

One bowl leads to another: Cereal through the ages

DARK AGES – For a long time in human history, the wonders of cold cereal from a box are not known or enjoyed. Whether happiness exists during this period of unenlightenment is a mystery.

1876 – Dr. John H. Kellogg is hired to oversee what will become the Battle Creek Sanitarium, in Battle Creek, Mich. His brother William assists him in bookkeeping and other tasks. He is hired by Ellen G. White, the founder of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and a former patient at the Jackson Sanitarium. He soon begins to experiment with grain-based breakfast foods, creating a similar product to Jackson's – he even calls it "granula."



1894 – The Kellogg family invents the process by which flaked cereal can be made. A patent for the process is filed in 1895 and granted in 1896. The Kellogg brothers soon begin selling Granose Flakes, the first flaked grain cereal, which is made of wheat. They later formulate a recipe for corn flakes.

1902 – Sunny Jim becomes the first cereal mascot. He appears on boxes of Force wheat flakes and soon becomes a nationally known fictional character. Other cereal companies quickly follow suit.



1905 – The first puffed rice cereal is produced by Quaker Oats. The method, which involves shooting grains of rice from a cannon, was invented by Alexander P. Anderson. The cereal markets itself as "food shot from guns" and "the 8th wonder of the world."

1909 – Kellogg's Corn Flakes introduces the first cereal box prize for kids as part of an advertising campaign.



1934 – Post Toasties pays Walt Disney \$1.5 million for the rights to use Mickey Mouse and other Walt Disney characters on their cereal boxes for one year. Some say Disney used the money to build his film empire.

1941 – Snap, Crackle and Pop appear for the first time together on a box of Rice Krispies. They were created in 1933, but originally appeared only on ads and in posters.



1960s – Breakfast cereal is so heavily marketed to kids that the Federal Trade Commission steps in to establish new laws.

1970s – Rising concerns about health and excess sugar consumption cause cereal producers to create more health-oriented products and emphasize nutritional value over flavor.

1863 – Dr. James Caleb Jackson, the founder of Jackson Sanitarium in New York, invents "granula," which is made from dried graham flour dough. It is tasteless and so hard that it must be soaked overnight before it can be consumed.



1881 – A lawsuit forces the Kellogg brothers to stop calling their product "granula" – so they name it "granola." This wheat, oat and corn-based cereal is formed into a dough, baked and then broken into crumbs. By 1889, the Battle Creek Sanitarium is selling 2 tons of granola each week.

1895 – C.W. Post, a former patient at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, founds his own company in Battle Creek, Mich., and sells a product called Postum, a breakfast cereal beverage. In 1897 he invents Grape Nuts. His products are heavily advertised with wildly inaccurate health claims.



1904 – C.W. Post produces corn flakes under the name Elijah's Manna. Religious groups protest, so he changes the name to Post Toasties in 1908. The Kellogg brothers accuse him of stealing the corn flakes recipe from their safe.

1906 – William K. Kellogg leaves the Battle Creek Sanitarium with the rights to produce the corn flakes. He desires to advertise products and sweeten the corn flakes with a little bit of sugar. John is opposed to both ideas so William founds his own company and sells the slightly sweetened Kellogg's Corn Flakes.

1911 – Because of their popularity and high profit margin, around 100 brands of corn flakes are produced in the Battle Creek, Mich. area.

1939 – Ranger Joe Popped Wheat Honnies become the first pre-sugared cereal. At this time most cereals are unsweetened; people at home added sugar according to their tastes. The pre-sweetened cereal was said to be aimed at keeping people from adding excess sugar.



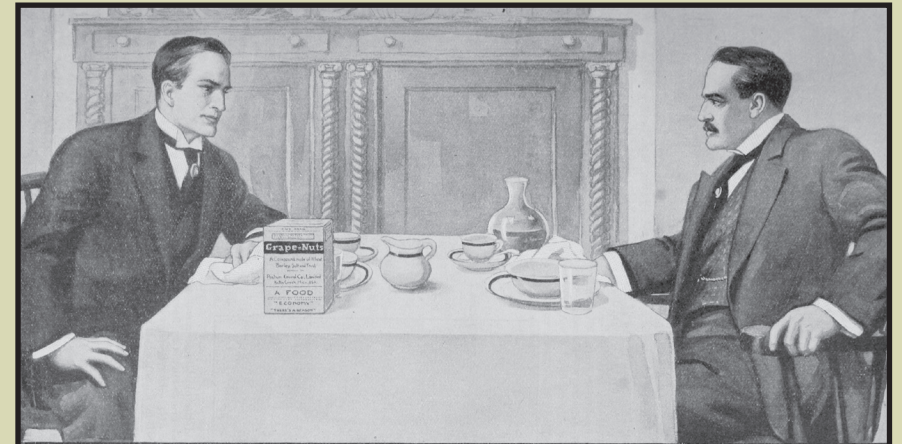
1949 – Sugar Crisp becomes first cereal to have an animated TV commercial, featuring three bears: Handy, Dandy and Candy. The cereal was later renamed Golden Crisp.



1950s – Trix, Frosted Flakes, Corn Pops and other sugar cereals that still dominate the market appear.



1996 – Cereal consumption peaks and has declined ever since.



Men of Brains Know and appreciate the brain-food strength of **Grape-Nuts** "There's a Reason" Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich., U. S. A.

Sinister cereal

DISHING ON THE DARK ORIGINS OF COLD CEREAL

That bowl of corn flakes might not be as pure and innocent it seems. Cereal's sordid past is filled with greed, lies, betrayal, family conflict, religious extremism and unethical business practices — just the sort of the thing to start your day off right. Here are a few skeletons you'll find in that pantry closet:

UNUSUAL HEALTH PRACTICES. Cereal owes its existence to sanitariums. In the mid-to-late 1800s, these health resorts were a convalescent destination for middle- and upper-class citizens who suffered from a variety of health woes. There they would be subjected to a restricted diet, along with specific exercises and therapies. For example, at the Battle Creek Sanitarium you could start your day with a Granose biscuit, enjoy shock therapy or a machine-powered enema in the afternoon and end your day with Wheatose Mould with Grape Sauce. It was at these places that cold cereal was developed and popularized.

EXTREME BELIEFS. As a Seventh Day Adventist and ardent vegetarian, Dr. John Kellogg believed meat was to blame not only for the chronic indigestion that scourged the nation, but its moral maladies as well. During the mid- to late 1800s, meat figured prominently on

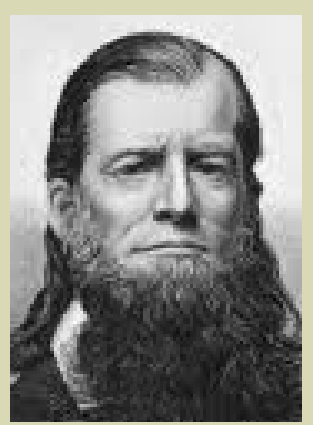
the breakfast table, so Kellogg wanted to provide people with an alternative. Cereal, he believed, would promote health and curb sexual desire. Not to be outdone in those claims, an early version of Wheat Chex, called Shredded Ralston, was developed for followers of Ralstonism, a racist social movement. The cereal was part of a diet said to give them control over the thoughts of others.

UNETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES. Kellogg's first cereal was a shameless copy of a product made at the Jackson Sanitarium. Later, one of Kellogg's patients at the sanitarium, C.W. Post, copied Kellogg's concept and began producing his own cereal. He was accused of stealing the corn flakes recipe from Kellogg's safe.

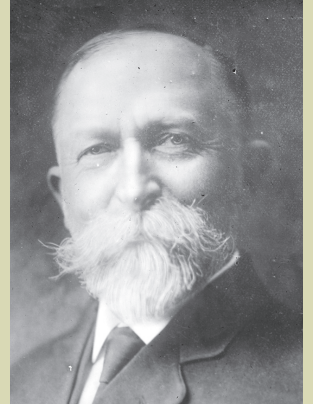
FAMILY CONFLICT. The Kellogg brothers worked together harmoniously at the Battle Creek Sanitarium for a time, but eventually parted ways over business disagreements about the direction of the cereal side of the business. They couldn't even agree on the story about how they had invented flaked cereal.

FALSE ADVERTISING. In the early 1900s, Post put more effort into selling his products than he did into making accurate claims about them. Grape-Nuts, his ads claimed, could help a person beat alcoholism, improve IQ and cure appendicitis. It also allegedly "made red blood redder," whatever that means.

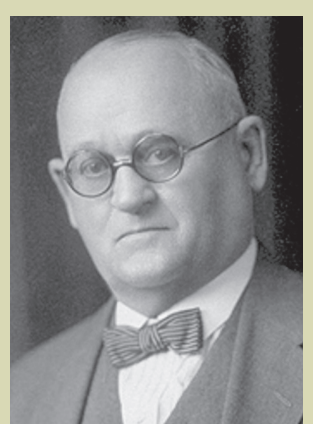
MARKETING TO CHILDREN. Sugar cereal has long been heavily marketed to children. With the rise of television, cereal product placement became the norm in children's cartoons and television shows — Andy Griffith, Fred Flintstone and Yogi Bear all pitched various brands of cereal during their programs. Some claimed these techniques were manipulative, and eventually Congress passed laws that restricted advertising to children. They're not the only gullible ones though: If you believe "breakfast is the most important meal of the day" you've been influenced by a good marketing campaign that is decades old.



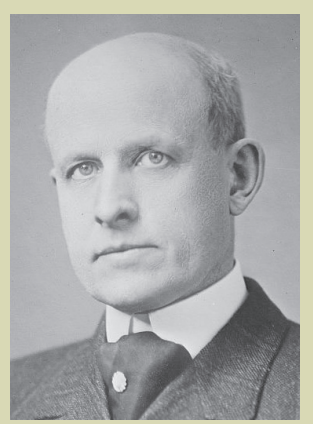
James Caleb Jackson



John Harvey Kellogg



Will Kellogg



C.W. Post

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{ CEREAL SMACKDOWN }

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND BEGINS: Frosted-Mini Wheats vs. Lucky Charms

The showdown for the best cereal is down to Frosted Mini Wheats and Lucky Charms. Things had been great for Tony the Tiger and his Frosted Flakes until they were bested by Frosted Mini Wheats 25 to 20. Lucky Charms kept its winning streak alive, taking down Apple Jacks 28 to 18. The fortunate leprechaun is the only survivor of the original four mascots — Tony the Tiger, Cap'n Crunch, the Trix Rabbit — to make it to the semi-finals. Voting continues for the Cereal Smackdown today until Monday at inland360.com. Results on the readers' favorite will be published in next Thursday's Inland 360.