A Historical “Bite” of Johnnie Bread
to note the centennial of

The death of
the creator of...

Cover of *The Loaf That Became A Legend: A History of Saint John’s Bread* by Ken and Diane Veale Jones. SJU Archives.

Baldus photo and caption from p. 6 of book.
Br. William died 100 years ago, on Dec. 15, 1918

Cover of *The Loaf That Became A Legend: A History of Saint John’s Bread* by Ken and Diane Veale Jones. SJU Archives.
Baldus photo and caption from p. 6 of book.
1868: the first mills are built on the Watab River

2571:13 (edited); sketch by Alexius Hoffmann OSB
Fire was a recurring threat; the mills repeatedly burned down.

O: ...Buildings ... Mills from SJAA
2571:13 sketch by Alexius Hoffmann, OSB
O: ...Buildings/Mills ... Mills from A Visual History ppt
Dates from Buildings and Places,
https://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/sjubuildings
There were two mills side by side: one a sawmill for lumber, the other a flour mill.

The original Johnnie bread had to be baked in a brick oven. The loaves were 18” x 8”, and the slices were 5/8” thick.

*Worship & Work*, p. 398

*W & W* p. 398, footnote 19: the original Johnnie bread had to be baked in a brick oven, the loaves were 18” x 8”, and the slices were 5/8” thick.

LP007.JohnnieBread
LP013a.1913.Loggers
http://www.thefreshloaf.com/node/34160/i-need-recipe-very-dark-bread-can-i-make-it-black
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**Stones and Hills / Steine und Huegel/Reflections: St. John the Baptist Parish, 1875-1975, part 1 (pp. 60-71)**

Baldus photo and caption from p. 6 of *The Loaf That Became A Legend: A History of Saint John’s Bread* by Ken and Diane Veale Jones.  SJU Archives.

Death notice from *Benedictine Forum*

http://tdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/44826/rec/1
“The best part of the old Johnnie bread was the bits of ‘hair’ surprises in the recipe!”

Stones and Hills / Steine und Huegel/Reflections: St. John the Baptist Parish, 1875-1975, part 1 (pp. 60-71)
Baldus photo and caption from p. 6 of The Loaf That Became A Legend: A History of Saint John’s Bread by Ken and Diane Veale Jones. SJU Archives.
Death notice from Benedictine Forum
http://tcdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/44826/rec/1
Quote from the Abbey Archivist
http://www.saintjohnsabbeycemetery.org/explore-the-cemetery/section/monastery_cemetery_south_side/
Although improvements in local milling facilities would have permitted Saint John’s to shift to a more refined white bread, the monks refused to follow the lead of most of the nation. Instead, they continued to prefer the loaf that would become a legend—a bread whose basic ingredients and texture were shaped by conditions in central Minnesota in the late nineteenth century. Johnnie Bread was distinct not only because of the mixture of one part rye flour to four parts wheat, but because the wheat portion included some relatively un pulverized bits that were very hard and could create a real surprise for the unwary eater. As milling techniques produced more uniform flour, the bakers at Saint John’s added cracked wheat and cracked rye to maintain the nineteenth-century texture.
Father Walter Reger, O.S.B. (1894–1971), erstwhile history professor and consummate university and alumni administrator (aka “Mr. Saint John’s”), wanted to promote Johnnie Bread as something emerging from and intimately associated with Saint John’s. He envisioned this hardy bread as a vehicle for fundraising, a source of financial aid and scholarships for students, and as a culinary connection for keeping in touch with alumni. During the 1960s, and continuing to this day, several campus clubs used sales of Johnnie Bread for fundraising.

Father Gordon Tavis, O.S.B., picked up where Father Walter left off. Thinking that Johnnie Bread sales might have a role in promoting student scholarships, he began new sales initiatives in the early 1970s.

Despite their combined efforts, however, their goal of a strong market revival and broad commercialization of Johnnie Bread over the long term was never realized.

Text from Abbey Banner Spring 2016 p.27 v. 16 n.1
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/47032/rec/46
Wlater Reger image by Bela Petheo, Fall 1968 Alum Magazine cover
Abbey Banner Spring 2016 p.27 v. 16 n.1
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/47032/rec/46
Marketing of Johnnie Bread in the 1950s and 60s included postcards from Father Walter Reger alerting friends and alumni that Saint John’s Bread was available "at your nearest food market."

*Abbey Banner Spring 2016*
By the numbers:

- 600-800 pounds of dough/week
- 300-400 loaves each week
- 25,000 loaves each year

Major bread sales coincide with:

- Johnnie homecoming
- Commencement
- school breaks
- major feast days like Christmas & Easter

Abbey Banner Spring 2016
Recent chief Johnnie Bread bakers

1960-1983:
  Clem Meyer
1983-1989:
  Adrian Weber
1989-2007:
  Rich Ruprect

Abbey Banner Spring 2016
the hot bread—with honey, jam, and peanut butter— in the student dorms is still a signature of living at Saint John’s

Many graduates have fond memories of the tradition of faculty residents serving hot bread—fresh from the oven—to students on their floors in the dormitories.

Abbey Banner Spring 2016 p.27 v. 16 n.1 (quotes on p. 26)
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Fr. Hilary Thimmesh and students, photo in SJU Archives: Bread slicing 2003.09.011.tif
Ad from SJU_Alumni_Magazine 1961 July v.1n.2p.1
Jack Eagle as Br. Dominic in Johnny Bread ads, PC06 103 shelf 3 v.1 p.36
O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Misc\Johnny Bread
Actor Jack Eagle, “Brother Dominic” in ads for St. John’s Bread, also posed with Coach John Gagliardi.
Left image from the back of book, *The Loaf That Became a Legend*
Ad from SJU_Alumni_Mag 1961 July v.1n.2p.1
Photo with hands by Paul Vincent Niebauer OSB IMAG0255 20130417 by PV Niebauer
"Brother Alan Reed’s redesign of the bread bag replaced a Franciscan friar with a Benedictine monk, though the Franciscan’s hairline may have been more accurate.”

Abbey Banner Spring 2016

Abbey Banner Spring 2016 p.27 v. 16 n.1
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