

TEN FUN CANDY FACTS KATHARINE WEBER LEARNED IN THE COURSE OF WRITING *TRUE CONFECTIONS*

- 1) You know Black Crows, those licorice gumdrops you see for sale at movie theater candy counters if nowhere else? Apparently the original intention was to call them Black Rose, but the person charged with designing and ordering the cardboard box misunderstood the request.
- 2) Chocolate sprinkles have a name. If you are over forty, you have probably already said "Jimmies!" and you're right; that's what they're called. Why? The founder of Just Born Candy was Sam Born, who arrived in New York from Russia in 1910. Sam opened his own shop in 1923 (where he hung out a sign saying his sweets were so fresh they were "Just Born"), and soon after, he also came up with a chocolate sprinkle-producing machine, whose yield—Jimmies—were named for the employee who operated the apparatus, a kid named Jimmy.
- 3) The average American eats **twenty-five pounds of candy a year**. Are you keeping up? The *average* American eats **two pounds of candy at Halloween**. Feeling less bad about that Snickers bar last week?
- 4) Why are Milk Duds called Milk Duds? The candy developed in 1926 by F. Hoffman in Chicago was supposed to be perfectly spherical, much like a malted milk ball, but each batch of the dense milk chocolate-covered caramels kept collapsing into misshapen lumps. They were duds. They were covered in milk chocolate. Milk plus Duds equals Milk Duds.
- 5) Sucralose, which is marketed as Splenda, was discovered in a laboratory by accident; they were trying to formulate insecticide. An assistant was asked to "test" a batch, but he misheard the instruction and thought he had been told to "taste" the compound. He tasted it and discovered that they had created a stunningly sweet sugar substitute.
- 6) During World War II, Hershey's had to suspend production of Hershey's Kisses, not because of sugar or cacao shortages but because it was impossible to source the foil that wrapped them. Production was not resumed until 1949, seven years later.
- 7) Some of the candy bars that used to grace American shelves include the weirdly named Old Nick, Fat Emma, Whiz, Candy Salad, Chump, Big Dearo, Denver Sandwich, Zep, Vegetable Sandwich, Lindy, Roasty Toasty, Vanilla Jitney, Doctor's Orders, Baffle, Coconut Grove, Cherry Hump (tragically discontinued in the 1980s because of a chronic leakage problem), Pierce Arrow, Poor Prune, the Bolster Bar, and let's not forget the Amos n' Andy bar, which had the slogan, Um-Um! Ain't Dat Sumpin'!

8) In 1880, David Goldenberg arrived in Philadelphia from Romania. (Born David Seltzer, he heard on the boat from Europe that Goldberg is a good name to have in America, and he embellished it with an added syllable.) After working for a decade making candies for carnivals and fairs, he opened a store, where he sold a popular chewy walnut and molasses candy, and in 1917, the walnut roll mutated to a peanut confection, since peanuts were cheaper. Goldenberg's Peanut Chews won government contracts as nutritious, nonmelting ration bars for American troops in World War I. Today, produced by Just Born and minus the Goldenberg name, Peanut Chews live on. But if it weren't for the expense of walnuts, they would be Walnut Chews.

9) Double Bubble ruled the bubble gum market when the four Shorin brothers developed Bazooka Bubble Gum, recognizing, as World War II ended, that the wartime slogan for their spearmint-flavored Topps Chewing Gum, "Don't Talk Chum, Chew Topps Gum!" (a variation of "loose lips sink ships") was about to become obsolete. Today, Bazooka Bubble Gum is one of the most universally recognized flavors in the world.

10) In 1921, the Curtiss Candy Company in Chicago changed their Kandy Kake Bar into the Baby Ruth, claiming former president Grover Cleveland's daughter Ruth (who died of diphtheria in 1904) had somehow inspired the name. This was implausible at best, and it is most likely that the Baby Ruth bar was an unauthorized attempt to cash in on the popularity of baseball great Babe Ruth. It hardly seems fair that in 1931 Curtiss succeeded in winning a case to shut down Babe Ruth's own licensed candy bar on the grounds that it was too close to their bestselling product.