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TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTOS

How the cone was licked into shape

For more than a century pastry 'engineers' have improved and innovated on the edible ice cream holder. But who invented the simple, yet ultimately complex ice cream cone? No one is sure

The ice cream cone is a marvel of edible engineering.

The ideal cone has to be strong enough to ship, firm enough to grasp, soft enough to chew and able to maintain its consistency in the presence of a cold, semi-solid substance that will soon be a liquid.

South of the border, today marks the beginning of national ice cream month. In Toronto, an ice cream cone has particular advantages this Canada Day, what with garbage-collection workers off-duty: an ice cream cone is entirely edible, and hence garbage-free.

Today's cone is the culmination work by hundreds of people around the world and more than a century of tinkering and evolution. But when and where the ice cream cone originated is hard to say.

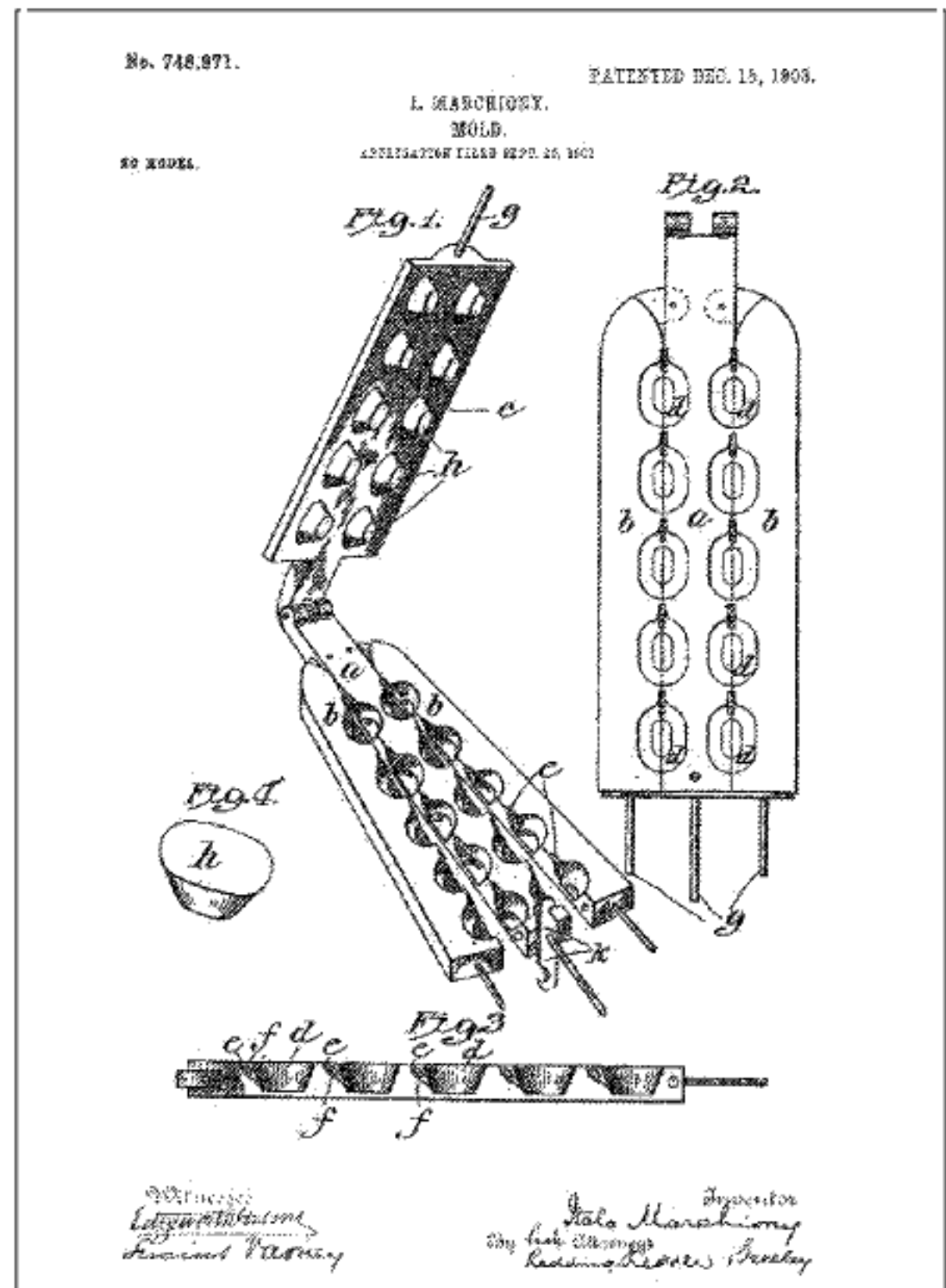
Conventional wisdom has it that the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, a spectacular world's fair held nearly a hundred years ago at St. Louis, Mo., was the birthplace of the ice cream cone. Countless textbooks, and quite a few people who were at the fair, make the claim; it's a textbook case of everyone wanting a lick of glory.

The most popular account holds that one Ernest A. Hamwi, an immigrant from Syria, created the first cone out of a rolled waffle-like pastry called a zalabis. When a nearby ice cream vendor at the fair ran out of dishes, Hamwi offered up the pastry as an alternative.

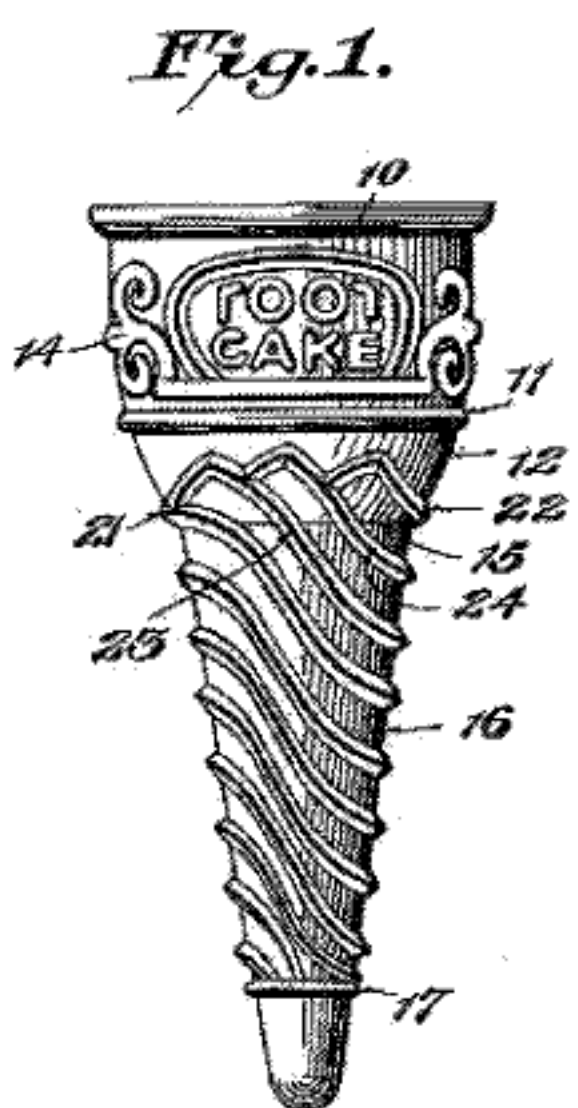
Hamwi later went into the ice cream cone business, setting up several successful waffle cone companies.

Nick and Albert Kabbaz, who worked in Hamwi's booth at St. Louis, says they dreamed up the cone.

In another account, a teenage ice cream vendor at the fair, Arnold Fornachou, claimed he was the guy who ran out of ice cream one fateful day — Hamwi just happened to be there with the right ingredients.



COOL: In 1903, pushcart vendor Italo Marchiony patented this design for a device to mold edible cups for ice cream. It worked like a waffle iron: the base came apart to release the baked bowls.



HEAVY-DUTY: Above, numbers indicate where Joseph Shapiro in 1928 re-engineered an ice cream cone with beads and ridges to add strength.

FIRST?: At right, a page from *Fancy Ices*, published in 1894, showing recipes which prompted a British museum to claim the book's author, Mrs. A.B. Marshall (1855-1905), was inventor of the ice cream cone.

Finally, there's the unlikely tale of an unidentified woman who, having trouble carrying a bouquet of flowers and an ice cream sandwich wrapped up both in a waffle. Who wraps up an ice cream sandwich?

But whether these incidents happened is truly moot — the St. Louis World's Fair was definitely not the origin of the edible wrappers.

A more supportable claim is made by Italo Marchiony, an Italian who immigrated to the United States and spent years vending ice cream from a pushcart on Wall Street in Manhattan.

Marchiony did a brisk business, selling homemade lemon ice cream in little glass cups.

Problem was he went through an awful lot of cups. Some were accident-

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sprinkle over the icing some chopped pistachio, and use as instructed above.

Margaret Cornets
Cornets à la Marguerite

Prepare some cornets as below, and just before serving fill them partly with ginger tea-water ('Book of Ices,' p. 26) and partly with apple ice-cream ('Book of Ices,' p. 9) frozen quite dry, and dish them up on a paper or napkin. Serve for a dinner sweet or for dessert.

CORNET CASES.—Mix well together half a pound of finely-chopped or ground almonds with four ounces of castor sugar, and four ounces of fine flour, two whole eggs, a saltspoonful of vanilla essence, and one table-spoonful of orange-flower water.

Put one or two baking tins into the oven, and when they are quite hot rub them over with white wax, and let the tins get cool; then spread the paste smoothly and thinly over the tins (say one-tenth of an inch thick), and

bake in the oven for three or four minutes; take out the tins and quickly stamp out the paste with a plain round cutter, about five inches in diameter, and immediately wrap these rounds of paste on the outside of the cornet

Rediscovery

RACHEL ROSS

tally broken, many wandered off with absent-minded customers. The rest he had to wash.

There had to be a better way, Marchiony reasoned. What he needed was a cheap container, perhaps an edible ice cream dish that would double as a tasty treat.

When exactly he began his quest is unknown, but the International Ice Cream Association credits him at producing the first cone in 1896.

The details are lost in antiquity but a few years later in 1903, a year before the St. Louis World's Fair, Marchiony patented a mold for holding ice cream.

The original drawing is shown at left. The device worked like a waffle iron — with a base panel that split in two, making it easier to release the baked cups.

But is it a cone? Marchiony's creations were shaped more like tea cups, complete with tiny handles.

The cup-like shape may explain why, up until his death, Marchiony was unable to establish himself as the ice cream cone's inventor, and why to this day the St. Louis story prevails.

Others do not claim to have invented the ice cream cone so much as having actually made them, long before Marchiony or the jealous, competitive ice cream vendors at the St. Louis World's Fair.

Just last week I held the proof in my hands: a copy Agnes Marshall's 1894 cookbook, *Fancy Ices*, now in the collection of the Toronto reference library. Inside is a recipe for Margaret Cornets, which are really just high-falutin' ice cream cones.

What Marshall called "cornet cases" — made of sugar, flour, eggs, vanilla, orange-flower water and ground almonds — served as the cone. She suggested filling them with ginger ice water and apple ice cream.

British historians say there's an even earlier mention of the cones in a recipe for "cornets with cream" from Marshall's 1888 cookbook, *Mrs. A. B. Marshall's Book of Cookery*.

It's not surprising. Cornets are a classic part of French cuisine. They are sometimes made out of cheese, and always stuffed with something,

CANADIAN CONE: Mr. Christie's version of a small flat-bottomed molded ice cream cone that stands on its own.

Marshall was a celebrated chef in England who would have been aware of fine French cuisine.

Whether she was the first to make cornets with ice cream is unclear, but she published the idea, years before Marchiony filed his patent or the ice cream vendors at the St. Louis World's Fair vied for the credit.

But while St. Louis may not have

One patent calls for insulating ice cream cones with a layer of popcorn or puffed rice

created the ice cream cone, the attention the world's fair there brought to the treat forever changed the ice cream business.

Cones entered the lexicon of popular foods; patent records suggest folk from sidewalk vendors to great corporations developed special cones and cone-making machines.

In 1912, one Frederick Bruckman perfected and patented a machine for rolling the waffle cones automatically.

Then, as now, ice cream consumers

Firm Footing: "The salesman at the counter, selling these cones, may rapidly fill the same and set the same in rows or groups on a counter," cone designers Maximilian and Walter Buhse explained in their 1927 patent for 'cone' with a flat base.

basically had two choices: sugary rolled waffle cones or the lighter, more structurally complex molded and baked brands.

But everyone thought they could make the ice cream cone better; patent records show dozens of applications in Britain and the U.S. in the early 20th century.

Maximilian and Walter Buhse of Minneapolis, working for the Maryland Baking Co. of Baltimore in 1922, came up with an idea that more or less merged Marchiony's cup and a St. Louis cone. "In accordance with universal practice, (cones) have hitherto been brought to an apex," they wrote in the crisp patent-filing language of 1927. "Our invention makes a highly important advance in the construction of commercial ice-cream cones by providing the same with flat bottoms."

The Buhse cone, "of the general shape of a whisky glass," is pictured above. It could be "set in self-sustaining positions, filled with ice cream, on counters, tables, trays or like places."

Working for the same company, Joseph Shapiro of Baltimore filed a patent for a cone that is not only elegant but also highlights one of the problems with the bowl design inspired by Marchiony.

"Although the bowl style cone has been on the market for some little time and is extremely popular by virtue of the fact that it so conveniently receives a helping of ice cream from the usual scoop it is essentially weak and frequently breaks in the circular line of junction between the bowl and stem."

The fancy ribs and rings around the Shapiro cone made it stronger.

Cone breakage, during shipping and use, has always been an issue.

Martin Feybusch of Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1926 filed a United States patent for a design that reinforced a cone's structure with "an outer layer of heat-insulating material," such as popcorn or puffed rice. He said it would spare ice-cream eaters from ending up with "a sodden pulpy mass... wet and sticky."

Another inventor, Edward Gingras of Buffalo, proposed a paper "ice-cream cone protector," to package a cone being served.

He used a series of pull-tabs secure a lid on top and to let ice cream eaters tear away a paper outer cone as they licked their way down.

He saw his device not only as a means for protecting the cone from bumps and knocks but also as a sanitary device, to protect from "dust and other impurities." An ice cream cone was "liable to be contaminated by handling by the vendor or purchaser."

Thus, the ice cream cone has never been frozen in time.

The invention has been reworked regularly, each generation giving the lowly ice cream cone its own twist.

In 1999, Richard Hartman of Issaquah, Wash., patented a motorized cone that spun around and around so you could sculpt the ice cream with your tongue.

Leave it to the Americans to mechanize a fancy European dessert.