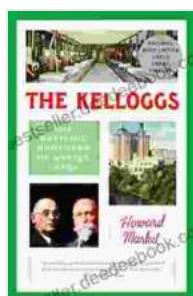


The Kellogg Brothers: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek

In the annals of American entrepreneurship, the Kellogg brothers, Will Keith and John Harvey, stand as iconic figures. Their names are synonymous with the breakfast cereal industry, and their company, Kellogg's, has become a global behemoth. However, behind this success story lies a tale of sibling rivalry, bitter feuds, and a remarkable transformation that shaped the American breakfast table forever.

Early Lives and Rivalry

Will Kellogg was born on April 7, 1860, in Battle Creek, Michigan. His younger brother, John, was born on February 18, 1866. The two brothers grew up in a devout Seventh-day Adventist family, where health and nutrition were paramount. From a young age, they exhibited a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a competitive streak.



The Kelloggs: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek

by Howard Markel

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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In their early twenties, the brothers opened a health food company in Battle Creek. They experimented with various food products, including peanut butter, granola, and breakfast cereals. However, it was not until 1894 that they stumbled upon a revolutionary idea: flaked wheat. After several rounds of experimentation, they developed a process for creating crispy, flavorful wheat flakes that would change the breakfast landscape forever.

The Birth of Kellogg's

The brothers named their new product "Granose," and in 1895 they launched the Battle Creek Sanitarium Health Food Company. The cereal quickly gained popularity among health-conscious consumers, particularly within the Seventh-day Adventist community.

In 1897, the brothers decided to split their partnership. John wanted to focus on the production and sales of their breakfast cereal, while Will preferred to remain in the health food business. John established his own company, the Sanitas Food Company, and began selling Granose under the name "Kellogg's Corn Flakes."

A Battle of Brothers

The separation of the brothers marked the beginning of a bitter rivalry that would last for decades. Will accused John of stealing his cereal formula and unfair competition. John, in turn, dismissed Will's claims and asserted that he had developed the improved recipe independently.

The rivalry extended to their personal lives. They refused to speak to each other and even avoided each other at social events. The schism within the family became a local scandal that captivated the town of Battle Creek.

The Advertising Wars

As the battle between the brothers intensified, they engaged in a relentless advertising war. Both companies spent millions of dollars on print and radio ads, extolling the virtues of their cereals and disparaging the other's product.

John Kellogg was particularly ruthless in his attacks. He accused Will of producing an inferior cereal and using unethical marketing practices. Will, on the other hand, portrayed John as a ruthless businessman who cared more about profits than the well-being of consumers.

The advertising battle reached its peak in 1906 with the publication of a scathing article in John Kellogg's magazine, *Good Health*. The article accused Will of selling impure and adulterated food products. In response, Will filed a lawsuit against his brother, alleging libel and slander.

The Aftermath

The lawsuit dragged on for years, further deepening the rift between the brothers. In the end, the jury ruled in Will's favor and awarded him a substantial sum in damages. However, the victory did little to heal the wounds that had been inflicted.

The Kellogg brothers never fully reconciled. Will continued to operate his health food business, while John built Kellogg's into a breakfast cereal empire. They remained bitter rivals until their deaths: Will in 1951 and John in 1955.

Legacy of the Brothers

Despite their feud, the Kellogg brothers left an enduring legacy on the American breakfast table. Their invention of flaked wheat cereal revolutionized the way people started their day. Kellogg's Corn Flakes became a staple of American breakfasts, and the company they founded continues to be one of the largest and most recognizable food companies in the world.

The story of the Kellogg brothers is also a cautionary tale about the dangers of sibling rivalry and the destructive power of unresolved conflicts. It reminds us that even the most successful relationships can be torn apart by bitterness and resentment.

The Kellogg brothers were complex and driven men. Their ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit transformed the American breakfast landscape, but their sibling rivalry left an enduring mark on their personal lives and their family's legacy. Their story is a testament to the power of both innovation and the importance of reconciliation.

FAQs

- *Who invented Kellogg's Corn Flakes?*

John Harvey Kellogg developed the improved recipe for Kellogg's Corn Flakes and launched the Sanitas Food Company in 1897.

- *Why did the Kellogg brothers split up?*

John Kellogg wanted to focus on the production and sales of breakfast cereal, while Will preferred to remain in the health food business.

- *What was the subject of the libel lawsuit between the brothers?*

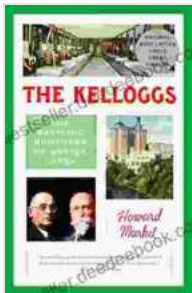
John Kellogg published an article in his magazine, Good Health, accusing Will of selling impure and adulterated food products.

- *How did the lawsuit end?*

The jury ruled in Will Kellogg's favor and awarded him a substantial sum in damages.

- *What is the legacy of the Kellogg brothers?*

The Kellogg brothers' invention of flaked wheat cereal revolutionized the American breakfast table. Kellogg's Corn Flakes became a staple of American breakfasts, and their company remains one of the largest and most recognizable food companies in the world.



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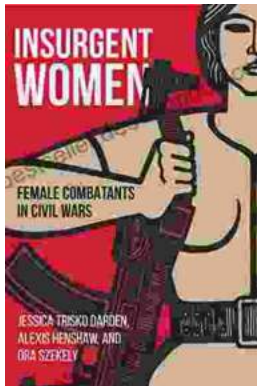
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