

WHO INVENTED POTATO CHIPS?

A play based on the story: *George Crum: Inventor of Potato Chips*

SCORE: History/Social Studies

By Carole L. Cooney

Setting: Moon Lake Lodge resort

Characters:

Narrator

George Crum

Peggy

Mr. Schmidt

Narrator: Who invented potato chips? The potato chip was invented by Mr. George Crum. And how did he do it? Well, it all started while Mr. Crum was a chef at the Moon Lake Lodge resort in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Peggy: George, Mr. Schmidt is looking very anxious. He wants his supper now!

George: Hold your horses, Peggy! I'm cooking up this batch of French fries as fast as I can.

Peggy: Okay. I'll just go smile and tell him his supper is on its way.

Narrator: A few seconds later, Peggy returns the plate of French fries with another complaint.

George: What now, Peggy?

Peggy: Mr. Schmidt says the fries are too thick and soggy. What'll I tell him now?

George: Please tell him I'm doing the best I can. I'll try to make them as thin as possible. Ask him to give me a few minutes.

Narrator: George was completely frustrated. He had been making the same delicious French fries for years and years. This was the first complaint he had ever received. George picked up his knife and sharpened it over and over again. Then he took a potato and decided to cut it in half at the center. This was something he had never done before. His knife was so sharp that the slices of potato were almost paper-thin. Next, he popped the potato slices into his wire fryer and dipped it into piping hot oil.

George: Oh, my! These potatoes will be done in two seconds! Whew! I've never seen potatoes cook so fast. And don't they look delicious! All nicely browned. I'm just going to try one. Umm! They are so crunchy but something is missing and I know what that is. Salt! Yes, just a sprinkle of salt will do the

trick! Peggy! Peggy!

Narrator: Peggy came running to the kitchen to see why George had called. A smile grew on her face as she saw the plate of potatoes.

Peggy: What are you going to call these potatoes, George?

George: I hadn't thought of that, Peggy. Let's see. Potato... ah... Potato slices? How does that sound?

Peggy: It needs a bit too formal. How about Potato thins? Or Potato slims?

George: We need a crunchy sounding word. Here, try one.

Narrator: Peggy popped a slice into her mouth.

Peggy: Crunch! Chomp! Chip!

George: Yes, that's it. How about Saratoga Chips? They'll be named after our town.

Narrator: With a big smile, Peggy lifted the plate of potatoes shoulder high and walked out to the dinning room to serve Mr. Schmidt. George stood in the shadow of the kitchen door to hear the conversation and to see Mr. Schmidt's reaction.

Peggy: (proudly) Mr. Schmidt, may I present, for the first time ever, Chef George Crum's Saratoga Chips! Have a taste and tell me what you think of them.

Narrator: Mr. Schmidt looked confused. These fried potatoes were so different looking. He bravely lifted one chip off the plate and ate it. Quickly, he reached for another and then another and another.

Schmidt: Peggy, tell Chef George, that these are the best tasting potatoes I've ever had. What did you call them?

Peggy: They're called Saratoga Chips! They're named after our town!

Narrator: Eventually, potato chips were packaged and sold all over the East Coast. In the southern states, Mr. Herman Lay sold potato chips out of the trunk of his car. In California, Laura Scudder, who owned a potato chip factory, invented a wax paper bag to package the chips so that they would always be fresh and crunchy. Today, potato chips are popular as ever and are sold in a variety of sizes, shapes and flavors.