

American Yesteryear

San Francisco's *Blum's*

Ah! Blum's! That brings back memories—driving to San Francisco on a Friday night, first from West Sacramento when I was in high school, and then from Berkeley when I was in college. I'd stay over at my dad's and wander around the city for a day or two—I'd always hit Blum's. Didn't do my waistline any good, but it did wonders for my disposition!

Blum's was a bakery and candy store in San Francisco. It was an institution and the mere mention of it makes people's eyes glaze over in joy at reminiscing about the various goodies one could get there, myself included. The sandwiches were good, but the desserts were what people came for: rich ice creams, delicious candies, never-to-be-forgotten crunch cakes, freshly brewed coffee, and pies...all to die for!

Here's a quick description of Blum's from the March 7th, 1949 issue of TIME magazine:

“With its soda-pop and jellybean atmosphere, San Francisco's Blum's (rhymes with Tums) looks like any old-fashioned corner candy store. Blum's hustling, bustling proprietor, Fred Levy, 37, wants his customers to think that's just what it is. But the atmosphere is deceiving. Blum's sells more candy (780,000 lbs. last year in its San Francisco store alone) than any other retail store in the world, and has a list of mail-order customers that reads like Who's Who (among them: Eisenhower, Noel Coward, Jim Farley, Lauren Bacall). Blum's candy had been always handmade...”

Unfortunately, as with so many great establishments from our younger days, Blum's has long since closed. Why it when out of business when it was such a famous producer of candy is beyond me, but now it's simply relegated to one of those delicious memories that can never be revisited...just remembered. I avoid San Francisco these days. It's just not the same place anymore...and no Blum's is one of the reasons.

