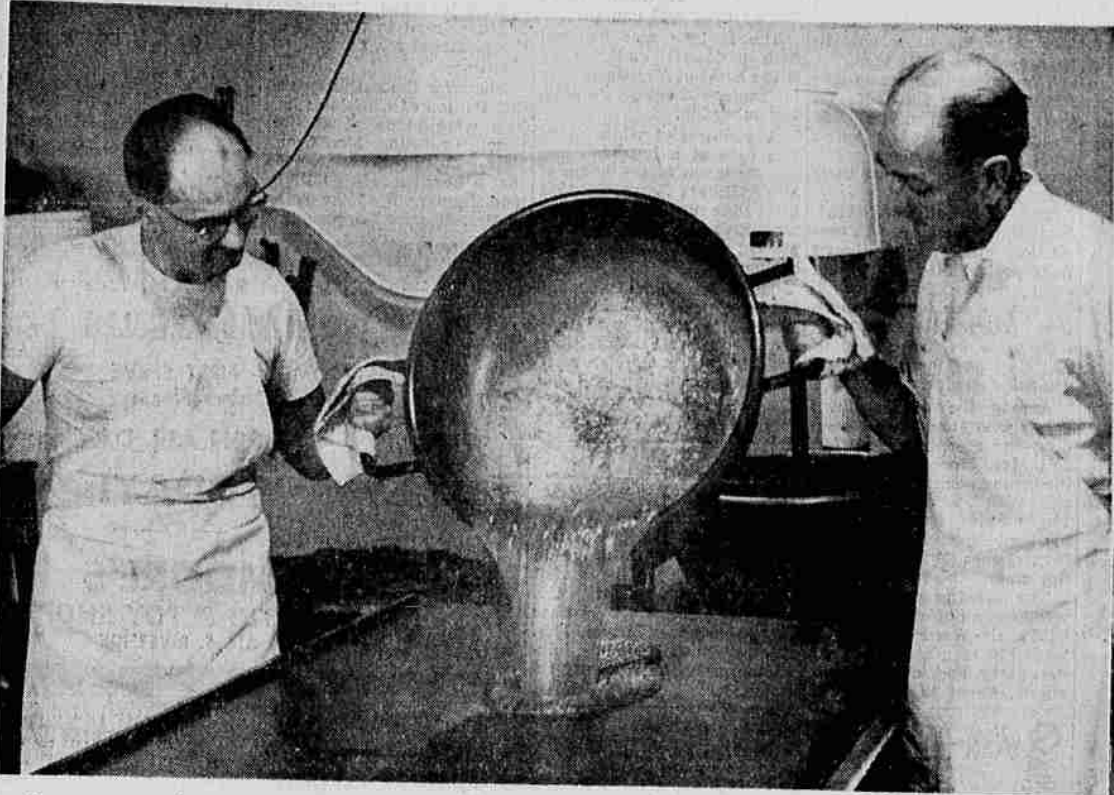


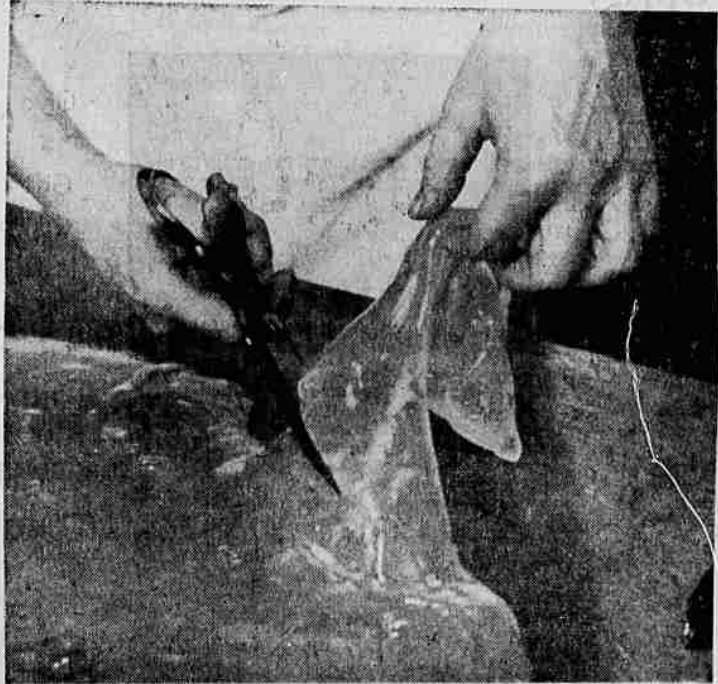
Christmas Canes



First step in making a Christmas candy cane is to cook the sugar and other ingredients for a hard candy formula over a hot fire; when the correct consistency is reached, the batch is poured on to a greased steel table to cool and triple-strength extract of mint oil added.



Here Kenneth Severson "pulls" the candy, using a large hook on the wall. This helps the air bubbles to escape, making a loud popping noise. Correctly made, the completed candy is hard, dry and glossy. This batch weighed about 35 pounds and the pulling is hard work.



Using a pair of scissors, a portion of the batch was cut off and colored a deep red to be used for the stripes in the canes. The two men explained that each candy maker, or firm, adopts a stripe pattern which he always uses. The Severson canes always have four narrow and one wide red stripes.



The Kenneth Severson's two children, Kenny, 7 and Sandra, 10, are just like all children—they love to eat peppermint candy canes. Each Christmas season the Seversons make and sell about 3,000 of the canes. Of this number, most will be the size pictured here—just right for the youngsters to eat. Both the small and the large canes make colorful and attractive decorations for tables or trees and are a favorite small gift for youngsters.

A treat for children everywhere are the sweet, gaily-striped red and white candy canes which are a part of traditional Christmas feasting in this country. They are sold by the million—from tiny ones only a couple of inches long to giants of two or three feet. Most are now machine-made, but one Medford firm, Severson's, still makes this confection by hand at their shop, 132 West Main street. When Kenneth Severson and his father, Henry, made a batch last week, Mail Tribune Photographer Robert Vroman set up lights and camera and took pictures.



Working in front of an open hot gas flame in order that the candy will not cool too rapidly, the younger Mr. Severson assembles portions in alternating red and white for the stripes. Correct timing and quickness are essential throughout the project; if the batch gets below 240 degrees, the candy is spoiled and cannot be used. A bit of water helps the red and white strips cling together, and they are formed into a loaf or block.



Transferring the entire batch to a long, clean table, Kenneth Severson begins the delicate and precise task of pulling the candy out to the correct thickness. Pushing with one hand and pulling with the other, Mr. Severson runs the twist between the base of his thumb and forefinger, forcing it to the exact size wanted. A small stick is used to measure the correct length, and the candy is cut into pieces with scissors.

Working swiftly in order to keep up with his son, Henry Severson picks up a severed piece of candy and deftly folds the top for the crook and there it is—a pretty red and white cane. The two men are careful to see that the ends of each cane are sliced off at a pleasing angle. The finished canes are laid out in neat rows, and when completely dry and hard, will be put into cellophane coverings.