

ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

G. CHESTER GENA, LOLLIPOP-KIT INVENTOR

Every child has become a potential lollipop-maker because "U-Make-Um" lollipop kits are on the market in volume. The home made idea "clicked" to such an extent that its originator finds the kit-manufacturing business has outstripped the capacities of his home and garage at 13 Cherry Street, Franklinville, where the novelty was born.

Complete from sticks to wrapping paper, a kit furnishes all ingredients, except sweetening and water to make 500 to 600 lollipops. A child old enough to light a gas burner can make the "pops."

"The demand is so great that I can't continue the business here," said G. Chester Gena, 53, the Franklinville man who fathered the home-made lollipops. He declined to discuss his plans at this time, but intimated he has arranged for expansion.

"The home-made lollipop kit developed from two other ventures," explained Mr. Gena, a Des Moines University graduate and former Iowa high school athletics coach. "About ten years ago I started manufacturing flavoring extracts for household use, and then I decided to make equipment for manufacturing lollipops in large quantities."

"I had several small sample kits for demonstration purposes, and people who saw these liked them so much that it gave me the idea of the individual home kits."

"I began by casting the aluminum molds in my garage. I could only make 300 a day, and when the demand grew I had to have them made for me, and devote about all my time to assembling the kits in my basement."

Manufacturing under the name Home Candy Company, Mr. Gena receives "lots of letters," he said praising the kits, especially for their value in instructing and entertaining children. He is a native of Franklinville and returned from Iowa about 15 years ago.

A kit contains six aluminum molds into which the hot candy mixture is poured, three bottles of flavoring extracts, 100 sticks and 150 pieces of waxed paper for wrapping. There is also a 3 oz. bottle of an ingredient called Pop-Tex, a half a teaspoon of which is added to the ingredients for 18 lollipops to prevent them from hardening before they can be poured into the molds. They are on sale at Hens and Kelly's.

For 18 "pops," a third of a cup of light corn syrup, an equal amount of water, a cup of sugar and the Pop-Tex are mixed. They are boiled, flavoring is added, sticks put in place after the mixture is in the molds, and three to five minutes later you have lollipops.

Submitted by: William Watkins, Machias Deputy Town Historian and taken from Marjorie Graves Scrapbook, January 1946.

MORE ON MR. GENA

He was born in Angelica in 1893 and came to Franklinville in 1907. After a number of years in Iowa, he returned to Franklinville in 1925. He was a coach and part time teacher at Ten Broeck. In 1946 he sold his lollipop company to New York interests. He became a partner in the newspaper and printing business. He died in 1965.