



## CEREAL CITY

The story of how American's breakfast eating habits changed started shortly after the Civil War. At the Western Reform Health Institute in Battle Creek, Michigan, patients were "cured" using water, sunshine, exercise, rest, and a healthy diet. In 1875, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, a battle creek native, became the institute's director. Kellogg renamed the institute the Battle Creek Medical and Surgical Sanitarium. Patients at the "San," as it was called, practiced "methods of healthful living." The main idea of the San's program was to change the patients' unhealthy eating habits. At the time of the Civil War, Americans ate heavy meals of meat and potatoes. They also ignored grains and fruits. Dr. Kellogg told his patients, "Eat what the monkey eats- simple food and not too much of it." At the San, patients were served Granula, a mixture of dried, ground-up leftover bread, and Caramel Cereal Coffee, a coffee substitute made of burnt bread crusts, bran, and molasses. To make a healthy diet taste better, the sanitarium experimented with food. It was during one of these experiments that they created the wheat flake.

### Post and Kellogg

One day in 1894, Dr. Kellogg and his younger brother William Keith (better known as W.K.) left cooked wheat sitting out for almost two days. When the brothers returned, they ran the dried wheat through rollers. Each wheat kernel was flattened into a small sliver of grain and baked. These early wheat flakes were tough and tasteless, but patients at the sanitarium liked them.

The Kelloggs had created the wheat flake, but Charles W. Post made Battle Creek the Cereal City.

Born in Illinois, Post was a patient at the San. When Post left the sanitarium, he stayed in Battle Creek and opened a health spa. He also experimented with health foods. Post created a hot drink from wheat, bran, and molasses. He called it Postum Cereal Food Coffee. Post then introduced a dry cereal called Grape Nuts. Its ingredients included wheat and malted barley flour. Post said Grape Nuts was "the most scientific food in the world" because it helped with digestion.

Post formed a company and began selling Postum and Grape Nuts. Within a few years, he was a millionaire. Post's success led others to start cereal companies. In 1902, one observer noted that everyone in Battle Creek "has gone daft over food cereal business".

At least thirty different Battle Creek companies started to make cereal. Many companies had problems. Frumenta Flakes were so brittle that the sharp edges cut the mouths of people. Norka's Malted Oats were grey in color and quickly spoiled on the grocer's shelves.

As Battle Creek's cereal boom began, W.K. Kellogg started experimenting with corn. Kellogg boiled raw corn. He then dried it and ran it through rollers. He invented Corn Flakes.

On February 16, 1906, Kellogg Founded the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company. The company given a new name. The Kellogg Toasted Corn Flake Company. Within a few years, Americans across the country enjoyed Kellogg's Corn Flakes.

In the 1920s, C.W. Post's company became part of General Foods Corporation. Today, the name Post still appears on cereal boxes. As for W.K. Kellogg's company, Kellogg's still makes cereal in Battle Creek.