

This Day in History... July 7, 1928

The World Debut of “The Greatest Thing” – Sliced Bread!

On July 7, 1928, sliced bread was sold for the first time in Chillicothe, Missouri.

Bread is one of the world’s oldest prepared foods, made and consumed around the globe for thousands of years. Long before it was sliced, it was broken off in pieces, which led to another popular phrase, “breaking bread.” But why wasn’t bread sold pre-sliced until 1928? In part, being sliced leads the bread to go stale faster, so inventors sought to create a machine that would both slice and wrap.



*From the 2014
Farmer's Market issue*



*Used in the late 19th
century, the bread
wagon delivered
baked bread to
individual homes
and grocery stores.*

Missouri jeweler Otto Frederick Rohwedder became fascinated with the idea of inventing a bread slicing machine.

He so believed in it, he sold all three of his jewelry stores to get the money he needed to build his first machine.

Rohwedder invented the first successful bread slicer and wrapper in 1912, but it was destroyed in a fire. Fifteen years later he tweaked and patented his design.

He spent considerable time studying what the perfect slice size should be and settled at just under a half an inch. Rohwedder sold a machine to Missouri-baker Frank Bench and another to Gustav Papendick who made improvements that sliced the loaves more cleanly and wrapped them in wax paper.

Then on July 7, 1928, Chillicothe Baking Company in Missouri became the first bread company to try this new machine and sell pre-sliced loaves of bread. Other bread companies were slow to follow. Many didn’t think it was worth it to buy new machines to do something people had always done at home. Two years later, national bread chain Wonder made sliced bread a necessity and it has been ever since. In fact, during World War II, when Americans were willing to cut back on sugar, meat, and other things for the war effort, one thing they wouldn’t give up was



Bread Wagon Imperforate Error

sliced bread. The government halted factory-made sliced bread, but it caused such an uproar, the ban only lasted a few months. The popularity of sliced bread also increased the need and production for spreads such as butter, jams, and jellies.



*Red Skelton is credited with saying
“the greatest thing since sliced bread.”*

Where did the phrase “The best thing since sliced bread” come from? It likely started with the Chillicothe Baking Company itself. When they first started selling their sliced bread, they advertised it as “the greatest forward step in the baking industry since bread was wrapped.” The phrase may have gained popular usage, but it wasn’t recorded until 1952, in an interview with Red Skelton in the *Salisbury Times*, when he said, “Don’t worry about television. It’s the greatest thing since sliced bread.”

Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316

This Day in History... July 7, 1928

The World Debut of “The Greatest Thing” – Sliced Bread!

On July 7, 1928, sliced bread was sold for the first time in Chillicothe, Missouri.

Bread is one of the world’s oldest prepared foods, made and consumed around the globe for thousands of years. Long before it was sliced, it was broken off in pieces, which led to another popular phrase, “breaking bread.” But why wasn’t bread sold pre-sliced until 1928? In part, being sliced leads the bread to go stale faster, so inventors sought to create a machine that would both slice and wrap.



*From the 2014
Farmer's Market issue*



*Used in the late 19th
century, the bread
wagon delivered
baked bread to
individual homes
and grocery stores.*

Missouri jeweler Otto Frederick Rohwedder became fascinated with the idea of inventing a bread slicing machine.

He so believed in it, he sold all three of his jewelry stores to get the money he needed to build his first machine.

Rohwedder invented the first successful bread slicer and wrapper in 1912, but it was destroyed in a fire. Fifteen years later he tweaked and patented his design.

He spent considerable time studying what the perfect slice size should be and settled at just under a half an inch. Rohwedder sold a machine to Missouri-baker Frank Bench and another to Gustav Papendick who made improvements that sliced the loaves more cleanly and wrapped them in wax paper.

Then on July 7, 1928, Chillicothe Baking Company in Missouri became the first bread company to try this new machine and sell pre-sliced loaves of bread. Other bread companies were slow to follow. Many didn't think it was worth it to buy new machines to do something people had always done at home. Two years later, national bread chain Wonder made sliced bread a necessity and it has been ever since.



Bread Wagon Imperforate Error

In fact, during World War II, when Americans were willing to cut back on sugar, meat, and other things for the war effort, one thing they wouldn't give up was

sliced bread. The government halted factory-made sliced bread, but it caused such an uproar, the ban only lasted a few months. The popularity of sliced bread also increased the need and production for spreads such as butter, jams, and jellies.



*Red Skelton is credited with saying
“the greatest thing since sliced bread.”*

Where did the phrase “The best thing since sliced bread” come from? It likely started with the Chillicothe Baking Company itself. When they first started selling their sliced bread, they advertised it as “the greatest forward step in the baking industry since bread was wrapped.” The phrase may have gained popular usage, but it wasn't recorded until 1952, in an interview with Red Skelton in the *Salisbury Times*, when he said, “Don't worry about television. It's the greatest thing since sliced bread.”

Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316