

The flaky history of the breakfast bowl

By Gena Bell

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Snap, Crackle and Pop may be your favorite breakfast music, but back in 1863, James Caleb Jackson of Dansville, N. Y., sang a different tune.

Jackson invented the first ready-to-eat breakfast cereal, which he called Granula. It was intended as a health food and consisted of coarse whole graham flour and water. The mixture was baked into loaves, broken into dense little bits and served with milk.

During the same period, brothers John and William Kellogg operated what today would be called a health resort started by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Battle Creek, Mich. It later became the Battle Creek Sanatorium, and patients flocked there, in large part, to get their colons cleansed.

John Kellogg developed numerous nut and vegetable products to vary the diet of the patients, including a pressed and flaked corn cereal called Granose.

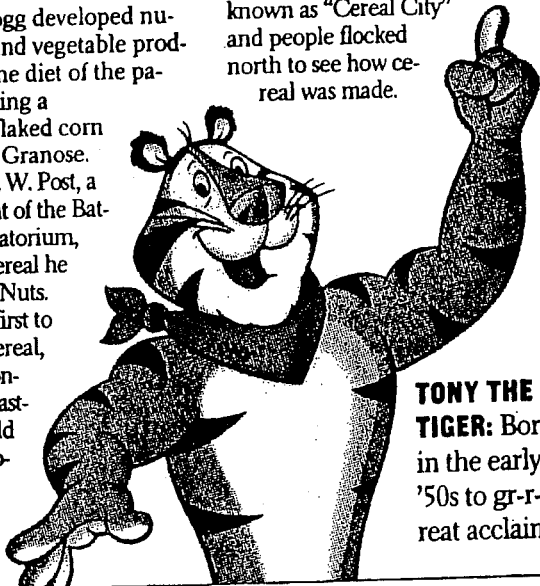
In 1897, C. W. Post, a former patient of the Battle Creek Sanatorium, marketed a cereal he called Grape Nuts. Post was the first to realize that cereal, which was convenient and tasted good, could have some appeal beyond the sanatorium.



SNAP! CRACKLE! POP!: These three were the first characters to represent a Kellogg's product. Snap! arrived in 1933, Crackle! and Pop! followed in 1941.

William Kellogg followed suit. In 1906, Kellogg began marketing his brother's corn and wheat flakes, and placed the first cereal advertisement in Ladies' Home Journal. By 1909, annual sales pushed past 1 million cases.

Battle Creek soon became known as "Cereal City" and people flocked north to see how cereal was made.



TONY THE TIGER: Born in the early '50s to gr-r-reat acclaim.

Today, cereals come in four basic types: flaked, puffed, shredded and granular.

■ Flaked cereals are made from corn, wheat or rice that has been cooked down into grits and then recooked with syrups and pressed into flakes, such as corn flakes.

■ Puffed cereal is made by exploding pressure-cooked wheat or rice, like puffed rice or Rice Krispies.

■ Shredded cereal is made from pressure-cooked wheat that is squeezed into strands by heavy rollers and cut into biscuits, like shredded wheat.

■ Granular cereal made with a stiff wheat dough that is fermented, baked, crumbled and rebaked, then ground into rough grain, like Grape Nuts.

After all that processing, cereal is treated to restore vita-

mins lost through cooking, a process that started in the '40s.

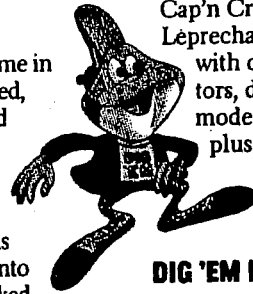
The sugar is a fairly recent addition. Early cereals were marketed as pure, healthy food, but by the late 1940s increased competition led to a rise in sugary cereal and a number of new fictional characters to sell it.

The Lone Ranger championed Cheerios on radio in the 1940s and later on TV. He also pitched Trix and Wheaties in the '50s.

In the 1960s, Sugar Bear, Cap'n Crunch and Lucky the Leprechaun enticed children with offers of bike reflectors, dolls and U.S. Navy model warships for 50 cents plus one box top.

In the 1970s, cereal companies came under attack for their products' lack of nutritional value and many manufacturers began adding nutrients and pitching the concept of "fortified" cereal.

DIG 'EM FROG: Introduced in 1972 to sell Kellogg's Sugar Smacks, now called Honey Smacks.



SOURCES INCLUDE
WWW.KRAFTFOODS.COM; THE
COLUMBIA ENCYCLOPEDIA, SIXTH
EDITION, 2001;
WWW.KELLOGGS.COM;
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WWW.BRITANNICA.COM.

Gena Bell graduates from Tante Marie's Cooking School next month.