

From Bone to Bark: The Shocking Evolution of the Chainsaw

1780 - The First Chainsaw (Osteotome)

Invented by Scottish doctors John Aitken and James Jeffray, the first chainsaw was a small, hand-cranked tool designed for symphysiotomy-a procedure to widen the pelvis during childbirth by cutting through bone.

1800s - Medical Use Expands

Chainsaws were used for amputations and other surgical operations. Their compact design allowed for 'precise' bone removal, but without anesthesia, the pain was unimaginable.

1920s - Enter the Forestry Industry

Engineers repurposed the chainsaw for logging, building larger gas-powered versions to cut down trees more efficiently. This marks the tool's shift from medical to industrial use.

1974 - Horror Icon Emerges

With the release of 'The Texas Chainsaw Massacre,' the chainsaw became a symbol of cinematic terror. What began in a surgery room became a weapon of fear in pop culture.

1980s - The Irish Symphysiotomy Scandal

Even as safer methods existed, some hospitals in Ireland continued using symphysiotomies-sometimes without patient consent. Survivors later reported lifelong trauma and demanded justice.

Modern Day - Rescue and Relief

Today, chainsaws are used in search and rescue, wildland firefighting, and sustainable forestry. Though the tech has evolved, its original function still echoes through its design.