

45 | *The Scoop on Husky Deli*

Anyone who's lived in West Seattle from 1932 until now knows about the dreamy, ice creamy charm of Husky Deli. Whether it's the mountainous scoop of Husky Flake that's part of every local kid's childhood or the Rueben on dark rye that the business crowd craves for lunch, the offerings are as authentic as the smiling proprietor Jack Miller.

But what you might not know about this neighborhood icon is that it helped the community survive tough times while West Seattle's sweet tooth, in turn, kept Husky alive.

According to Miller, the family-run business began when his grandfather Herman Miller, an Indiana cattle breeder, moved from Eastern Washington to Seattle to sell Kelvinator commercial refrigerators in the mid-1920s. Soon after his arrival, the then-named Edgewood Farms Grocery store in West Seattle was up for sale. Miller bought the business in 1932, immediately purchased a Mills ice cream machine, and began making homemade ice cream in the store's front window for all to see.

His store soon became known for a neighborhood treat called the "Husky"—a giant scoop of ice cream dipped in chocolate and rolled in nuts. Miller signed a contract to sell his Huskies to public school lunch programs, which kept his business going through the Depression. In

turn, to serve his customers during these hard times, Miller let them run a tab if they could not afford to pay for their groceries. Embraced by the community, this act of kindness earned him loyal customers—while the schoolkids' love for ice cream kept Miller's business churning.

"Ice cream still saves the day."

Jack Miller
owner

In 1937, Miller changed the name of the store to Husky and trademarked the ice cream. The store became a soda fountain until Miller's sons returned from the WWII, when he converted it to the deli it is today.

"We had a lot of Europeans living in the community," explains Jack.

"As time went on, we became a deli that catered to the customers' requests. We carried things you couldn't find anywhere else."

And Husky, the international deli, was born.

With the world shrinking, many grocery stores now carry these same goods. Still, nothing can replace Husky's commitment to the community. According to Jack, "Ice cream still saves the day."

The place where West Seattleites bought their staples during war times and the Depression continues to build a loyal following.

"It's a treat to have always been here," beams Jack. "When kids we once knew go away and come back years later, they're excited we remember them and know their names. And even though a lot has changed, we're still the same. It's a family-run business and always will be—with 24 grandkids coming up, eight of which already work here."

A life-long gathering place, Husky has a tie to the community that, like their ice cream, is frozen in time.

So if you're looking for a heaping helping of local history and homemade ice cream, stop by Husky Deli for the best scoop in town.



What:
Husky Deli

Where:
4721 California Ave SW
www.huskydeli.com
206.937.2810

When:
Monday–Saturday 9 am–9 pm
Sunday 9 am–7 pm

Price:
A single scoop for \$2;
or \$3.50 for two