



# Heartland Science

Ohio's Legacy of Discovery & Innovation

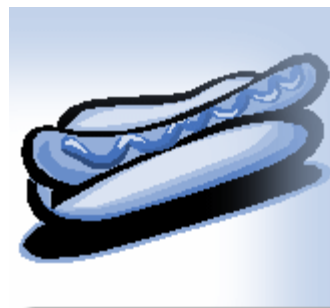


## Agriculture & Food

From Aquaculture to Hot Dogs

### Hot Dog and Sports Concession Industry

"Take me out to the ball game,  
Take me out with the crowd.  
Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack,  
I don't care if I never get back."  
-- From Jack Norworth's famous baseball song, 1908



Make that peanuts, crackerjacks, and hot dogs, popcorn, nachos, pizza, fries, pretzels, and a host of other munchies that fans down at sports events, concerts, and other gatherings. And thank Ohioan Harry M. Stevens (1855-1934) for getting the ball rolling nationally on serving these popular foods in stadiums. Stevens, of Niles, Ohio, was the father of modern sports concessions, which now includes foods, souvenirs, and other goods sold at all kinds of big gatherings. Stevens also can claim a key role in naming America's No. 1 sausage, the hot dog.

Born in London, England, Stevens emigrated to Ohio in 1882 and went into the business of providing food to sports fans and conventioners. While at a baseball game in Ohio in 1885, Stevens noticed that there was no way for fans to identify the players and keep track of their performance. He seized the opportunity, and began printing programs. He made money by selling local merchants advertising space in the programs. That led to the modern scorecards used in baseball games from Little League on up. It also helped win Stevens concessions, or rights, to sell food, programs, and other items inside baseball parks.

Stevens went national, and by the turn of the century was running the concessions at the Polo Grounds in New York City, a field used by the New York Yankees and New York Giants. Concessionaires in that era usually sold fans just ice cream and lemonade. One chilly day Stevens noticed that shivering fans weren't buying anything. He sent his salesmen out of the stadium to buy hundreds of "dachshund" sausages and rolls to put them in.



People had been eating long, thin sausages for hundreds of years. A city in Germany, Frankfurt-am-Main, often gets credit for originating and naming this sausage – the "frankfurter." Some hot dog historians, however, think it was invented in the late 1600's by Johann Georghehner, a butcher in Coburg, Germany who later sold them in Frankfurt. People called them "dachshund sausages" after the cute German dog with the long body.

Stevens' sales crew soon was selling the dachshund-in-a-bun combination – convenient for people to eat without a knife or fork – to the fans. Vendors roamed among the shivering fans with sausages in pots of hot water. Stevens told them to shout, "They're red hot. Get your dachshund sausages while they're red hot."

A newspaper cartoonist named Tad Dorgan supposedly took note and drew a cartoon showing dachshund sausages snuggled inside buns. Unable to spell "dachshund," he penned the words "hot dog" on the cartoon. The term then meant something fashionable. And so the term "hot dog" became an American food icon. Maybe.

Dorgan was a very popular cartoonist for the Hearst newspapers, and hundreds of his creations remain. This particular cartoon, however, is not among them. Among other accounts is a story that dachshund sausages became standard fare at baseball games in 1893, when a St. Louis bar owner, Chris Von de Ahe, started selling them at the St. Louis Browns major league baseball stadium.