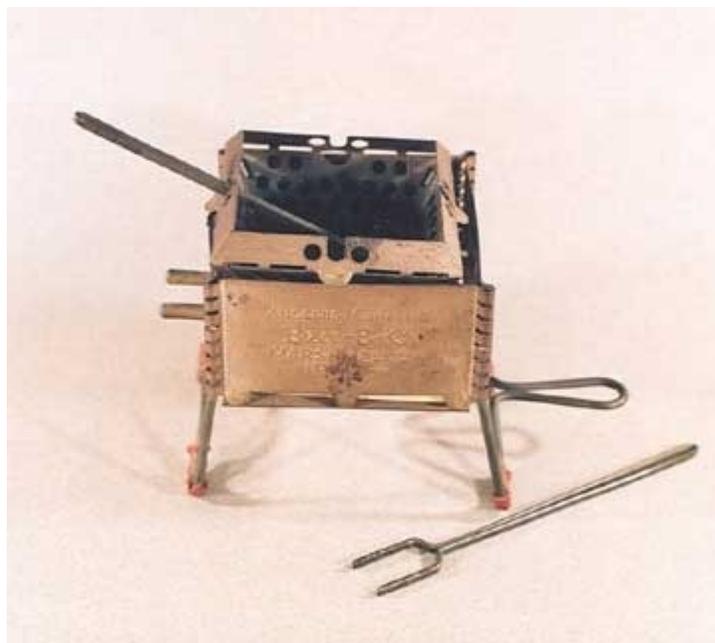


Donation of the Month

Marshmallow Toaster



Marshmallow Toaster
Catalog #: 2000.7.1
Donor: Lauren Godley

This strange looking contraption is an Angelus-Campfire Bar-B-Q Marshmallow Toaster. Dating from between 1909 to the 1930s, the marshmallow toaster joined many other small appliances that came about with the expanded use of electricity in the home. The marshmallow toaster joined other new household electric appliances such as bread toasters, waffle irons, and coffee makers. This marshmallow toaster was donated by Lauren Godley who remembered the toaster being in his childhood home in Rogers.

Made of thin metal, the toaster has a square chamber which sits on metal legs. In the bottom of this chamber is a metal heating coil set in ceramic. A square metal screen with holes fits inside above the heating element. A small metal fork is used to hold a marshmallow inside the screen for toasting and then lifted out when the desired amount of toasting is achieved. Four metal forks were provided. An electric cord would have plugged into one side to provide heating power. Although the cord for this model is missing, the metal prongs are visible on one side where the cord would have attached. Red rubber encases the feet to help keep the toaster in place during use.

Treats similar to marshmallows were enjoyed by ancient Egyptians as early as 2000 B.C. The Egyptians mixed sap from the mallow plant with nuts or honey. The mallow plant typically grew in marshes, hence the name marshmallow. In the mid-1800s, French candy makers whipped mallow root sap until fluffy in a candy mold. Unfortunately the process was often done by hand and was thus very slow. By the late 1800s, candy makers began using cornstarch to create better marshmallow molds and also started using gelatin instead of sap to create a more stable, uniform marshmallow. Both increased the speed of marshmallow production. In 1948, Alex Doumak patented a new process for making marshmallows. In this process, marshmallow ingredients were run through tubes and cut into equal-sized pieces. By the 1950s, marshmallows were found in many homes and were used in a variety of recipes.

CREDITS

“The History of Marshmallows,” National Confectioners Association (<http://www.candyusa.org/Candy/marshmallows.asp>); Linda Campbell Franklin, 300 Years of Kitchen Collectibles, Second Edition (1984), and “Lighting a Revolution” website accompanying exhibition by the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institute, 2005; Object and Donor files, Rogers Historical Museum Research Library.