

Title:

Time Flies When You're Chewing Gum: A Brief History Of Chewing Gum

Word Count:

634

Summary:

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Article Body:

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Thomas Adams, often referred to as "The Father of Gum," is said to have first tried to mix chicle (a natural gum base that had been chewed in Mexico for generations) with rubber to create a cheaper product for carriage wheels. After experimenting without success, it's believed he overheard a little girl ordering chewing gum at a drugstore and then decided to use the chicle for chewing gum. At that time, chewing gum was made from paraffin wax. Adams bet that his chicle would be a popular substitute. His wager paid off.

Adding The Flavor

In Louisville, Kentucky, a drugstore owner named John Colgan sold gum from the balsam tree, flavored with powdered sugar. After Adams' son (who was a traveling salesman) paid Colgan a visit, he was sold on the merits of using chicle gum instead. Using the new chicle gum imported from Mexico, Colgan introduced a new, flavored gum called "Colgan's Taffy Tolu Chewing Gum." The product became an overnight success.

Since then, gum manufacturers have found a number of ways to create exciting gum sensations. For instance, Trident Splash® has a liquid-filled center surrounded by a soft, chewy gum with a sweet, crisp outer shell. It comes in two

surprising flavors that are a far cry from the powdered sugar gum sold by John Colgan: peppermint with vanilla and strawberry with lime.

Adding The Fun

Mr. Jonathan P. Primley had a sense of humor that upset proper Victorian rules of etiquette. At that time, no "proper lady" would be caught chewing gum. Yet Primley's invention of the first ever fruit-flavored gum, which he called Kis-Me, proved very popular. The gum's slogan was: "Far Better Than A Kiss."

A Gum Is Born

The first sugarless gum- Trident-was introduced in the 1960s. Since its introduction, people have chewed more than 4.5 billion pieces of the gum. Placed end to end, that's enough gum to span the distance from New York to Los Angeles 18 times, reach halfway to the moon or circle the globe 1.8 times.

According to Cadbury Adams USA LLC, which is the U.S. business unit of confectionery and beverage leader Cadbury Schweppes (NYSE: CSG), and the makers of Trident and other popular gums such as Dentyne-"the gum isn't just great tasting, it's good for you." Studies have shown that chewing sugarless gum reduces the risk of tooth decay-which can lead to tooth loss.

In fact, the gum was originally sold to soften tooth tartar. It was made from three ingredients (Tri-); and because it was good for teeth, the Latin root for teeth (-dent) was used in the name. Trident White, a product also sold by Cadbury Adams, which whitens teeth and helps prevent stains, contains an ingredient called Recaldent that has been shown to strengthen teeth.

Great Moments In Gum

• Around the year 200 A.D., Mayans of Central America are believed to have been chewing chicle-a gum resin. At the same time, native peoples in North America are thought to have been chewing resin from spruce trees.

• In 1900, the first gumballs hit American shelves.

• In 1928, the first bubble gum was invented by a 28-year-old accountant named Walter Diemer.

• The first bubble gum cards were introduced in the 1930s. The pictures ranged from war heroes, to Wild West figures to pro-athletes.

• During WWII, U.S. military personnel gave American chewing gum away to

people they met overseas-helping make friends and spread the popularity of gum.

• In 1964, NASA gave sugarless gum to astronauts on the Gemini space missions to help keep their teeth and gums healthy.