

Chiloquin Baker Proves Expert At Baking And Decorating Fancy Cakes

By DARLENE WOLFF
If you've seen an extremely beautiful ornate cake recently, it's likely that Johnny decorated it. Chiloquin is as well known for fancy cakes these days as for lumber, cattle or the Panther basketball team.

In 1925 John Acomb, a young Salt Lake City high school graduate, appeared in the bay area with a keen desire to be a baker. He became one—the hard but effective way. He learned by doing. Working as an unpaid apprentice, Johnny made the rounds of bakeries learning the specialty of each shop. The knack of French bread came from a French concern, an unusual cookie recipe from a pastry shop, the trick of pie crust from a bakery which specialized in pies.

Cakes which delighted the eye as well as the palate were an early interest of Johnny's. He had done more than the average amount of casual drawing in school, and art was a favorite subject during his early years. The ability to create was turned into sugary channels as he learned the intricacies of flowers, terraces, lettering and scrolls done in frosting rather than in charcoal, water colors, or oils. Before long, the young baker was ranking with the top notch decorators of San Francisco.

450 Pies
Making pastries rather than the staff of life, Johnny worked in some of the finest restaurants, hotels and bakeries in the bay district. One of his favorite stories about his baking career concerns an incident in Oakland. He was employed in a pastry shop as head man of an oven capable of baking 450 pies at one time. A capacity number of "loaded" shells was placed for baking and the oven man went across the street for a cup of

It was during these years that Acomb's interest in this district grew because of scenery, climate, but mostly the hunting and fishing. One day he visited the Electric bakery in Chiloquin, which had been owned and managed for nearly 20 years by Henry Wolff but was then up for sale. An order for a large Red Cross benefit cake had come in late and Wolff was detained at his ranch. Johnny pitched in and decorated his first Klamath county cake.

In October, 1942, Acomb took over the shop and the A-B bakery came into existence. In four and one-half years all Chiloquin and a large portion of Klamath Falls hostesses have learned the added touch which Johnny's cakes give to a party.

Lots of Stories
While in Oakland, Johnny married a beautiful, appropriately named Marcella Woodruff. Locally Marcella has proved that the male half of the Acomb couple is not the only half to be a success in business, for after helping her husband begin, she took over a beauty shop.

The baker is a moustached, short, dark man of slight build with graying hair, an infectious grin, and a never-ending supply of stories. He says it is impossible to get a clear

picture of him without one further piece of information, he enjoys "a good time with the boys as much or more than most."

Asked to name some special jobs done locally, Johnny mentioned the donated cakes during war years which were sold on chances and then auctioned for as high as \$400, which was used to help till Christmas boxes for servicemen; the many wedding cakes; the Hughes birthday cake which was shipped to Louisiana; and the golden wedding anniversary cake expressed to Idaho. That cake recalled to mind the most unusual cake in a long baking career.

A lady had promised to furnish the wedding cake when her grandson chose a wife. He found one in England. Nothing daunted, the elderly woman ordered a cake from Johnny, whose work she especially admired. The problem of shipping and age of the confection were both solved. A fruit cake was made and after elaborate decorating was done, Acomb put the cake into a box he had constructed of wood with a glass top. The top turned the trick. Express handlers were afraid to pile objects on the glass and human interest was aroused when they looked through and saw the

wedding cake on its lengthy journey. The box and its contents arrived safely for the young man and his bride.

WHOPPERS ASKED
ALBANY, May 8 (AP)—A call went out today for good tall tales about the woods.

A Paul Bunyan bar's cup will be awarded for the best whopper, as a feature of the Albany timber carnival July 2-4. The carnival will be highlighted by logging contests.

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