



KANSAS LEGEND BIOGRAPHY

Russell Stover (1888-1954)

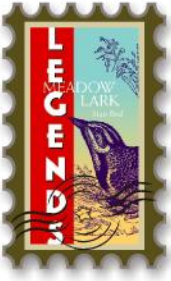
Chocolate and candy lovers alike, especially those in the Midwest, are very familiar with the name Russell Stover. Russell Stover Candies, Inc., was incorporated in 1923 and is now one of the largest boxed chocolate manufacturing companies in the country. Behind this legendary company is a fun and unique history of a husband and wife with a passion for putting smiles on their customers' faces.



Russell Stover was born in a sod house in Mount Ayr Township (Alton), Kan., to John and Sarah Stover. The family moved to a farm in Iowa, where Russell grew up and attended school. Stover attended Iowa State University where he studied chemistry. In 1911, Stover married Clara Lewis and the couple moved to a large farm in Saskatchewan, Canada.

After a disappointing attempt to farm wheat and flax, the couple moved to Winnipeg, where Stover took a job with a candy company. Stover left the company for a position with candy maker A.G. Morris in Chicago four years later and eventually held jobs with Bunte Candy and Irwin Candy Co. before settling in Omaha, Neb.

In 1921, Christian Nelson, a confectioner and inventor, presented the "I-Scream" bar to Stover. Intrigued, Stover decided to produce the product and change the name to the Eskimo Pie, which Nelson patented in 1922. An Eskimo Pie craze swept the nation and more than 1,500 manufacturers signed on to produce the treat.



On the heels of this success, numerous companies began producing copycat products, and the Stovers sold their interest in the product for \$25,000 before moving to Denver. The couple soon formed Mrs. Stover's Bungalow Candies out of their home, with Clara producing the product and Russell selling it. The candy company was an overnight success, and by 1925, the Stovers opened their first factory in Denver.

Even through the Depression, sales of Mrs. Stover's Bungalow Candies maintained a steady pace, and growth resumed after the war. In 1943, the couple decided to rename their company Russell Stover Candies. The Stovers remained committed to three principals that helped them maintain success: quality, service and value.



In 1946, Stover received the confectionery industry's highest honor, the Candy Kettle Award. Stover patented dipping tables and a manufacturing process called the Zephyr Freeze. Sales continued to grow at a phenomenal rate, and Russell Stover Candies became a multi-million dollar business with locations across the nation and several in other countries.

Stover ran the company until his death at age 66. At this time, the company was already selling 11 million pounds of candy each year. The Stover family operated the company for another 30 years before it was sold to Louis Ward. Ward continues to grow the company and maintain the Stover legacy, never wavering from its commitment to producing "Only the Finest" candies and chocolates.

