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BUSTER**

In A. D. 50, Ancient Greeks were believed to chew mastiche, tree resin from the Mastic tree. Researchers also discovered that the Mayans, an Indian civilization that inhabited Central American during the second century, enjoyed chewing chicle.

This natural gum comes from the latex of the Sapodilla tree and later became the main ingredient in chewing gum. The American Indians discovered another natural form of gum-like resin by cutting the bark of spruce trees. They introduced the custom of chewing spruce gum to the early North American settlers. These savvy New Englanders created the first commercial chewing gum by selling and trading lumps of spruce. Spruce gum continued to be sold in 19th century America until the 1850s when paraffin wax became the new popular base for chewing gum. Modern chewing gum products appeared in 1869. Mexican General, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, conqueror of the Alamo, hired New York inventor Thomas Adams to develop a new form of rubber using chicle. Chicle is the same gummy substance people in Mexico had been chewing for centuries.

Adams was unsuccessful in developing rubber, but he did succeed in producing the first modern chewing gum. He called it Adams New York No. 1.

Gum made with chicle and similar latexes soon became more popular than spruce gum or paraffin gum. Chicle-base chewing gum was smoother, softer and held its flavor better than any previous type of chewing gum. By the 1900s chewing gum was manufactured in many different shapes and sizes (long pencil-shaped sticks, ball form, flat sticks and blocks) and flavors

(peppermint, fruit and spearmint). Bubble gum was invented in 1928 by Walter Diemer, a cost analyst for the Fleer Company.

Many people had tried for years to develop a gum that could be blown into bubbles, but it was Mr. Diemer, a young man who knew nothing about chemistry, who found the right combination of ingredients and created a gum that was strong enough and elastic enough to stretch when filled with air. Today, synthetic materials replace natural gum ingredients to create a chewing gum with better quality, texture and taste. There are more than 1,000 varieties of gum manufactured and sold in the United States. You can find gum filled with liquid or speckled with crystals; gum that won't stick or is made without sugar; gum with wild flavor combinations like mango and watermelon or gum in crazy shapes like long rolls of tape. Bibliography: