

The Ice Cream Wars



The history of ice cream seems like it should be easy enough to determine, but many of its landmarks are hidden in the fog of historical controversy. Here are milestones in the history of American ice cream. Which ones are highly contested and which are not? (Hint: there are five that are contested):

1744: The first written record of ice cream in America (and the first use of the exact phrase "ice cream," rather than "iced cream") is made when a journal entry by William Black of Virginia notes that Maryland Colonial Governor Thomas Bladen notes served ice cream ("After which came a Dessert no less Curious; Among the Rarities of which it was Compos'd, was some fine Ice Cream which, with the Strawberries and Milk, eat most Deliciously...") to him and other dinner guests at the Governor's home in Annapolis.

contested

not contested

1774: Immigrant from London Philip Lenzi, a caterer, opens the nation's first ice cream parlor, on Dock Street in New York City. On May 12, 1777, Lenzi places the first advertisement for ice cream in America in The New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, noting that he would make it available "almost every day."

contested

not contested

1832: Massachusetts brass founder John Matthews invents the soda fountain.

contested

not contested

1843: Philadelphia housewife Nancy M. Johnson invents the hand-crank ice cream freezer, and receives a patent for it, the rights to which she sells for \$200 to wholesaler William G. Young.

contested

not contested

1874: The ice cream soda is created by soda concessionaire Robert M. Green for the semicentennial celebration of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. He had been making soda drinks of sweet cream, syrup, ice, and carbonated water, a drink already well-known and called, fancifully, "ice cream soda." When he runs out of cream, he substitutes ice cream (Philadelphia-style vanilla ice cream, which means it was not custard based).

contested

not contested

1881: The ice cream sundae is created, in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, by Ed C. Berners, who operates an ice cream shop at 1404 Fifteenth Street. A teen-aged customer, George Hallauer, asks Mr. Berner to put some chocolate sauce on his ice cream. Prior to this, chocolate sauce had been



used only in ice cream sodas. Berners complies and charges Hallauer--and other customers afterwards--5 cents. He serves it only on Sunday.

- contested not contested

1897: African-American inventor Alfred L. Cralle, while working in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, patents the lever-operated, half-globed-shaped, hand ice cream scooper.

- contested not contested

1904: The ice cream cone is introduced, at the St. Louis World's Fair, Louisiana Purchase Exposition. An ice cream vendor named Arnold Fornachou runs out of dishes and a Syrian vendor named Abe Doumar (or a Lebanese vendor named Ernest A. Hamwi) seizes the moment to roll a "zalabia"--a sugar waffle--into a cone and comes to his rescue.

- contested not contested

1904: Soda jerk (and soon-to-be graduate of University of Pittsburgh's School of Pharmacy) David E. Strickler invents the banana split (and the elongated dish to serve it in) while working in a drug store in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

- contested not contested

1906: In C. C. (Clarence Clifton) Brown's Ice Cream Parlor at 7007 Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles, California, the first hot fudge sundae is served.

- contested not contested

Sources:

Anne Cooper Funderburg, *Chocolate, Strawberry and Vanilla: A History of American Ice Cream*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Press, 1996.

Anne Cooper Funderburg, *Sundae Best: A History of Soda Fountains*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 2002.

Jeri Quinzio, *Of Sugar and Snow: A History of Ice Cream Making*. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2009.

Oscar E. Anderson, *Refrigeration in America: A History of a New Technology and Its Impact*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Gavin Weightman. *The Frozen-Water Trade: A True Story*. New York: Hyperion, 2003.

Sara Rath. *About Cows*. Stillwater, Minn.: Voyageur Press, 2000.