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Name: Thomas Adams Jr.

Place: Brooklyn, New York

Years: April 11, 1846 – August 4, 1926

Brief Biography

Thomas Adams Jr. was born on April 11, 1846 in Brooklyn, New York. When Thomas was young, his father had come across a sample of chicle. Chicle was a form of gum that was made from the sap of a sapodilla tree located in Central America. He spent some time experimenting with the gum but nothing came of it.

Shortly after this brief experimentation, Rudolph Napegy, the secretary to the Mexican president walked into the family business of chewing chicle. Thomas's father realized people all over the world like to chew different things so he decided he was going to bring chicle to America. He asked drug stores to give people some chicle for free when they purchased candy. It began to catch on and more people were chewing.

At the urging of Thomas, his father increased production and formed his own company. With the addition of sugar to the recipe, chicle began to fly off the shelves. His father obtained a patent for making the gum. Upon the retirement of his father, Thomas became president of the growing chewing gum family business. As president he consolidated with other companies forming the American Chicle Company where he served as president. He was also able to create subsidiaries

Major Achievements

Thomas was responsible for urging his father to focus on the creation of chewing gum. Once he had taken over the family business he was able to consolidate and create subsidiaries. His product became so popular that he had to create new plants to handle the demand.

Thomas was also a part of clubs and part of the Republican Party. In addition to his political actions, he was also known for the many charitable contributions he made.

For More Information

Newark News, 25 Oct. 1953.

New York World Journal Tribune, 28 Mar. 1967.

New York Times, 6 Aug. 1926. (obituary)

Resources

American National Biography Online

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By Jenn Delisle