Baking Industry, January 31, 1953, p.36

- ¹¹ “Rebirth of a Legend.” Snack Food, February 1995, p. 27.
- ¹² Alsberg, Carl L. Combination in the American bread-baking industry: with some observations on the mergers of 1924-25, p. 132.
- ¹³ Ibid, p. 133.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, p. 134.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, p. 134.
- ¹⁶ Ibid, p. 135.
- ¹⁷ “Baking’s German heritage: doing America proud for 300 years: Donuts to dollars”, Milling & Baking News
- ¹⁸ Better Food, March 1947, p. 50-51.
- ¹⁹ The American Baker, July 1949
- ²⁰ The Northwestern Miller and the American Baker, May 27, 1931, p. 576.
- ²¹ B. Manischewitz Company website at www.manischewitz.com
- ²² Company Capsule for the B. Manischewitz Company located at www.hoovers.com
- ²³ The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union website located at: www.bctgm.org
- ²⁴ <Find Source>
- ²⁵ Bakery Production and Marketing Redbook 1987, p. 40.
- ²⁶ Bakery Production and Marketing Redbook 2001, p.50
- ²⁷ Ibid, p. 56
- ²⁸ Baker’s Weekly, October 22, 1927
- ²⁹ Partial list of New York Cooking schools found listed in Shaw Guides at www.shawguides.com
- ³⁰ American Institute of Baking, registration records.
- ³¹ “Baked in New York: special report to the Consortium for Worker Education and the Artisan Baking Center,” February 2002, p.4.
- ³² *ibid*, p. 6.
- ³³ *ibid*.

