

Saratoga Chips

Written By: Melissa Downer on July 17, 2009

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In 1853, a chef at Moon's Lake House in Saratoga Springs named George Crum came up with a snack food out of spite. Agitated when a customer sent back an order of French fried potatoes complaining they were too thick, Crum chopped the potatoes as thinly as possible. He refried and salted them, hoping to overcompensate for the customer's complaint. What initially was a problem solved became the Saratoga Potato Chip, a concept that spread like wildfire and give birth to a booming snack food industry.

While the Saratoga Chip fell by the wayside when national chains such as Wise and Lays opened, there has been a revival by local business owners in Saratoga to bring back the history and tradition of the snack.

In January 2009, two Saratoga locals, Dan Jameson and Paul Tator were researching new business ventures when they came across the original take-out box from Moon's Lake House. It was then that the partners decided to reintroduce the original Saratoga Chip, complete with a replica of the original box they came in during the late 1800s using the same exact recipe: Yukon Gold potatoes, cottonseed oil and sea salt. For Jameson and Tator, authenticity is the most important aspect to bringing a bit of Saratoga's history back to life.



"This was a real find for us," Jameson said. "The box was in real bad shape when we found it and it took months to restore. One of the most important aspects of our business model is that we wanted every detail on the box 'then' to be true 'today.'"

Together, Jameson and Tator opened the Saratoga Specialties Company and have begun distributing Saratoga Chips to area grocery stores and specialty shops.

"We launched the business on July 4 and within two weeks we have 25 retail outlets for Saratoga Chips. We couldn't be happier right now," Jameson said.

It is their hope that Saratoga Chips will spread to bordering towns, but for now, business in Saratoga seems to be booming. For example EBI Beverage Center on Excelsior Avenue has needed to be restocked more than six times in the two weeks that the chips have been available.

"There have been massive amounts of repeat customers that keep these chips flying off the shelves," Jameson said. "It's refreshing to share our enthusiasm with the public and to have such a great response. It seemed sad that people couldn't purchase the original Moon's brand anymore. It seemed as though a legacy had been lost, so that was a major reason we made a go of it to reintroduce the product."

Due to the overwhelming local response, Saratoga Specialties Company has plans to open a fully operational manufacturing and warehouse site that will bring manufacturing and delivery jobs to the local economy.

"We believe that the nation's economic recovery will come from small businesses and by utilizing other local businesses for various needs," Jameson said. "We are trying to do our part to reignite the nation's economy."

Moon Brand Saratoga Chips can be found locally at Hannaford, Price Chopper, EBI Beverage, Minogue's Beverage Center, Impressions of Saratoga, Roma's, Compliments to the Chef, Mango's Deli, The Candy Company and many other specialty stores in the region. For a full list, visit www.originalsaratogachips.com.

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