Dinner Fresh from the Freezer

You need to make dinner, but don't have any fresh vegetables. So you go to the freezer and take out some frozen ones. When you have dinner, the taste of the vegetables is fresh and delicious. You can thank Clarence Birdseye for that. Clarence Birdseye invented a way for us to have frozen food in convenient packages.

Clarence Birdseye was born in 1886 in Brooklyn, New York. He was one of eight children. He loved nature and animals. Later, he started to study biology at college. He didn't finish college and started to work to make money. In many jobs around the country, he worked with animals and nature.

In 1912, Birdseye went to the north of Canada. He liked it there and bought and sold fur. He also took his new wife and baby son there. They lived in a cabin 250 miles (402 kilometers) away from the nearest doctor.

He often traveled with the local Inuit people, and he went fishing with them. As soon as one of them caught a fish, it quickly froze because the air was so cold. He asked them, "Are we going to eat this fish today?" The Inuit replied, "No, we already have fish for one month." Birdseye didn't understand. How could fish stay for a month and not go bad? Later, when he ate the frozen fish, it was as delicious as the fresh fish. Then he understood! When you freeze fish fast enough, it doesn't change its taste or the way it looks. He tried this new idea on vegetables. He froze cabbage so his family could eat vegetables in the winter.

In 1917, Birdseye returned to the United States and took different jobs. In the end, he worked for a fish company and started to try out the quick-freezing method he learned in Canada. Finally, in 1924, he started a company called Birdseye Seafood . It sold frozen foods such as fish, meat, and vegetables. In 1930, he tested the foods in Springfield, Massachusetts. For the first time, shoppers saw frozen foods in their grocery store. Did they buy them? Yes, they did! And what a change Birdseye made to the American diet, all because of his curiosity.