

HOBBY HISTORY

Universal's Sweeter Side

[from Twenty Years Young: The Story of Universal Match Corporation, 1947]

“...The alert organization [*Universal*] was continually experimenting with products that its sales force could logically sell. But the first real step toward today's multiplicity of products, was the acquisition in 1940 of Candy Bros. Mfg. Co. Inc., of St. Louis. This company had made cough drops, under the trade name “Red Cross”, since 1885. While the brand was well known and respected for quality, merchandising had been neglected and both sales and distribution were thin.

After acquiring the company, Universal invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in new production equipment, and in advertising, turned the product over to its aggressive nation wide sales force, and in a few years pegged Red Cross Drop sales among the industry's leaders.”

“...Then, in August 1944, Universal startled the business world by buying one of the nation's largest candy companies - Schutter, makers of Old Nick and Bit-O-Honey. It took less than a year to evidence that Universal knew merchandising that applied to candy as well as matches. Today, candy buyers and manufacturers recognize Universal as a good industry citizen, revering quality, and progressing with production improvements constantly. Likewise, in the difficult days since Universal acquired Schutter - when shortages and allotments have been characteristic of the candy industry - wholesalers have come to respect Universal's operation of Schutter because of fair distribution and friendly consideration of the distributors' problems.”

“...1946 has seen further development. Early in the year, the fifty-year old Jacobs Candy Company, New Orleans, makers of box candies and pralines, was bought outright by Universal.

Time and shortages have prevented any disclosure of Universal's merchandising plans, but it is already evident that the acquisition was beneficial to the Jacobs Company and to Jacobs distributors.”

“...under Universal's aegis, Schutter Candy division has sponsored a leading half hour program of entertainment on the airways. “David Harding - Counterspy”, entertains millions each Sunday afternoon over the 193 stations of the entire American Broadcasting Network.

The Schutter Candy Kitchens, too, for many years famed as “The longest straight-line candy factory in the world”, are a model for sanitary and efficient candy production. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been invested in the most modern equipment, and in rebuilding the factory itself.”

[Ed. note: Although the actual writer, publisher, is not identified on the copy of this source that I have, I have to assume this was written by Universal. The candy connection is certainly interesting, though]