

Myer's Bakery

For half a century, Myers Bakery produced and sold a wide-ranging assortment of delicious products from a vintage white-frame building on Main Street, as the street at the end of the Washington Avenue ridge was then called. Main street is now known as McMullin Drive, just south of the Kankakee River.

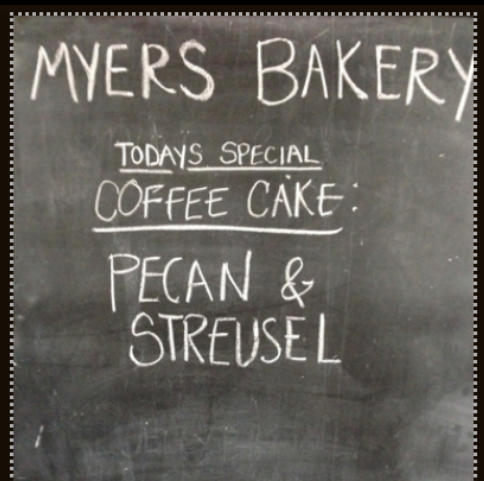


Myers Bakery in 1938, at the corner of Main Street and West Water Street



Memories of the family bakery at 800 Main Street--its quality products and flavorful variety--still bring fond recollections of everyday events, as well as special occasions, to generations of Kankakeeans. The fragrance of fresh bread, pastries, cookies, and other baked goods greeted customers entering the busy corner shop six days a week.

Coke-fired oven and fresh bread, ca. 1938
(Freddie Zachgo, Britton Palmateer, Louie Myers and Edna Myers)



Wedding cake display in bakery window.



The Myers Bakery building facing Main Street.

Owner Louie Myers started in the bakery usiness in 1905, working for Stamm's South Side Bakery as a salesman. According to his grandson, Roland B. "Skip" Myers, young Louie traveled by horse and buggy, selling baked goods in Kankakee, Bradley, and Bourbonnais. After finishing his route, he took care of the horse and buggy, then helped the bakers at night.

Louie met his future wife Edna that same year and they were married in 1906. In 1931, he borrowed \$800 and started a bakery on the west side of Kankakee. Within two years, Myers Bakery opened on Main Street, the site of a former feed store.



Winter snow drifts (Helen Ruth Myers)



Bob Myers & birthday cake for cousin Lavona





3 sons birthday cakes



Louie Myers and the new gas-fired oven ca. 1940.



Mrs. Bob Myers and son, "Skip," in front of bakery ca. 1940.





In the early years of the bakery, Louis started a bread dough or sponge dough on Friday to kneed and work it on Saturday and Sunday, so it would be ready for Monday morning. He established a way to work the dough so that the bakers could go to church on Sunday and work the remaining days of the week.

Bakery work area, looking across Main St. to Koehler Drug and Gas Station.



Porta Myers, right, and friend.



Interior of Myers Bakery ca. 1950.

Later years brought improved yeast, which substantially shortened the time it took to make the dough, along with new types of flour and shortening. Refrigeration and freezers replaced a large icebox. A new gas-fired oven was purchased. Commercial mixers improved and eventually, the bakery used one with a 60-quart capacity.

The three girls in the family went to school, helped at home and at the bakery. Son Sylvester "Bob" Myers became a baker, also learning to make and decorate special cakes.



Pies and more pies. Customer, Mae and Maime.



Main Street south of Myers Bakery ca. 1950s.

"Skip," the son of Bob and Porta Myers, carried the family tradition into a third generation and eventually became a master baker.



Louie and Edna Myers

