

ADVERTISING WORKSHEET

COMPANY NAME: FERN BRAND CHOCOLATES

STREET: _____

CITY-STATE: _____

BUSINESS TYPE: CANDY MANUFACTURE / SALES

WORDING AS SHOWN: FERN BRAND CHOCOLATES

SHAPES KNOWN: BOWL - H/4 - PLATE

MAKER: NORTHWOOD

BACK PATTERN: BASKETWEAVE

COMMENTS: FAIRLY AVAILABLE — UNUSUAL PATTERN IN THAT THE BOWL IS THE MOST DIFFICULT SHAPE TO OBTAIN

~~BOWL 300-350~~
 H/4 300-350
 PLATE 350-400

BURLINGTON, IOWA — OUR HOME TOWN AND HOME OF FERN BRAND CHOCOLATES

By Ray & Verda Asbury



Gardner & Gould Company, 228 South Third (corner 3rd & Elm), Burlington, IA. Photo taken August 1939

As a result of our display at the ICGA convention, we were asked to write an article for *The Pump*. We appreciate the interest shown in our display. We enjoyed putting it together and learned a lot of interesting things about the making of Fern Brand Chocolates.

The little amethyst plates are approx. 6¼ in. in diameter and are made in three shapes — flat, hand grip and turned up on two sides. They have a fern, the words Fern Brand Chocolates and a flower molded on the front of the plate with the basket weave on the back and the "N" impressed in the center.

If you have the privilege of owning a Fern Brand Chocolate advertising plate, we thought it might be of interest to you to know that it was made by the Northwood Company especially for the Gardner & Gould Company in Burlington, Iowa. The building from where these plates were distributed and the chocolates were made, still stands at the corner of Elm & Third Street, just a couple of blocks from the Mississippi river and is now occupied by the Burlington Tent & Awning Company.

The Company was in operation from June 1900 until July 1955. It was during the Pre-World War I period that the plates were given to merchants as a token of appreciation for promoting their chocolates. One plate was carefully wrapped and packed on top of each large wooden crate full of bulk chocolates and shipped to fill orders all over the U.S. Since their chocolates contained no additives or preservatives, and there was very little refrigeration during the early days of the company, weather was the determining factor in when shipments would be made. Their goal was to be able to make and ship chocolates from Oct. until Mother's Day.

Due to the large number of out-of-town orders and because local merchants picked up their bulk chocolates in cardboard boxes rather than crates, it was suggested by the late president of the company, that many more plates were distributed nationwide rather than locally. We purchased our first plate from Bill Crawl at the ICGA convention in Columbus, Ohio in 1974. He had purchased it from a dealer in New York — so we

brought it back home.

When visiting with the late Mr. Henry Raff, the President of the company at the time it was sold, I showed him our plate. He wasn't very impressed, however, and said that it reminded him of "the ugly green bowl" that was always on the president's desk filled with paper clips, etc. He said it was there the day he sold the company, and as he walked out of his office, he threw his keys in the bowl. When asked if it was a carnival glass bowl, he said "No, it wasn't like yours, it had the same inscription but it was green." He thought because it was green, it wasn't carnival! We were left wondering if maybe the Northwood company made a "one of a kind" bowl especially for the desk of the president and sent it along with the hundreds of little plates they had ordered. At any rate, we're keeping our eyes open and will always be on the look out for "that ugly green bowl"!

As a result of our search into the history of the Gardner & Gould Co. and the memorabilia regarding Fern Brand Chocolates, we developed a great appreciation for the Fern Brand Chocolate plate, and we hope that many others will find pleasure in adding one to their collection.

REMINDER

Copy for publication is requested on or before the 10th day of August, November, February and May. This is to insure that members receive their "Pump" **on time!** I am also requesting that clubs submit only one newsletter per issue. It would save space if you would combine 3 months of news in one letter. Thank you, Don Braden.

