

History is sweet at Americana Museum

By Melissa Piper
LITITZ - Although the Wilbur Chocolate Company is by no means new to the community here, its candy outlet store and Americana Museum is a relatively new tourist attraction to the County.

Begun in 1972 under the direction of Mrs. Penny Buzzard, the outlet and museum facilities will be celebrating its third anniversary this month.

Mrs. Penny Buzzard, wife of the president of Wilbur Chocolate Co., wanted to begin an outlet store to market the Wilbur Candy and chocolate products on a local basis so three years ago a room was set aside for the small store.

"We began selling the candy in just one tiny room, but as more and more people began coming to buy, we needed more space."

"One room led to another and soon we had to open a whole section," Mrs. Buzzard related.

Mrs. Buzzard's "tiny store" wasn't long in being for its notoriety spread from the county limits to several areas of the eastern U.S. prompting tourists to visit the outlet.

Mrs. Buzzard's interest in the chocolate and candy business did not stop at the outlet store but also centered around collecting antiques.

Through much research and hours of legwork, Mrs. Buzzard obtained an outstanding collection of antique candy molds, candy boxes and utensils used in early candy preparation.

Visiting countless antique shops and flea markets, she found numerous items relating to the candy business.

"I gathered all the antiques I could find on the subject and many people donated items until we had a good collection."

After the antiques had been gathered together, Mrs. Buzzard helped to set up a museum of antique candy artifacts. Included in her collection is a display of



Penny's Fudge Bar has become a favorite spot of every visitor. Roberta Diehm, Elm, (right) packages candy while Mrs. Penny Buzzard director of the museum and outlet prepares a box of fudge.

antique glass candy containers, candy boxes of the early 19th century and display boxes used in general stores.

Donations have also gained a place in the museum as in the case of candy making machinery, boxes and toys. Special molds can also be viewed at the Lititz facility.

Along with the antique collections, visitors are given a brief history of candy making while watching a replica of an early kitchen complete with period utensils, one can also learn about the early use of chocolate and cocoa in the United States and Central America, by watching a slide presentation.

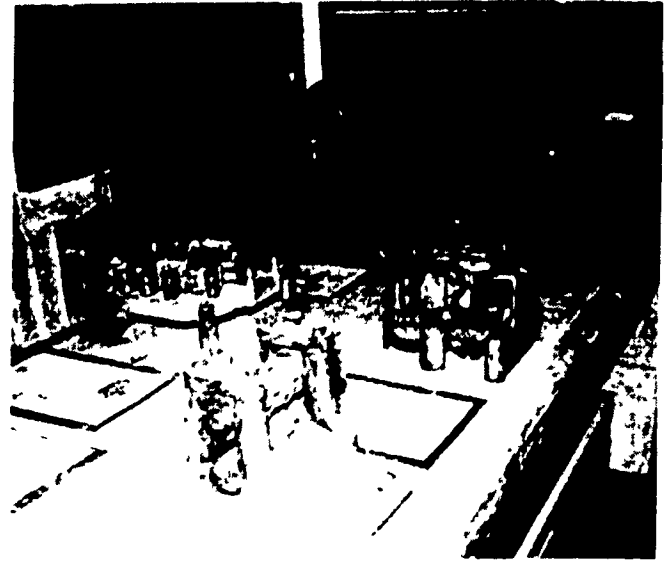
"Visitors are always interested in just how the candy is made," Mrs. Buzzard stated, but since we can't take them through the factory we try to give them an idea in our museum."

To aid the educational

aspect of the museum, Mrs. Buzzard would eventually like to construct a theater where visitors could see a movie on how the chocolate is gathered, fermented and

sent to this country and how the candy is then prepared. Something is always "cooking" at the Lititz store or so says Mrs. Buzzard. The newest item to strike a fancy

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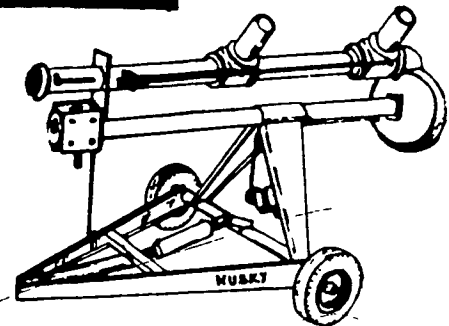
Candy making machines were donated to the museum by a company in Philadelphia. The machines rest on a heavy stone slab table.

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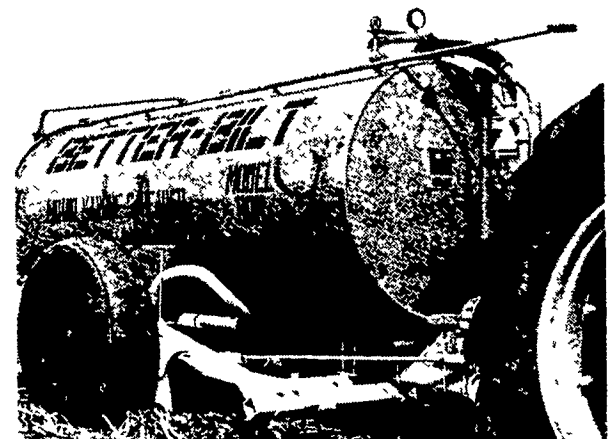
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