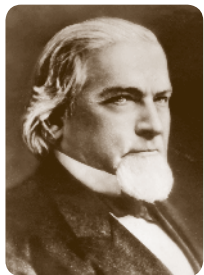


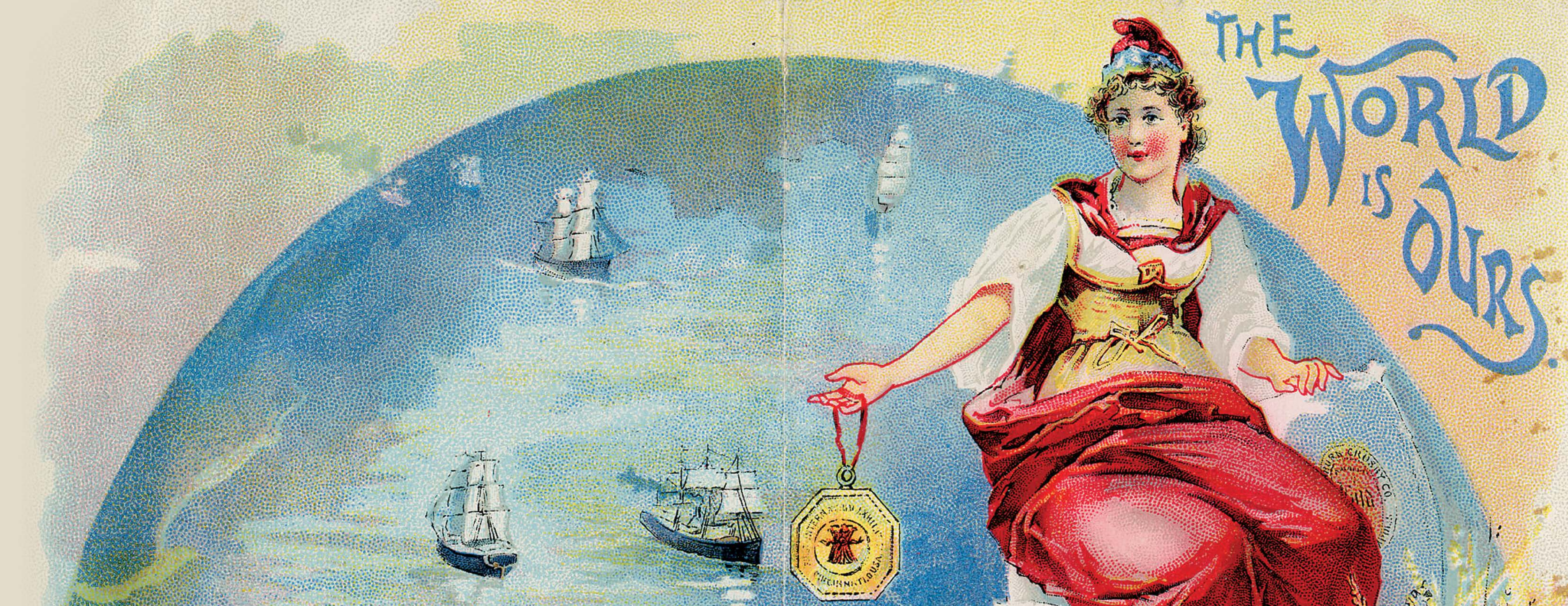
GENERAL MILLS



*Celebrating* **150**  
*years of making food people love*







THE  
WORLD  
IS  
Ours.







**IN 1866, CADWALLADER WASHBURN** built his first flour mill on the banks of the Mississippi River.

**ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS LATER,** the company he founded – General Mills – has grown to become one of the most trusted food companies in the world.

**TODAY, IN 2016,** as we celebrate our first 150 years of innovation, invention, food and fun – we also look ahead with excitement to our next 150 years of making food people love.

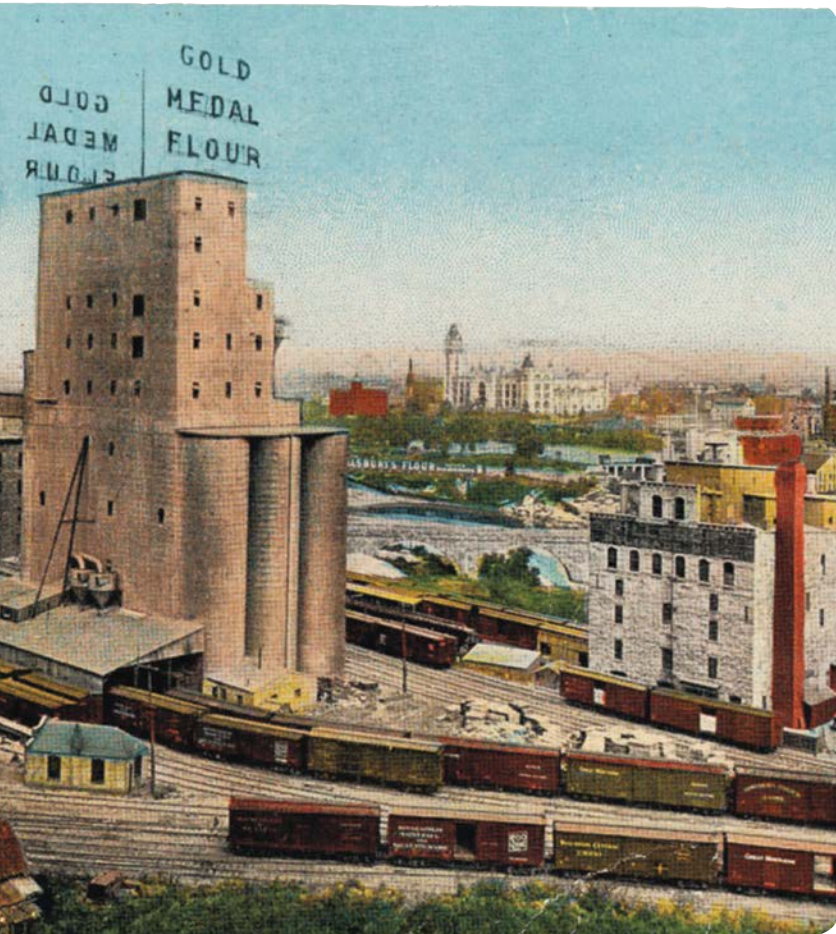


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GENERAL MILLS



*Celebrating* **150**  
*years of making food people love*





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**SENIOR EDITOR:** Tom Forsythe

**EDITOR:** Judy Hynes

**DESIGNER:** Jo Penfield

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Sarah Huesing, Grant Moos, Monte Olmsted, Chris Roberts, Jim Thielman

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:** Sandy Laidlaw

**HISTORICAL RESEARCH:** General Mills Archivists Jean Toll, Katie Dishman, Suzie Goodsell, Susan Wakefield, Jessica Faucher; research assistant Katie Gamache

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*Celebrating 150 years*



## *Prologue*

Few companies live to celebrate a sesquicentennial – 150 years. Fewer still have as much fun with as many stories to tell as General Mills.

Ours is a rich history of firsts and forays, setbacks and success. We've innovated, invented, connected and created. Through furniture and fashion, games and trains – but always with our heart in food – we've embraced every twist and turn for a century and a half across our changing world.

Through it all, we've not only endured, we've also prospered.

Ours is a story of conviction and courage, challenge and change. It's a story of people, passion and principle, of resourcefulness, renewal and resolve.

We've been making food and families better and healthier for 150 years, and it would be difficult to tell our story in a thousand pages. There are simply too many stories to tell. But we would be remiss not to mark this milestone.

So with apologies for excluding too many items worthy of mention, and with acknowledgment and thanks to the sister companies, friends and employees – especially our General Mills archivists – who have shared our exceptional journey, we invite you to spend a moment remembering some of the highlights of our rich and colorful past.

Celebrating 150 years of making food people love – and looking forward to 150 more.

— Tom Forsythe







## Our Belief

We believe food should make us better.

We believe food brings us joy and nourishes our lives, connecting us to each other and the earth.

It's our unique point of view on the power of food.



## Our Purpose

**Our purpose is why we do what we do.** It guides what we do as a company.

Across our rich history, we've found three themes consistently reflected in all we do.

- › We are a **service** company, with a deep respect and sense of service to our consumers, customers, communities and shareholders.
- › We make **food**, and we do it with pride and passion.
- › We make food for **people**. For our friends and family. For your friends and your family.

Our belief that food should make us better helps clarify our purpose.

**We serve the world by making food people love.**

We know when we're at our very best, people love our products.

- › They love Cheerios – from young to old.
- › They love Häagen-Dazs – the best ice cream in the world.
- › They love Totino's, Nature Valley and Fiber One.
- › They love Betty Crocker and Pillsbury and Yoki.
- › They love Wanchai Ferry dim sum – the best you can buy.
- › They love Annie's, from organic mac and cheese to cheddar bunnies.
- › And they love Yoplait around the world.

Always living our purpose, we know what we have to do. We have to continue to serve the world by making food people love.





## Our Pursuits

Our pursuits outline how to live our purpose.



**Our pursuit to put people first** is the link between our purpose and our strategy.

It reflects our commitment to “Serving People” and fully reinforces our strategy of “Consumer First.”

We conduct ourselves with integrity. We treat consumers and customers with respect and dignity. We live our values – and “Do the Right Thing, All the Time.” In every interaction with consumers, customers, shareholders, stakeholders, communities and employees – General Mills is a “put people first” company.



We create – and there is a unique sense of pride in all we do.

We build things. We create things. We make things. And not just products. We also create shareholder value and work to create a better community.

We’re “creators,” and it is one of the most rewarding aspects of being part of General Mills.

To strive to **build a culture of creating** sets the bar high. It drives us to innovate and create in all we do.



We are a food company – so above all, we strive to **make food with passion.**

For nearly 150 years, that’s exactly what we’ve done. We’ve made the world’s best flour. We’ve made cereals loved around the world. We’ve made baking easier and cooking healthier. We created the world’s best ice cream and the world’s best frozen dumplings.

We serve the world by making food people love. We’re passionate about our food.

Food of the highest quality. Food of uncompromising safety. Food that tastes great. Food that makes life easier and healthier. Food that connects us. Food that makes moments worth sharing and life a little more rewarding. We make food with passion – and we are passionate to the core.



Food is intimate. People prepare and share our food with the most important people in their lives.

Trust is everything for us. We embrace only the highest standards for quality and safety – and we pledge to make the very best products we can every single day.

We strive to **earn people’s trust.**

Not only in how our products are made, but also in how our communities are served and how the planet is stewarded. It’s about sharing information people want to know – and holding ourselves to the highest standards for how we will treat people around the world.

It’s a high bar – and it can be a competitive advantage if we continue to be the company that we ourselves would want to be.



Finally, we must do all of this sustainably, while giving back and making our communities and our world a better place every day.

We must **treat the world with care.**

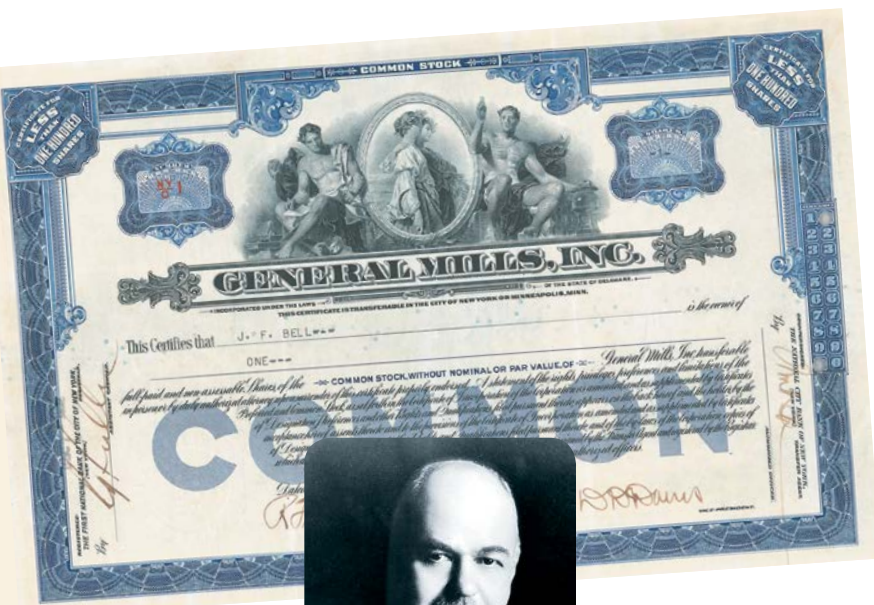
We must steward the water resources on which we depend. We must sustainably source our key ingredients. We must respect human rights and make our communities stronger – giving of our time and our talents. It’s philanthropy. It’s volunteerism. It’s operating responsibly.

**We serve the world by making food people love.** That is our purpose, and our pursuits guide us and move us forward every day.





## Creation of General Mills



James Ford Bell is rightly viewed as the founder of General Mills. But if not for a lone dissenter on the board of the company that had offered to purchase the Washburn Crosby Company in 1928, General Mills may never have come to be.

Washburn Crosby had accepted the purchase offer, and the contracts were nearly signed when the purchasing company abruptly withdrew. Knowing that a dramatic moment was at hand, Bell instead went

across the street to a New York

investment banker and advanced a plan for a horizontal integration of milling companies. By June 1928, Bell had aligned four other milling companies to merge into the new General Mills. Red Star Milling Company, Royal Milling Company, Kalispell Flour Mills Company, and Rocky Mountain Elevator Company joined the Washburn Crosby Company to create one of the largest milling companies in the world.

General Mills came into existence on June 22, 1928, two days after its incorporation. The new company's broad-minded philosophy of allowing mills to maintain their own identities impressed bankers, and Washburn Crosby's track record impressed the American public. In Chicago, the allotment of stock to brokers was sold before a formal selling campaign could even commence.

At its first official board meeting in June 1928, the new board of directors issued GIS stock to acquire the assets of the five companies, with the stock indicating the value of each company within General Mills: 135,418 shares to the Washburn Crosby Company; 20,152 to the Red Star Milling Company; 8,122 to the Royal Milling Company; 3,671 to the Kalispell Flour Mills Company; and 2,637 to the Rocky Mountain Elevator Company.

Although little had been added physically to what the Washburn Crosby Company owned before the merger, investors believed the new company would grow more quickly than if the various mills had remained independent. That confidence was reflected in General Mills' stock price, which was issued at \$65, but quickly rose to \$86. The stock first traded as GIS on the New York Stock Exchange on November 30, 1928.

### STOCKHOLDERS GET CONNECTED

After years of holding regional shareholder meetings, General Mills decided to try something new. On October 29, 1959, the company connected stockholders across the country in one meeting via closed-circuit television. General Mills executives presided at each location, and two-way communication was maintained throughout. It was the first nationwide closed-circuit meeting.



### UNINTERRUPTED DIVIDENDS

General Mills paid a dividend of \$1.67 per share for fiscal 2015. The company and its predecessor firm have paid shareholder dividends without interruption or reduction for 117 years.







## Flour power

At its core, General Mills was first a flour milling company.

For 150 years and counting, General Mills and its predecessor companies have provided the world with top-quality flour.

In fact, Gold Medal flour has been a top-selling flour in the U.S. since its debut in 1880. That was when the Washburn Crosby Company entered several grades of its flour in the first Millers' International Exhibition in Cincinnati, Ohio. The company's flours shined, winning the gold, silver and bronze medals for quality. Soon after, the company changed the name of its highest quality flour to Gold Medal.



After several mills were consolidated to become General Mills in 1928, the company absorbed other flour brands, enhancing the position of the U.S. milling trade in export markets while streamlining transportation needs.

The Sperry Flour Company's Drifted Snow flour was the most prominent flour brand on the West Coast when Sperry was incorporated into General Mills in 1929. Sperry's other flours included La Bandera, Harina and Gold Seal flour.

Flour brands varied in attributes. For example, Sperry's La Piña flour, introduced in 1910, was formulated from soft wheat, which was ideal for use in tortillas and other



Mexican dishes.

La Piña remained popular in the Southwest even after the brand was sold as part of General Mills' acquisition of the Pillsbury Company in 2001.

Red Star Milling Company in Kansas contributed three brands to the company: Red Star Perfect Process, Red Star Enriched and Vitalife.

SunDown Bleached and Fluffy White brands from Montana's Kalispell Flour Mills Company, as well as Rex flours from Montana's Royal Milling Company, became part of General Mills in the merger that created the company in 1928.

General Mills purchased Red Band Company in 1933, along with its Red Band flour, multipurpose soft wheat flour specifically for use in quick breads, biscuits and cakes. We sold Red Band in the 2001 Pillsbury deal as well.

Many different flour brands have dotted our history over the years, but the most well-known brand remains Gold Medal flour – still the leading consumer flour brand in America.

### PILLSBURY'S BEST

Pillsbury broke milling protocol when it created its familiar barrelhead logo with four "X"s. At that time, millers used Xs to distinguish between flour qualities. Flour marked with three Xs was the miller's highest-quality flour.

By adding another X, Pillsbury set its flour apart, indicating that it was superior to the other leading flours on the market. In 1872, Pillsbury's Best trademark name and four-X logo were registered.



Pillsbury A mill, 1881



### Just a few of the flour brands from our past



La Piña      Fluffy White      Rex      Baquick      Top Hat      Perry Seal      Biskit Queen      Pure Gold



# Advertising with a flair



You've heard of baseball cards? General Mills and Pillsbury promoted flour using something similar. Thick and the size of a postcard, each had an illustration on one side. The flip side presented recipes, ads or grocer specials. "Trade" cards were popular forms of advertising from the 1890s through the late 1910s.

As a surplus of wheat and a dwindling world market were driving down prices for farmers in 1923, the Washburn Crosby Company implemented a new advertising program for its flour. The campaign added the slogan "Eat More Wheat" to all of its ads. The American Bakers Association endorsed the idea, as did many grocery and farming organizations. Other companies adopted the slogan, including Pillsbury. The campaign lasted a short time, but the phrase became ubiquitous in many parts of the United States.



## FROM BARN TO BARNSTORMING

As the nation took flight, Gold Medal took wing, with barnstormers and airplane races. "Speed" Holman, right, of the Minneapolis Aero Club, set a speed record flying from Minot, North Dakota, to Dayton, Ohio, in the International Air Races of 1924. Above: 1980 ad marking Gold Medal flour's 100th anniversary.



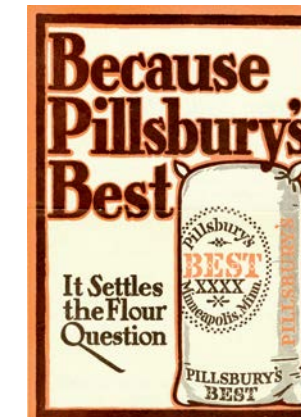
## EVENTUALLY ... WHY NOT NOW?

It was retrieved from a wastebasket, but no flour advertising campaign in the 1900s was as well-known as the Washburn Crosby Company's "Eventually ... Why Not Now?"

Benjamin S. Bull, Washburn Crosby's advertising manager, coined the slogan in 1907, and it lasted well into the 1940s – an unusually long time. Although many stories exist about how Bull created the famous words, the accepted tale is that he was given a long list of reasons people should use Gold Medal flour. Each point was preceded with the word "eventually." Bull thought, "Why wait?" He wrote, "Eventually – why not now?" He wavered, flipping the paper into a nearby wastebasket. James Ford Bell, son of the

company's president, retrieved the crumpled paper and encouraged Bull to reconsider.

The \$650,000 cost of the "Eventually" campaign was a large investment in the early 1900s. It paid off handsomely. The phrase was adopted by other businesses worldwide that modified it to advertise everything from Harley-Davidson motorcycles to banking services. But competitor Pillsbury took a sparring approach to the "Eventually" slogan. Near a Washburn Crosby Company billboard that read "Eventually ... Why Not Now?", Pillsbury raised a billboard that read: "Because Pillsbury's Best."



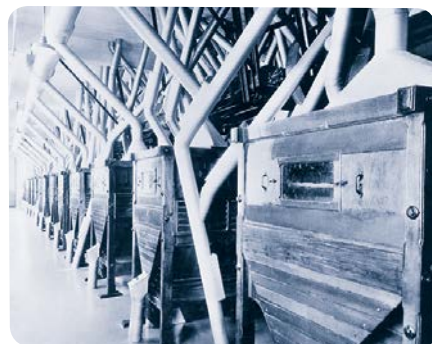




# Milling milestones

## MIDLINGS PURIFIER

Hard red spring wheat, the variety grown in the upper Midwest because of its shorter growing season, would unfortunately retain some of its darker, rough bran fragments when milled. But people preferred white flour, rather than gray. And that was an issue for Minneapolis mills. There was a machine, though, of French design called a middlings purifier that took the “middlings” – the glutinous wheat kernel’s center – and separated that from the bran. Cadwallader Washburn’s miller, George Christian, improved the machine’s design, and Washburn installed the new middlings purifier in his new mill – revolutionizing the milling industry.

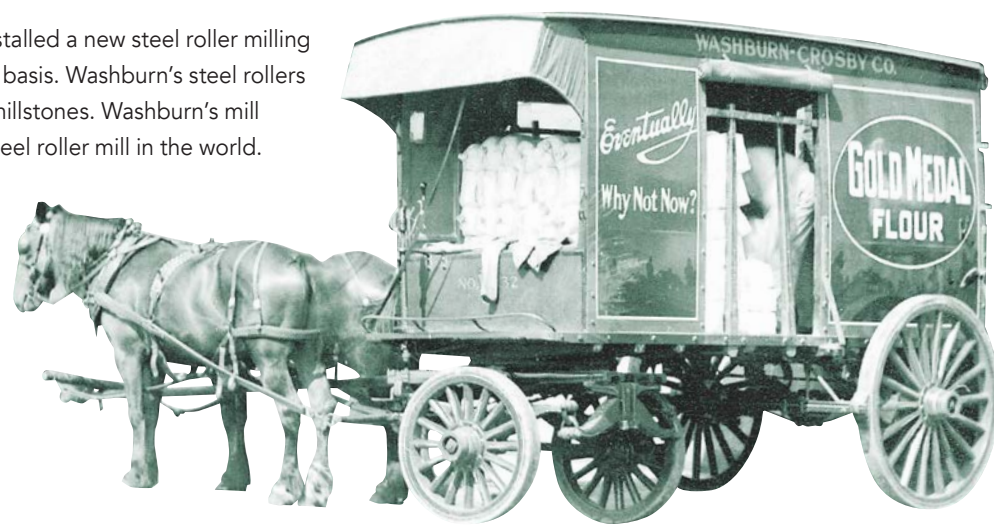


## STEEL ROLLERS REPLACE MILLSTONES

In 1879, Cadwallader Washburn also installed a new steel roller milling system in his C mill on an experimental basis. Washburn’s steel rollers produced superior flour compared to millstones. Washburn’s mill became the first complete automatic steel roller mill in the world.

## HORSE POWER

Flour bags and barrels were delivered to grocers by horse and buggy. Later, as motor vehicles became more popular, companies transitioned flour deliveries to trucks by the early 1920s.



## A BETTER WAY TO SEAL FLOUR BAGS

In 1939, General Mills packaging designer Helmer Anderson created the Anderson sealer. It allowed General Mills to seal flour packages with glue instead of tying them with string, revolutionizing flour packaging.

## BELLERA AIR SPUN PROCESS

The Bellera Air Spun process for milling flour, developed by General Mills in 1960, was faster and less costly than older methods because it drastically reduced the number of steps needed to turn wheat into flour. Bellera, named after James Ford Bell and his son Charles, not only simplified the milling process, but also produced a higher-quality flour.



## ON THE RIGHT TRACKS WITH BISQUICK

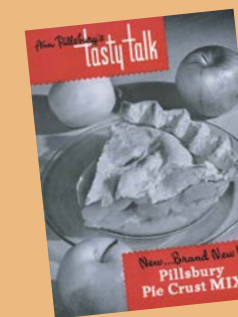


It was a late evening in 1930. The train’s dining car was closed. Yet a clever cook quickly produced hot biscuits for a hungry traveling General Mills salesman. How? The chef had blended lard, flour, baking powder and salt, then stored the mixture in an ice chest. The salesman recognized the potential of this idea and took it to a food expert at General Mills. The challenge? Making a mix that could produce biscuits as good as

homemade. In 1931, Bisquick was introduced as the first-ever baking mix and quickly became so popular that within months there were nearly 100 competing biscuit mixes on the market.



Betty Crocker



Ann Pillsbury

## First ladies of flour

**Betty Crocker** began as a signature on letters requesting cooking advice and recipes from the Washburn Crosby Company in 1921. She received a voice on the Gold Medal Flour Home Service Talks on the company’s WCCO radio station in 1924. Betty Crocker officially received a face when Neysa McMein, a prominent commercial artist, was commissioned to create Betty’s portrait in 1936.



Martha Meade

**Martha Meade** was the face of flour on the West Coast. Created by the Sperry Flour Company as a fictional contemporary of Betty Crocker, her recipes and cookbooks were published for years, and she was also on radio.

**Ann Pillsbury’s** signature was a sign of quality for Pillsbury baking products. Created in 1944, Ann had her own test kitchen and recipes. The woman who was director of the Home Services department filled the public relations role of Ann Pillsbury. Unlike Betty Crocker, the live face of Ann Pillsbury changed with each new director.

The “Betty Crocker of the South,” **Martha White** was the only one of our “first ladies” who was actually a real person. Martha White Lindsay was the daughter of Richard Lindsay Sr., who founded the Royal Flour Mill in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1899. The name of the company changed to Martha White, the mill’s most popular brand, in 1944. General Mills divested the Martha White brand in 2001.



Martha White



# Pillsbury: The early years



In 1869, Charles A. Pillsbury purchased a one-third interest in the Minneapolis Flouring Mill for \$10,000. At that time, millers marked the quality of their flour with “X”s. Their lowest-quality flour would carry one X. Their medium-quality flour two Xs and their best flour three Xs. To indicate Pillsbury flour was superior to all others, Charles Pillsbury added a fourth X to his flour, and in 1872, Pillsbury’s Best and his four-X logo were trademarked.

Pillsbury began his milling career with a single flour mill, just like Cadwallader Washburn. Flour milling was a vital industry at the time, important to both farmers and settlers, and the Pillsbury mill’s output increased each decade as the milling industry grew. By 1932, Pillsbury had expanded into specialized grain products, like cake flour and cereals.

In 1940, Pillsbury purchased the Globe Grain and Milling Company, which distributed its popular pancake mixes, biscuit mixes and pasta primarily west of the Rocky Mountains.

Demand for flour kept increasing after World War II, yet only seven products used the Pillsbury name. By 1950, that was about to change dramatically. The company began adding to its product line, producing convenience foods, such as Pillsbury Pie Crust mix, Hot Roll mix and

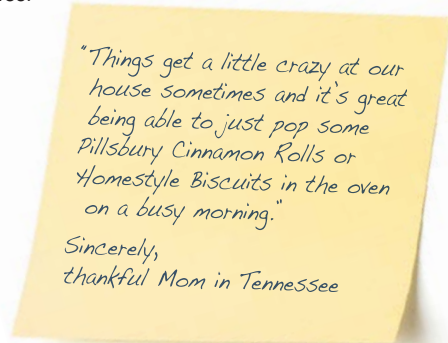
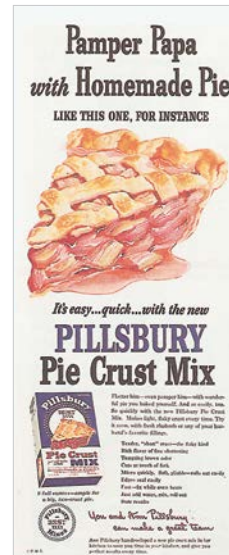
cake mix. Brownie mix and frosting mix followed in 1955, and Pillsbury’s first ready-to-spread frosting was introduced in 1964.



In 1951, Pillsbury purchased the Ballard & Ballard Co. Ballard held the 1931 patent to an innovative packaging technology created by a veteran baker named Lively Willoughby.

When Pillsbury asked Ballard employees to list every product they thought was possible using the packaging technology, they emerged with a list of about 50 products. Three years later, Pillsbury marketed its first: Quick Cinnamon Rolls. Other classics-to-be came along, such as Buttermilk Biscuits, Caramel Nut Rolls and Sweetmilk Biscuits. Pillsbury also created several flavors of refrigerated cookie dough.

By 1963, the Pillsbury name appeared on 127 different products, and by 1984, Pillsbury sold more than 200 products in 55 countries.



Philip W. Pillsbury and Eleanor Roosevelt present the grand prize to Theodora Smafield, winner in the first Pillsbury Bake-Off Contest in 1949. Art Linkletter looks on.

## THE PILLSBURY BAKE-OFF

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt presented the winning prize at the first Pillsbury Bake-Off in 1949. According to a 1945 poll, Roosevelt was the only woman in America better known than Betty Crocker.

In her newspaper column, Roosevelt called the lavish inaugural at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria hotel ballroom “a healthy contest,” that “reaches far down into the lives of the housewives of America.” It was called the “Grand National Recipe and Baking Contest” in 1949, celebrating Pillsbury’s 80th birthday – but it would eventually become internationally known as the “Pillsbury Bake-Off.”

There were 100 finalists, including three men, in that first event, at which Roosevelt presented Michigan’s Theodora Smafield with a \$50,000 first prize for her yeast-bread recipe for No-Knead Water-Rising Twists.

Over the years, the winning Bake-Off recipe has always been popular. In 1954, sesame seeds were virtually out of stock in supermarkets after Dorothy Koteen’s Open Sesame Pie took the honors. When Tunnel of Fudge Cake won in 1966, Pillsbury received thousands of requests to locate the ring-shaped Bundt cake pan used – and the recipe, one of the best-loved Bake-Off recipes 50 years later.

The first \$1 million Bake-Off prize went to Kurt Wait of California – the first male winner – for his Macadamia Fudge Torte in 1996.

Consumers were able to vote for their favorite recipe from four finalists selected by a panel of judges in 2014. The \$1 million grand prize was announced on live TV and was awarded to Beth Royals from Richmond, Virginia, for her original recipe Peanuttie Pie Crust Clusters.

## OUT OF THIS WORLD



Crumbs the size of large dust particles floated in the cabin when the fourth NASA astronaut in space, Scott Carpenter, tried to eat cookies during his short, three-orbit flight aboard the Aurora 7 in 1962. But the small cubes of space food he had with him didn’t crumble.

Pillsbury had taken more than a year to develop those space food cubes, which were later followed by other space-friendly foods, such as noncrumbly cake, relish served in slices and meat that needed no refrigeration.

Space foods created an entirely new category when Space Food Sticks launched as an instant hit in 1969. They had the same nutritional value as the food developed for NASA, but our earth-bound astronauts got to enjoy flavors such as chocolate, caramel and peanut butter.





## Home-baked goodness

Dough innovation allowed Pillsbury to create Slice 'n Bake cookies in 1957. No more mixing – just take it out of the refrigerator, slice, and place it on a baking tray.

Pillsbury introduced Shape cookies in 1992. The “Cookie within a Cookie” first featured teddy bears and dinosaurs, although their popularity quickly led to holiday-themed varieties. Prepared like Slice 'n Bake cookies, this innovative dough had shapes in the middle of a different color and texture than the outside cookie.

Ready To Bake! cookies added even more convenience in 2001 – just place the cookies on a tray and bake.

Today, consumers can bake Artisan Pizza Crust at home, buy gluten-free dough, bake sugar-free cookies or choose Simply...Cookies, made with no preservatives and no artificial colors or flavors.

Pillsbury Slice 'n Bake cookies were the ultimate convenience in 1957. Just slice, bake and enjoy.



Pillsbury continues to improve its classics. Grands! refrigerated biscuits, introduced in 1990, were improved in 2004 to produce bigger and fluffier biscuits.

Many of Pillsbury's newest products bring on-the-go convenience to hospitals, schools, hotels and convenience stores. Pillsbury offers muffins, whole grain biscuits, mini bagels, mini pancakes, mini muffins and even mini cinnamon rolls.

Pillsbury is sold in more than 60 countries today, but the brand's online presence knows no boundaries. It brings recipes, inspiration and answers to consumers around the globe. Pillsbury's first website was developed in 1996, and its Facebook page has more than 3 million “Likes.”



## The giggle that launched a thousand chips

The Pillsbury Doughboy was born in Chicago in 1965, but he was raised in Minneapolis, of course.

One of the world's best-loved advertising icons, the Pillsbury Doughboy's first words were, “Hi! I'm Poppin' Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy,” followed by “Nothin' says loving like somethin' from the oven, and Pillsbury says it best.”

The lovable Pillsbury Doughboy was created with the help of the Leo Burnett advertising agency at a cost of about \$16,000. Stop-action animation was used, and it took five bodies and 15 heads to make all the looks and movements for his television advertisement. Twenty-four individual shots of the Doughboy were taken for every one second of animated action in his first television commercial.

More than 50 actors auditioned to be the voice of the Pillsbury Doughboy. The winner was Paul Frees, who was also the voice of Boris Badenov in “The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle.”

Canadian consumers enjoy the convenience of our ready-to-unroll pie crust.



Chocolate Soufflé is one of many Pillsbury products offered in Greece.



Within two years of his first appearance, the Doughboy was among the most recognized spokescharacters, known by 87 percent of American consumers.

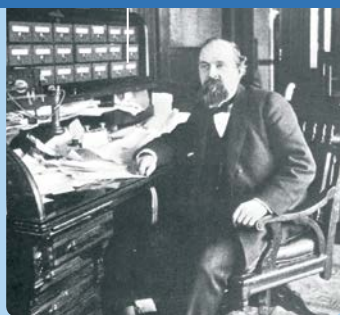
By 1998, the Doughboy was receiving 200 fan letters and 1,500 requests for autographed photos each week. He's also received numerous awards, including “most recognizable” and “favorite spokescharacter.” He was named to Advertising Age's list of the Top 10 ad icons of the 20th century, and in 2015, Poppin' Fresh was recognized by the Museum of Broadcast Communications in its “Salute to Advertising's Greatest Icons.”

Around the globe, the Doughboy is known as “El Masin” (the Little Dough) in Latin America; as “Teigmännchen” (the little Dough Man) in Germany and Austria; and as “Zymaroylis” (Doughboy in Greek) in Greece and Cypress. In Israel, he goes by “Efi,” a Hebrew nickname for “cute little baker.” But everywhere he goes, the Doughboy brings joy, cuteness and tasty products.



The Doughboy has a family: Poppie Fresh, his dough companion, a boy named Popper, a girl named Bun-Bun, Granmommer, Granpopper and Uncle Rollie. The family wouldn't be complete without the family dog, Flapjack, and cat Biscuit.

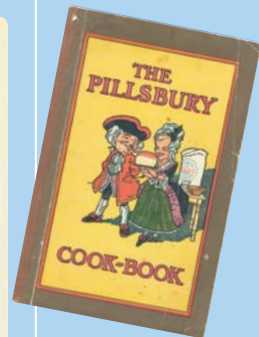




1869 Charles A. Pillsbury purchases a one-third interest in the Minneapolis Flouring Mill.



1872 Pillsbury's Best XXXX logo first appears.



1914 Little Nick, Pillsbury's mascot before the Doughboy, appears on the cover of a cookbook containing more than 300 recipes.



1932 Pillsbury expands into specialized grain products like cake flour and cereals.



1951 Oven Ready biscuits were a regional product when Pillsbury acquired Ballard & Ballard in 1951. But today more than 2 billion refrigerated biscuits, rolls and breads are sold each year.



1947 Pillsbury begins producing Pillsbury Pie Crust mix, Hot Roll mix and cake mix.



1957 With no mixing required, Slice 'n Bake cookies are taken out of the refrigerator, sliced and placed on a baking tray.

1952 Pillsbury patents a "crack on the black line" packaging innovation for its refrigerated canned dough products.



1954 Cinnamon rolls are introduced and later become available in several varieties.



1955 Brownies become easier to make with the launch of Pillsbury Brownie mix.



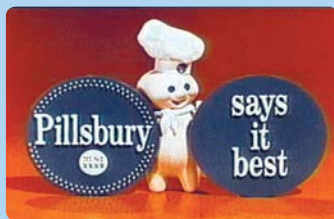
1961 Pillsbury Crescent Rolls are introduced, and the Pillsbury Doughboy pops out of a Crescent Roll tube for his TV debut.



1964 Pillsbury's first ready-to-spread frosting is introduced.



1965 Poppin' Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy, makes his first television appearance.



1983 After nearly a decade of development incorporating specialized dough technology, Pillsbury refrigerated pie crusts are released nationally.



1972 Pillsbury Bundt cake mix is introduced building on the popularity of the Pillsbury Bake-Off Contest "Tunnel of Fudge Cake" winning recipe. Pillsbury receives thousands of requests for the ring-shaped Bundt cake pan used in the recipe.



1990 Grands! refrigerated biscuits enter the market.



1998 Pillsbury Fresh Atta flour is introduced in India to address the need for wholesome nutrition in convenient packaging.



2004 Freezer-to-microwave biscuits and dinner rolls combine both portion control and convenience – and take just 25 seconds in the microwave.



2007 Sweet Minis are offered in convenience stores. They're served warm in a cup in three varieties – chocolate chip cookies, brownie bites and mini-donuts.



1985 Pillsbury launches Toaster Strudel frozen breakfast pastries after six years of development and testing.



1992 Pillsbury introduces Shape cookies – the "cookie within a cookie."



Ready To Bake! cookies add even more convenience – just place cookies on a tray and bake.



2009 Whole Grain Mini Pancakes heat up the hot breakfast market. Mini Waffles soon follow.



2012 Artisan Pizza Crust is introduced for consumers who prefer creating their own pizza at home.



2011 Egg Scrambles and Grands! Biscuit sandwiches go from frozen to piping hot in minutes in the microwave.



2013 Gluten-sensitive consumers rejoice when Pillsbury introduces gluten-free dough, including pie and pastry, chocolate chip cookie and pizza dough.



2005 The Pillsbury Kids Cookbook, Food Fun for Boys and Girls, is published for young chefs interested in getting hands-on experience in the kitchen.



# Betty Crocker: The first lady of food

When Betty Crocker was not quite 25 years old, she was named the second best-known female in the United States, after Eleanor Roosevelt. Now in her 90s, Betty Crocker remains one of the most recognizable names in the kitchen today.

At the height of her popularity, Betty Crocker received as many as 5,000 letters every day. What's more amazing is that she answered nearly every one – quite impressive for a woman who started as a signature. Most letters requested cooking advice or recipes, but Betty Crocker also received more unusual requests, including marriage proposals. As Betty Crocker was married to her work, she would gracefully decline.

It all began with a simple advertisement in the Saturday Evening Post magazine in 1921.



The ad asked consumers to complete and return a picture puzzle to receive a small Gold Medal flour sack pin cushion. Along with some 30,000 completed puzzles came several hundred letters asking various cooking and baking questions.

In a stroke of marketing genius, the General Mills advertising department convinced executives to create a female personality within Washburn Crosby Company's Home Service department to reply to the questions. The surname Crocker was chosen in honor of a recently retired director, William G. Crocker, and the name "Betty" was chosen simply because of its friendly sound.

An informal contest among female employees was held to find the most distinctive Betty Crocker signature. Florence Lindberg's version was chosen, and it remains the basis of the Betty Crocker logo of today.



1936



1955



1965



1969



1972



1980



1986



1996

Betty Crocker didn't receive an official portrait until Neysa McMein, a prominent commercial artist, was commissioned to create one in 1936. McMein's rendition, with a classic red jacket and white collar, established a tradition for future portraits and remained the official Betty Crocker likeness for nearly 20 years.

In 1955, six well-known artists, including Norman Rockwell, were invited to paint fresh interpretations of Betty Crocker. About 1,600 women from across the country evaluated the finished works and chose the portrait by illustrator Hilda Taylor – a softer, smiling version of the original image.

Remaining contemporary with changing consumers, Betty Crocker has updated her image six more times over the years – most recently in 1996 for her 75th birthday. A computerized composite of 75 women who embodied the characteristics of Betty Crocker served as the inspiration for the painting. The portrait, by internationally known artist John Stuart Ingle, was unveiled March 19, 1996, in New York City.

The Betty Crocker personality is so engaging that even today some people still believe she is real.



## CAKE DISCOVERY OF THE CENTURY

In 1947, a 64-year-old California man approached General Mills with a secret recipe. "I wanted Betty Crocker to give the secret to the women of America," Harry Baker explained. General Mills refined the recipe in the Betty Crocker test kitchens and debuted Chiffon cake. Heralded as the "cake discovery of the century," and "the first new cake in 100 years," the new Chiffon cake used a secret ingredient – salad oil.



## THE SPOON THAT CHANGED BETTY CROCKER

General Mills sought a simple, powerful visual that would quickly communicate Betty Crocker's ties to our products in many categories. Putting Betty's image on the package wasn't realistic. The company wanted a symbol to highlight the many descriptions of Betty: "kitchen helper," "warm and friendly" and "reliable guide."

The Lippincott & Margulies ad agency was enlisted. The Betty Crocker signature had been used enclosed in a red oval frame in 1953. A simple change is all it took. Using that logo as a foundation, the oval was changed into the bowl of a spoon, a stem and handle added, and the signature tweaked. Voila! The Betty Crocker red spoon was born in May 1954, and it has been an icon for the brand ever since.





# Recipes for success



Betty Crocker received a voice in 1924 with the launch of the “Gold Medal Flour Home Service Talks” on the Washburn Crosby Company’s radio station, WCCO. “The Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air” soon followed.

Blanche Ingersoll provided the voice for Betty Crocker initially. Every Friday morning, Ingersoll would broadcast recipes, baking ideas and household tips. Listeners “enrolled” in the school by requesting recipes. The “homework” was making the recipes and writing a report. Those who completed all recipes and lessons graduated during a broadcast ceremony.



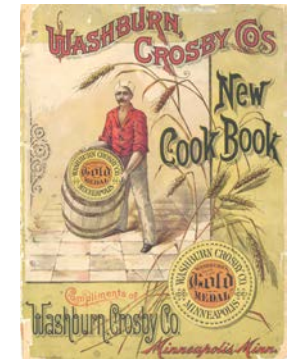
1950

One of the first radio shows dedicated to homemakers, the Betty Crocker cooking school was a huge hit, with more than 200 “graduates” in the first class. The show expanded to 13 markets – each regional Betty Crocker had a different voice, but they all read scripts prepared by the Home Service department in Minneapolis.

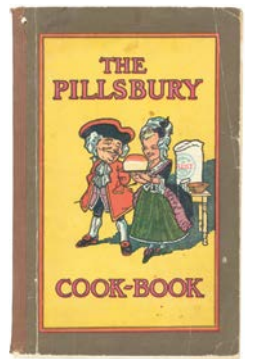
Through its various incarnations over 27 years on the air, the “Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air” remains one of the longest-running shows in radio history.

In 1950, Betty Crocker published the Betty Crocker Picture Cook Book, the first to show images of how to make recipes. More than 75 million copies of this cookbook, affectionately known as “Big Red” have been sold.

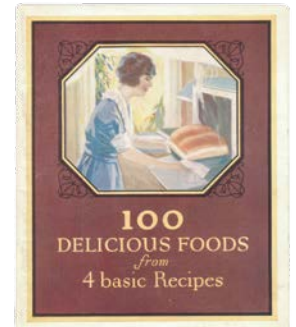
Betty Crocker has evolved to serve consumers’ changing lifestyles. Her website – www.BettyCrocker.com – features meal planning ideas, recipes for all occasions, money-saving tips, coupons and an “Ask Betty” feature. The site is one of the most popular cooking websites with more than 14 million visits per month. The Betty Crocker Cookbook application, launched in 2014, is designed specifically to use while cooking in the kitchen. It is free in app stores for iPhone, iPad and Android.



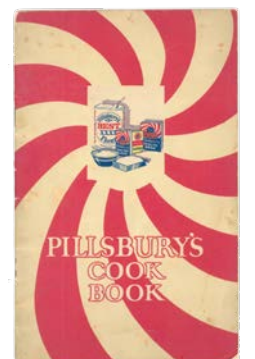
1894



1914



1923



1927



1957

General Mills began producing recipes on records in 1957 for people who couldn't use a traditional cookbook. The records gave cooking and baking instructions tailored to a person without sight. Adelaide Hawley, who portrayed Betty Crocker on television, provided the voice. Betty Crocker’s Braille cookbook was published in 1997.



From apple pie to pad Thai, Betty Crocker and Pillsbury have helped create family favorites for more than a century with thousands of delicious recipes. Here are some highlights:

1894: General Mills’ cookbook ventures begin with the Washburn Crosby Company’s New Cook Book.

1905: Pillsbury issues its first cookbook, A Book for a Cook.

1949: Pillsbury publishes its first recipe magazine to share the winning recipes from its inaugural Bake-Off Contest.

1950: The first Betty Crocker Picture Cook Book is published. Dubbed “Big Red,” it quickly becomes one of the best-selling books in the United States.

1963: The popular Pillsbury Family Cookbook debuts.

1980: General Mills publishes its first recipe magazine, Creative Recipes with Bisquick.

2010: In the digital realm, the Betty Crocker Cookbook application for the iPad is one of the most downloaded apps for Apple’s new device. In the first weeks of the iPad launch, the app is among Apple’s top 25 free downloads.

2011: The 11th edition of the Betty Crocker (Big Red) Cookbook, published as Betty Crocker turns 90, exceeds 1,500 recipes. It has an online component that links to 85 videos and 400 bonus recipes as well.



## A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA

One of the longest-running consumer promotions ever began in 1931 when Gold Medal flour packages included a coupon for a free Wm. Rogers & Son teaspoon.

A year later, General Mills created a program where consumers could save and redeem coupons for entire sets of flatware. Oneida purchased Wm. Rogers & Son in 1936, and the Betty Crocker coupon program grew until at one point, General Mills was the largest distributor of Oneida’s Community patterns of stainless steel flatware in the United States. The Community style, available in four patterns, was designed especially for Betty Crocker coupon savers.

The promotion was suspended during World War II but resumed in 1947. By 1962, the program had grown well beyond flatware, and the first Betty Crocker coupon catalog was published.

The program was renamed “Betty Crocker Catalog Points” in 1992 in order to avoid confusion with cents-off coupons. Consumers could purchase items from the catalog with cash and points. In 2006, the company discontinued the long-running program.

Today Betty Crocker rewards loyal consumers with special offers, promotions and coupons online at BettyCrocker.com.



# The Betty Crocker Kitchens: What's cooking?

Although the Betty Crocker Kitchens have evolved through the years, they remain state-of-the-art. What would become the Betty Crocker Kitchens actually began as Washburn Crosby's test kitchens inside the company's A mill. Those kitchens, created before the birth of Betty Crocker, were full of modern conveniences like running water and gas stoves.

Those original kitchens would evolve into the General Mills test kitchens where staff would not only conduct cooking and baking tests, but also answer consumer letters, compile recipes, produce the material for the Betty Crocker radio shows, and host informal tours.

The kitchens formally changed their name to the Betty Crocker Kitchens in 1946. To accommodate the large numbers of visitors, General Mills began a daily tour schedule when its kitchens opened at its new headquarters in 1958 in Golden Valley, Minnesota. Invitations were sent, inviting people to "Come into our kitchens and see how we test and develop recipes, work on new products and perfect quicker, easier methods to help you in your homemaking."

Nearly 2 million people visited the Betty Crocker Kitchens on free tours offered from 1958 to 1985, making them one of the state's top tourist attractions.

What would become the Betty Crocker Kitchens began as Washburn Crosby's test kitchens, created before the birth of Betty Crocker.

During the years the kitchens were open, everyone from elementary school students to politicians and celebrities visited to catch a glimpse of where Betty Crocker created her famous recipes.

In 1985, General Mills closed its kitchens to the public to preserve the confidentiality of its new product development and testing.



## UPDATED KITCHENS

How many kitchens does it take to accommodate America's top baking and cooking icon? In 1958, Betty Crocker had seven, each designed with a different theme: Arizona Desert, California, Cape Cod, Chinatown, Hawaiian, Pennsylvania Dutch and Williamsburg. There were also three more kitchens dedicated to food photography for packaging, recipes and cookbooks.



Betty Crocker got a brand new kitchen in 2003. Her new 13,595-square-foot facility includes 22 microwaves, 18 refrigerators and 15 freezers in an ergonomic, modern design. In this space, Betty Crocker Kitchens home economists create delicious recipes for a whole new generation of cooks.







1921 A Gold Medal picture puzzle promotion generates thousands of replies and several hundred baking questions from homemakers. Betty Crocker is created to respond.

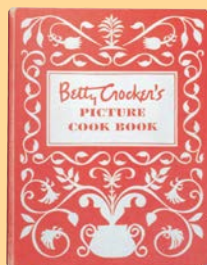
1924 The Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air debuts on the Washburn Crosby Company's own WCCO radio.



1936 Betty Crocker meets her public for the first time when artist Neysa McMein was commissioned to create her portrait.



1940s General Mills distributes more than 7 million booklets providing easy meal ideas that use war-rationed food in 1943. The full title was "Your Share: How to Prepare Appetizing, Healthful Meals with Foods Available Today by Betty Crocker." It is free from the grocer with the purchase of any sized sack of flour. That same year, "Meal Planning on a Limited Budget by Betty Crocker: Nutrition for Defense" is published.



1950 Betty Crocker's first cookbook, dubbed "Big Red," quickly becomes one of the best-selling cookbooks in the U.S. Updated several times over the years, it has sold more than 75 million copies since its debut.



1948 Betty Crocker's new Chiffon cake takes the nation by storm. The recipe was purchased from Harry Baker in 1947 and launched in 1948 after extensive testing. It was called "the cake discovery of the century."



1947 Ginger cake, the first Betty Crocker packaged cake mix, is launched. It is followed by Party cake and Devil's Food cake two years later.



1955 General Mills begins the Betty Crocker Search for the All-American Homemaker of Tomorrow. When the program ended by 1977, more than 9.5 million high school seniors had taken part, and General Mills had awarded more than \$2.1 million in student scholarships.



1950s The Betty Crocker television show begins with Adelaide Hawley as Betty Crocker. It is filled with demonstrations, tips and recipes for homemakers. Hawley also appears as Betty Crocker on "The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show," a popular television show in the 1950s.



1962 The first Betty Crocker Coupon Catalog is published.

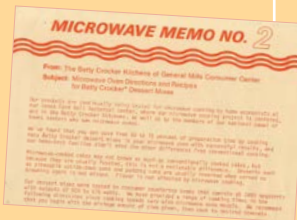


1957 General Mills begins producing recipes on record albums for sight-impaired people who can't use a traditional cookbook.

1958 Betty Crocker Kitchens public tours begin in the new headquarters in Golden Valley, Minnesota.



1971 With Snackin' Cake mixes, there are no beaters, no bowls, and no greasing or flouring of pans. The mix is stirred, baked and served in the same pan. The result is a moist, rich cake that needs no topping.



1970s Betty Crocker publishes "Microwave Memos," a newsletter to take advantage of this amazing new technology.



1971 Hamburger Helper dinner mix revolutionizes convenient meal making. Building on its success, Tuna and Chicken Helper soon follow.



1980 General Mills publishes its first recipe magazine, Creative Recipes with Bisquick. Millions of Betty Crocker and Pillsbury recipe magazines are sold.



1988 With the growing popularity of microwave ovens, Betty Crocker creates a microwavable cake mix line.



1996 For her 75th anniversary, Betty Crocker's image is updated to represent a more multicultural woman.



1999 Betty Crocker introduces 12 new rice and pasta dishes made with real, wholesome ingredients.



Warm Delights, microwavable chocolate desserts in a bowl, are launched. The cardboard packaging is configured to feature the serving bowl.



2009 Four gluten-free dessert mixes are introduced: brownies, chocolate chip cookies, and yellow and devil's food cake mixes.



2005 Cocina, a Spanish/English bilingual cookbook is published that collects some of the more common recipes for Spanish-speaking readers looking to cook American-style food.



2009 Betty Crocker's free iPhone and iPad applications give immediate access to recipes - anywhere, anyplace.



2014 Betty Crocker and Yoki introduce co-branded baking mixes to South America.



2014 Betty Crocker's helpers answer cookie baking questions on National Cookie Day (December 4) via a live Facebook event. Fans receive real-time, personalized video or written responses.



# The Breakfast of Champions

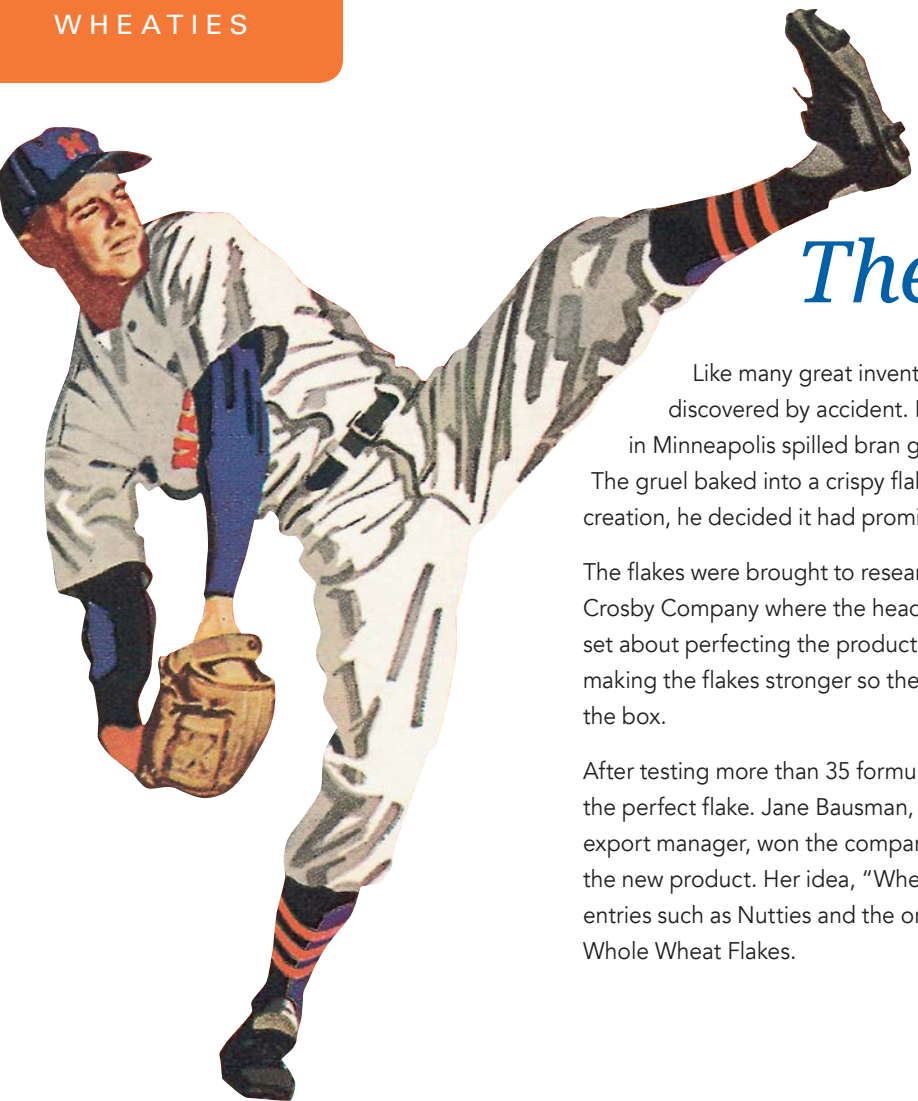
Like many great inventions, Wheaties was discovered by accident. In 1921, a health clinician in Minneapolis spilled bran gruel mix on a hot stove. The gruel baked into a crispy flake. Tasting his new creation, he decided it had promise.

The flakes were brought to researchers at the Washburn Crosby Company where the head miller, George Cormack, set about perfecting the product. His top priority was making the flakes stronger so they didn't turn to dust in the box.

After testing more than 35 formulas, Cormack finally found the perfect flake. Jane Bausman, the wife of a General Mills export manager, won the companywide naming contest for the new product. Her idea, "Wheaties," was chosen over entries such as Nutties and the original name, Gold Medal Whole Wheat Flakes.

In 1933, General Mills advertising manager Sam Gale and legendary ad man Knox Reeves coined what would become one of the most famous advertising slogans in history – "The Breakfast of Champions."

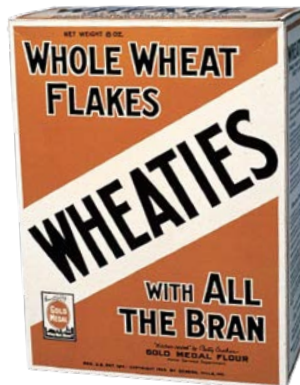
Gale was also the innovator behind the idea of sponsoring radio broadcasts of baseball games. General Mills' contract for the broadcasts of Minneapolis Millers games on WCCO included a large advertising sign board at the ballpark. Though details are sketchy, legend suggests the famous phrase was created as Reeves sketched a box of Wheaties and then wrote "Wheaties – The Breakfast of Champions." Whether it was an agency copywriter, Sam Gale or Knox Reeves himself, the slogan was posted, and an advertising legend was born – launching the Wheaties affiliation with sports champions.



**WHEATIES**  
WITH PLENTY OF MILK OR CREAM AND SOME KIND OF FRUIT  
*"The Breakfast of Champions"*



1922



1925

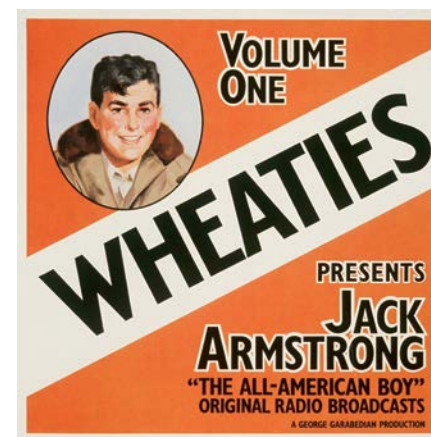
## SPONSORING BASEBALL ON RADIO

Wheaties sponsored radio baseball broadcasts that became very popular; eventually they were broadcast on 95 stations across the U.S. One young broadcaster at WHO in Des Moines, Iowa, entered a Wheaties-sponsored broadcaster contest in 1937 and won an all-expense paid trip to Hollywood. While there, play-by-play announcer Ronald "Dutch" Reagan, age 25, took a screen test. The rest, as they say, is history.



## THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY

Exploits of the fictitious character "Jack Armstrong, The All-American Boy" first aired on radio in 1933. Sponsored by Wheaties, Jack Armstrong became the first juvenile adventure serial. Highly popular, Jack's many thrilling adventures were broadcast until 1951.



## WHEATIES QUARTET: 'HAVE YOU TRIED WHEATIES?'

For six years, the Wheaties Quartet harmonized live in the Washburn Crosby Company's radio studio – WCCO radio – singing "Have You Tried Wheaties?" Believed to be the first singing radio commercial, the song first aired on Christmas Eve 1926. With sales lagging in 1929, General Mills considered discontinuing Wheaties until advertising manager Sam Gale noticed the majority of Wheaties customers lived where they could hear the singing jingle about the benefits of Wheaties. Gale urged the company to take the commercial national – and Wheaties sales soared.



## TV SPONSORSHIP

Wheaties sponsored the first televised commercial sports broadcast in 1939. The game between the Cincinnati Reds and the Brooklyn Dodgers was aired on NBC to a small audience – the roughly 500 owners of television sets in New York City.





# Promoting strength and fitness

## WHEATIES SPORTS FEDERATION

In 1956, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower called the nation to action after a survey found that American children trailed European children in muscular strength and flexibility. More than half of Americans tested failed at least one of the six physical tests, while only 8 percent in Europe failed.

Working with President Eisenhower's Council of Youth Fitness, General Mills created the Wheaties Sports Federation in 1958. It was a natural fit. U.S. Olympic pole-vaulter and decathlon champion Bob Richards was named director of the Wheaties Sports Federation. Membership was offered to any American who pledged to four basic tenets: adequate exercise, sufficient rest, proper diet and clean living.

The Federation also worked to advance the goals of Eisenhower's Council of Youth Fitness. The Wheaties Sports Federation sponsored many sporting events and produced television ads promoting sports and fitness. Wheaties featured the Wheaties Federation on packaging by providing consumers with healthy eating tips, exercise information and fun contests.



Basketball great George Mikan appeared with President Dwight D. Eisenhower to support youth and fitness.

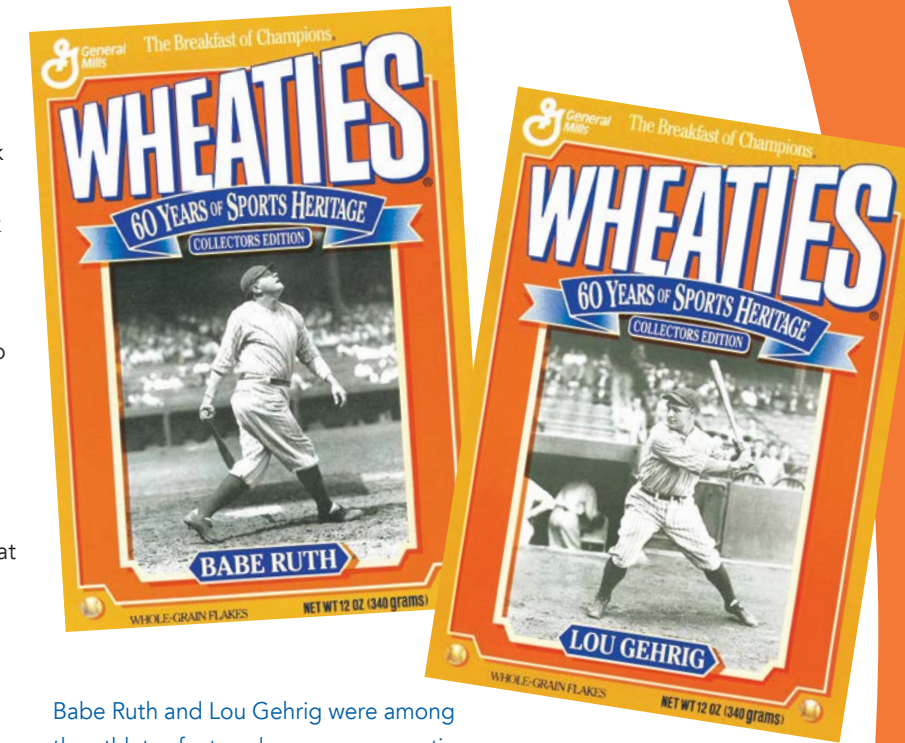
## ATHLETES PROMOTE WHEATIES

In 1934, Wheaties featured New York Yankee first baseman Lou Gehrig on the back of the box. He was the first living person (fictional Jack Armstrong was the first to appear on the box) and set the precedent for athletes appearing – but on the back of the box. It was 1958 when Olympic pole vaulter Bob Richards was the first to be featured on the front of the Wheaties box.

Baseball stars such as Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, Jackie Robinson, Bob Feller, Hank Greenberg, Stan Musial, Ted Williams, Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle and Johnny Bench appeared on the box and endorsed Wheaties. In 1939, 46 of the 51 players selected for Major League Baseball's All-Star Game endorsed the product.

Through the years, Wheaties has featured seven official spokespersons: Richards; Olympians Bruce Jenner and Mary Lou Retton; football's Walter Payton; tennis great Chris Evert; basketball's Michael Jordan; and golfer Tiger Woods.

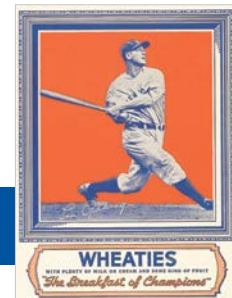
For the 75th anniversary of Wheaties in 1999, General Mills asked folks to vote for their favorite Wheaties champions, and re-released those boxes. The top 10 honorees were Jordan, Gehrig, Ruth, Retton, Woods, baseball's Cal Ripken Jr., Payton, football's John Elway, Jackie Robinson, and the 1980 U.S. Men's Olympic Hockey Team.



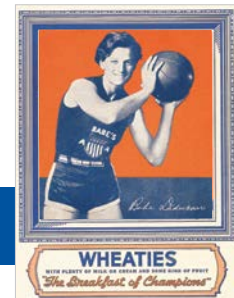
Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig were among the athletes featured on commemorative boxes released in 1992 to celebrate "60 Years of Sports Heritage."



## The Breakfast of Champions



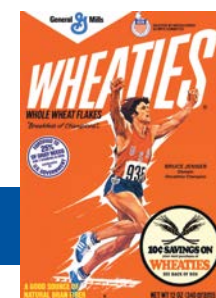
1934  
Lou Gehrig



1935  
Babe Dedrickson



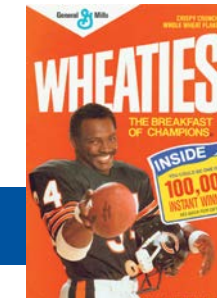
1935  
Bob Richards



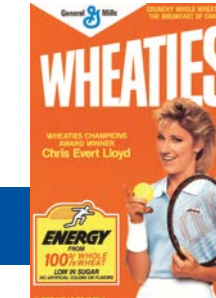
1979  
Bruce Jenner



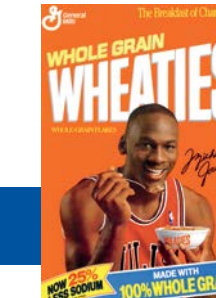
1984  
Mary Lou Retton



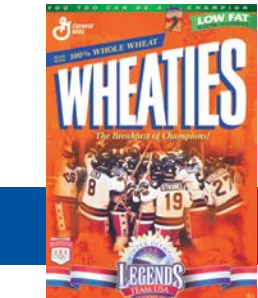
1986  
Walter Payton



1987  
Chris Evert



1989  
Michael Jordan



1980  
Legends: U.S. Men's Olympic Hockey Team





## A Cheeri start

Americans were already eating their Wheaties. General Mills had created Kix, the first corn puff cereal, and there was oatmeal, of course. But there were no oat-based ready-to-eat cereals.

Until Cheerios. Or more accurately, until Cheerioats.

General Mills wanted to provide people with a “satisfactory, tasty, ready-to-eat oat cereal,” according to a 1941 issue of the Modern Millwheel, the company’s newsletter. More than 500 formulas were tested and more than 10 shapes and sizes were considered before researchers found the perfect combination.

“Finally, the laboratory knew it had in Cheerioats the delicate balance of taste and palatability so difficult to find – a tasty, ready-to-eat oat cereal.”

Four years after its debut, Cheerioats changed its name to Cheerios. The name change was, in part, in response to a competitor’s lawsuit that took issue with the word “oats” in the name. Thank you unnamed competitor.

According to Walter R. Barry, General Mills vice president, the name was changed to “eliminate confusion which the manufacturers of rolled oats have felt existed among ready-to-eat and other product trade names.” The name change, we must admit, has worked out rather well.

Cheeri O’Leary was introduced in 1942. Known as “The Cheerioats Girl,” Cheeri O’Leary appeared in both advertising and on packaging until 1946.



### THE LONE RANGER

Cheerios began sponsoring the “Lone Ranger” radio show in 1941, and it transitioned to television in 1949. The long-running sponsorship lasted until 1961.

### THE CHEERIOS KID AND SUE

Beginning in 1953, Cheerios ads encouraged kids to connect the “Big G and Little O” to get the “GO” power of Cheerios. The Cheerios Kid and Sue were mainstays in Cheerios commercials. Sue always got into trouble – and the Cheerios Kid was able to rescue her, feeling the “GO” power of his favorite Os. The Cheerios Kid and Sue campaign lasted nearly two decades.

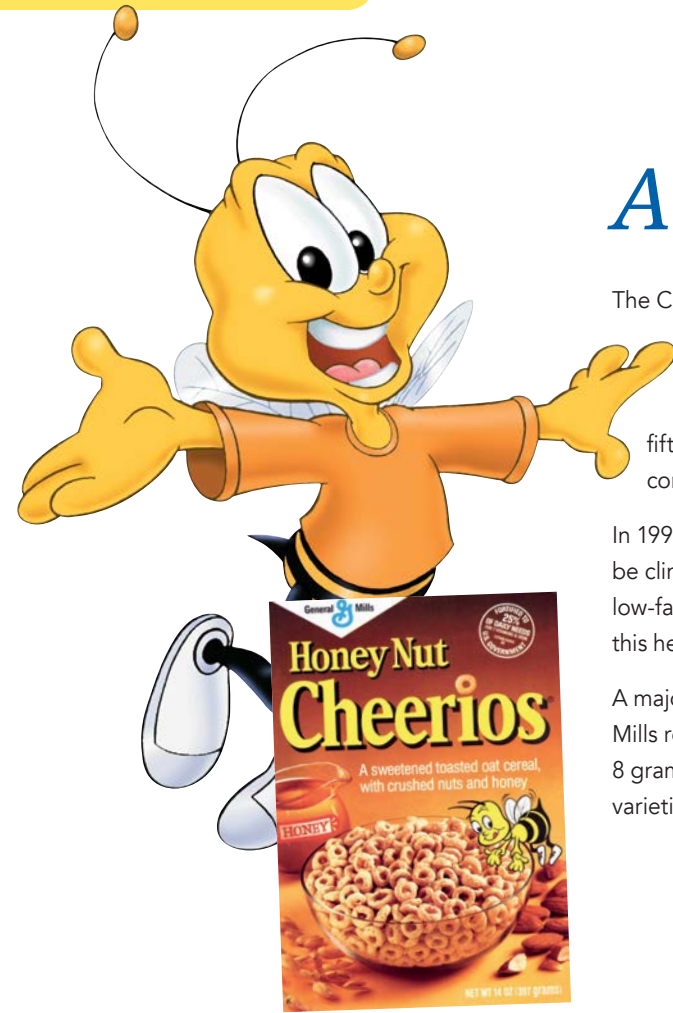
### ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE

Bullwinkle, the lovable cartoon moose, and his loyal sidekick Rocky, the flying squirrel, advertised Cheerios when General Mills started sponsoring the TV show “Rocky and his Friends” in 1959. Rocky and Bullwinkle also appeared in daily comic strips beginning in 1962.



SUE AND THE CHEERIOS KID





## All in the family

The Cheerios franchise branched out for the first time in 1978, with the introduction of Honey Nut Cheerios. But the Honey Nut Cheerios Bee buzzed around without a name until 2000, when Kristine Tong, a fifth-grade student from Coolidge, Texas, won a national contest to name the bee, dubbing him "BuzzBee."

In 1998, Cheerios became the first leading cold cereal to be clinically proven to lower cholesterol as part of a healthy, low-fat diet. Honey Nut Cheerios also was proven to have this heart health benefit in 2002.

A major health improvement came in 2005, when General Mills reformulated all of our Big G cereals to provide at least 8 grams of whole grain per serving. Today, all Cheerios varieties have at least 14 grams of whole grain per serving.

### CHEERIOS GOES GLUTEN FREE

Yellow-box and four other Cheerios varieties became gluten free in 2015. It was a bold step, requiring a multimillion dollar investment and years of grit and determination by one employee – Phil Zietlow – who declared he would pay for the project himself if necessary.

The project started in 2007, and getting gluten-free oats posed monumental technical hurdles. Zietlow, a 50-year research and development employee, ultimately found a way, and fortunately for him, the company paid to make it happen.



### TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM

Millenios marked the turn of the millennium in 1999. The cereal contained both the trademark Os of Cheerios along with oats in the shape of 2s to create the year 2000. The limited edition boxes were designed to become a time capsule to store significant memorabilia. The box even had a place where you could record your exact location on Dec. 31, 1999, at 11:59 p.m.

### ENCOURAGING KIDS TO READ

The goal of Cheer on Reading, a first-of-its-kind program, was to improve children's literacy by putting free children's books inside specially marked Cheerios boxes.

The program debuted in 2002 as Spoonfuls of Stories, and has already placed more than 78 million books in the hands of children and donated more than \$4.4 million to First Book, a national children's literacy organization.



### A HEALTHY START FOR LITTLE ONES

Cheerios is a favorite choice for moms and dads with toddlers. Why? Because it's nutritious, it's easy for little fingers to hold, and it tastes great. Cheerios is often the first finger food pediatricians recommend to new American parents.

### NASCAR REVS UP FOR CHEERIOS

General Mills became involved in NASCAR in 1997. Our brands have sponsored various cars and drivers, including John Andretti, Jeff Green, Bobby Labonte, Clint Bowyer, Jeff Burton, Austin Dillon and Ty Dillon.

Our several-year association with Richard Petty Enterprises led to Petty celebrating his 65th birthday in 2002 with BuzzBee, the Honey Nut Cheerios Bee. BuzzBee flitted around the track during the parade lap, before presenting Petty with a special edition of his trademark cowboy hat, customized for the occasion.



NASCAR driver Clint Bowyer

## The Cheerios family







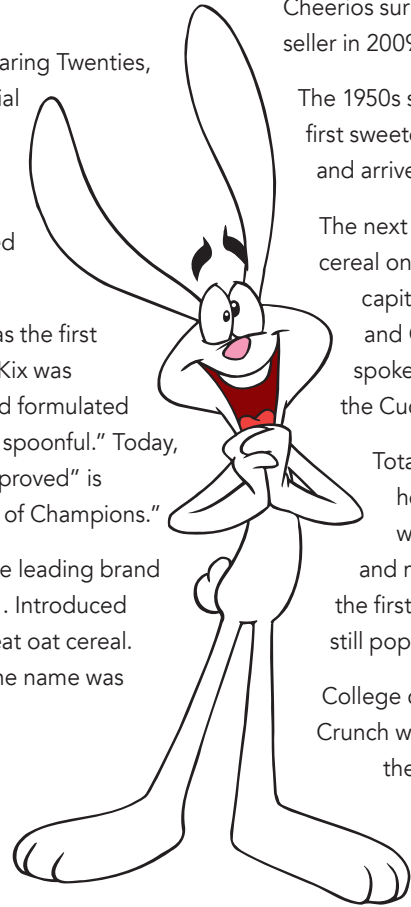
## The G stands for Goodness

Many people think of General Mills as a cereal company, and we're certainly proud of our cereal heritage. After all, General Mills helped define the ready-to-eat cereal category.

Wheaties was introduced during the Roaring Twenties, in 1924. It was a singing radio commercial that really helped establish the identity of Wheaties, but cereal superstardom arrived when the slogan "Wheaties – The Breakfast of Champions" was coined a few years later.

The company's second cereal – Kix – was the first puffed corn cereal. Introduced in 1937, Kix was enriched with vitamins and minerals, and formulated to "stay crisp in cream until the very last spoonful." Today, the Kix tag line "Kid-Tested, Mother-Approved" is almost as well-known as "The Breakfast of Champions."

General Mills launched what became the leading brand in the cereal category, Cheerios, in 1941. Introduced as Cheerioats, it was the first ready-to-eat oat cereal. In 1945, to solve a trademark dispute, the name was changed to Cheerios.



By 1954, Cheerios had become General Mills' top-selling cereal, and it continued as America's top-selling cereal for 55 years, according to Nielsen data, when Honey Nut Cheerios surpassed "yellow box" as the country's top-seller in 2009.

The 1950s saw some notable debuts. Sugar Jets, our first sweetened cereal, was made of oats and wheat and arrived in 1953.

The next year welcomed Trix, the first fruit-flavored cereal on the market. Cocoa Puffs came in 1958, capitalizing on folks' love of chocolate. Trix and Cocoa Puffs are still known for their spokescharacters – the Trix Rabbit and Sonny the Cuckoo Bird.

Total was introduced to compete in the health cereal market in 1961, fortified with 100 percent of important vitamins and minerals. Lucky Charms, in 1964, was the first cereal to include marshmallows, and is still popular with kids and leprechauns of all ages.

College campus favorite Cinnamon Toast Crunch was introduced in 1984. And we acquired the Chex brand in 1997.



Big new "G" on the box means...



very special Goodness from General Mills



### WHAT'S THE 'BIG G'?

That "Big G" stands for "goodness," and it became the theme for General Mills cereals in 1959. A white triangle highlighting a "G" in script was first introduced on Twinkles cereal packages. Consumers responded well to the idea, so the Betty Crocker brand name that had been on packages was dropped from all General Mills cereals in 1961.

The Big G was refined and adapted as the corporate logo in 1963, and variations of the Big G have represented General Mills ever since.







## Out of the box

The Washburn Crosby Company began exciting consumers with in-package premiums in the late 1880s. The first, a Gold Medal top, could be found in select Gold Medal flour sacks. Tops were popular toys at the time.

In later years, consumers collected coupons or box tops and mailed them to us for an item. Now and then they needed to send in a little cash as well.

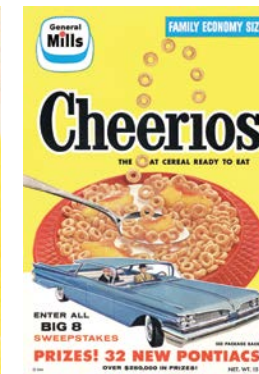
In 1931, a teaspoon offer included in Gold Medal flour and Wheaties cereal boxes sparked a huge response, pushing us to expand the promotion and to continue making exciting new premiums.

Before TV, General Mills often used its radio shows to announce premium offers. Listeners could write to the company to request their promotional items, then would spend a few weeks checking the mailbox until the cool new premium arrived.

Announcements dotted the “Jack Armstrong” radio show, sponsored by Wheaties. At one point, more than 6 million Jack Armstrong SkyRanger planes were in toy chests across the U.S.

Finger rings were a guaranteed hit. There have been six-shooter rings, silver bullet rings – and, of course, secret decoder rings. One of the most well-known was the atomic bomb ring in the late 1940s. A Kix cereal box top and a bit of money returned an adjustable ring with a two-piece aluminum and plastic “bomb.” Of course, it wasn’t an actual weapon of mass destruction. It was more a toy of mass distraction.

Cereal premiums continue today, and although most can be found in or on the box, some have taken on a different form. In 2005, consumers could download a free ringtone for their cell phones through a Reese’s Puffs cereal promotion. The next year, boxes of Lucky Charms came with a free Apple iTunes download. So they’ve changed with the times, but premiums remain popular.



Rings were among the most popular items in the early days of premiums. There have been six-shooter rings, silver bullet rings – and, of course, secret decoder rings.

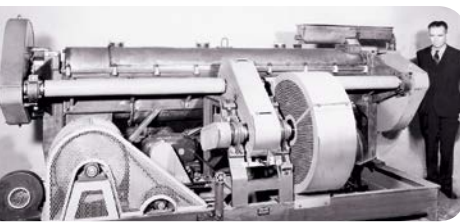


# A blast from the past

## PUFFING GUN

The puffing gun, developed in the late 1930s by General Mills engineer and chemist Thomas R. James, allowed the company to expand or “puff” grain pellets into different cereal shapes. It was the crucial technology component in the development of Kix cereal in 1937 and the creation of Cheerioats in 1941.

Tak Tsuchiya, a General Mills engineer, improved on James’ invention with an innovation that allowed the puffing gun to puff cereal continually, instead of in batches. He worked on the upgrade for nearly six years, and introduced it to General Mills manufacturing facilities in 1960. The continuous cereal puffing gun not only puffed a greater volume of cereal, but produced a more uniform product and reduced quality control losses.



## JAMES COOKER

Thomas R. James also designed the James Cooker – a cooker and extruder that makes round pellets of dough. An evolved version of the James Cooker is still used today to make many General Mills cereals.

## EASY-OPEN PACKAGES

Stanley Grapp, a physicist in General Mills’ research packaging department, developed the package tear strip in 1953, making it easier for people to open a variety of everyday food products.



## Who was that masked man?



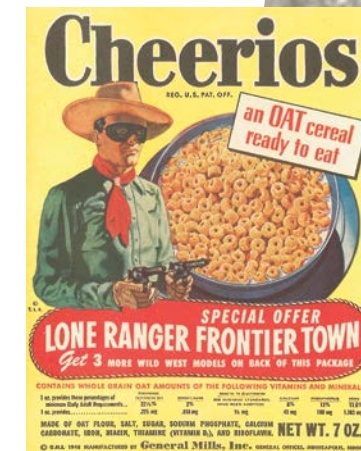
For two decades, General Mills brought radio listeners, then television viewers, the adventures of “The Lone Ranger.” General Mills’ long-running sponsorship began with the radio show in 1941 and ended 20 years later with “The Lone Ranger” television show in 1961. During that time, the Lone Ranger and his faithful companion Tonto appeared on scores of cereal packages.

General Mills created countless Lone Ranger-related premiums for our Wheaties, Kix and Cheerios boxes, some of which were announced only during the radio show. One of the most

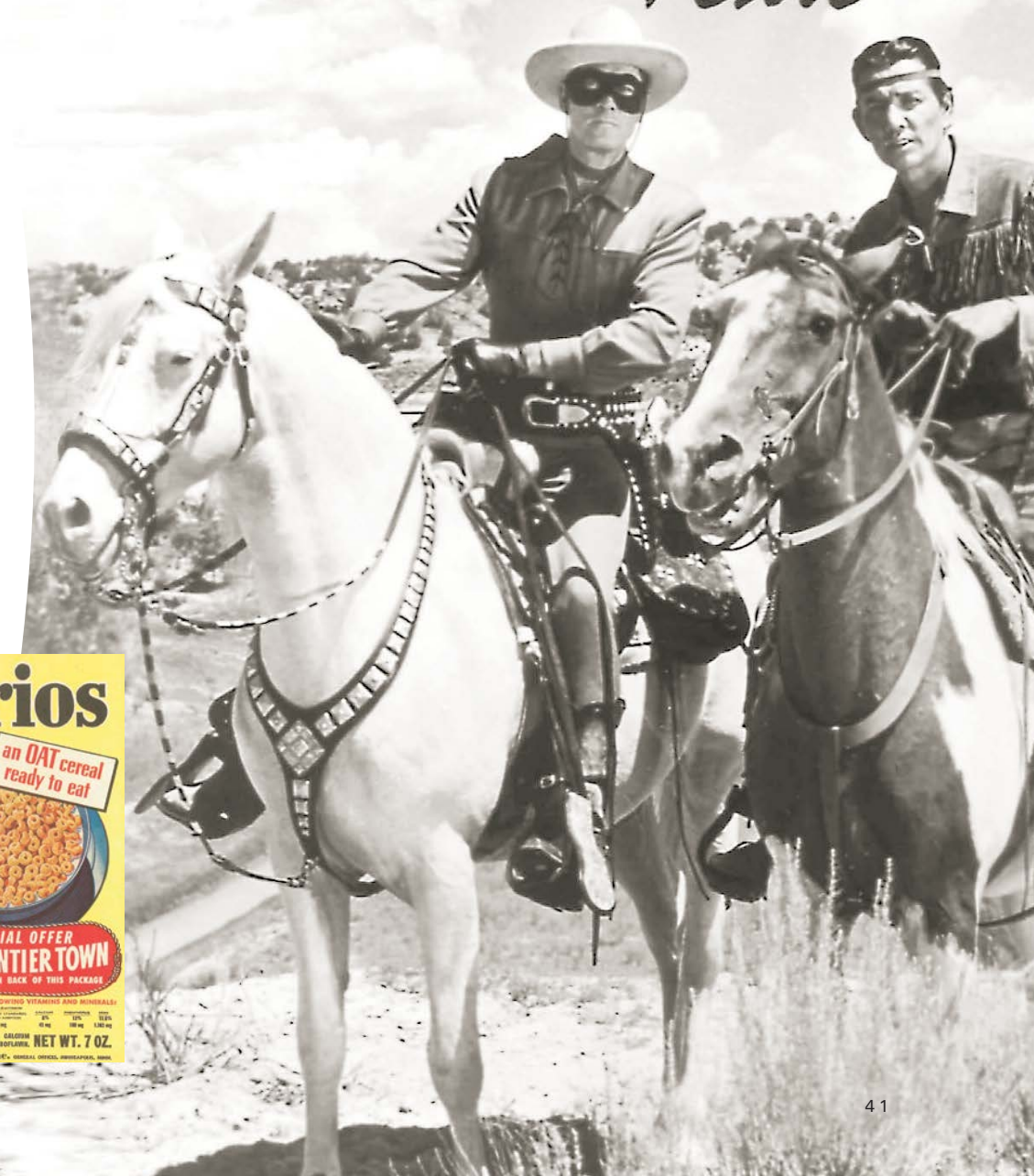
popular was the Lone Ranger frontier town.

The frontier town premium came in four sections and, when assembled, depicted an entire western town that was 3.5 feet by 4.5 feet. Each section cost 10 cents and one Cheerios box top. Once assembled, children could add buildings found on the backs of Cheerios boxes. For an entire year, radio listeners could follow the adventures of the Lone Ranger and his horse, Silver, in the frontier town.

To celebrate the Cheerios 60th anniversary in 2001, General Mills released a special commemorative Lone Ranger cereal package. The Cheerios box was a replica of one that first appeared in 1948 and was banded with the 60th anniversary Cheerios box.



*Best Wishes  
The Lone Ranger  
& Tonto*





## Charmin' characters

General Mills has created some of the most beloved characters in the grocery store.

The Trix Rabbit might look young, but he dates back to the late 1950s. In almost every commercial, his attempt to eat Trix is inevitably foiled by kids who exclaim, "Silly Rabbit, Trix are for kids!"

But the Rabbit has tasted Trix twice – in 1976 and 1980 – following box top voting campaigns.



Lucky the Leprechaun has certainly tasted Lucky Charms. How else would he know it's "magically delicious"? Lucky arrived in 1964 to proclaim that Lucky Charms "'tis a charmin' cereal ... simply charmin'!" 'Twas those marshmallow charms that won him over.

Lucky took a short break in the mid-1970s. Looking for that pot of gold, no doubt. Waldo the Wizard stepped in, but in less than a year, Lucky "magically" reappeared on boxes.

If you can invite a leprechaun to breakfast, why not monsters? Count Chocula, Franken Berry and Boo Berry debuted in the early 1970s. They were followed by Fruit Brute and Yummy Mummy, who both turned out to be a little shy. They've only been seen once since 1990, which is about the time Wendell the friendly baker appeared.

Wendell cooked up batches of Cinnamon Toast Crunch cereal starting in 1987. His baking pals Bob and Quello have retired.



### MORE THAN JUST CEREAL

Marshmallow charms – those unique little marshmallow shapes – are sprinkled throughout Lucky Charms. The original cereal contained pink hearts, yellow moons, orange stars and green clovers.



Dudley Do-Right, the Canadian Mountie, always got his man. Persistently pursuing Snidely Whiplash and regularly rescuing his girlfriend Nell, Dudley appeared on the FrostyO's cereal box and on "The Bullwinkle Show," created and sponsored by General Mills.





# Cereal for one and all

Breakfast in America has long meant cereal from General Mills.

But outside of the United States, people know us differently.

Cereal Partners Worldwide (CPW), General Mills' 50-50 joint venture with Nestlé, is the No. 2 cereal company globally. CPW markets dozens of brands, including Fitness, Nesquik, Cheerios, Chocapic and Shreddies.

The idea for the partnership got its start in 1989. General Mills Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Bruce Atwater traveled to Vevey, Switzerland, to meet with Nestlé Chief Executive Officer Helmut Maucher. General Mills sought a strategy for expanding its operations in the international cereal market.

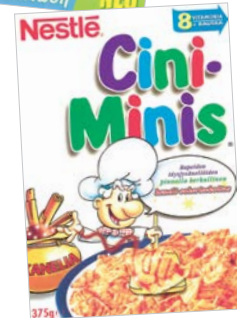
The meeting went so well that the two agreed to create a joint venture partnership on the spot.

The partners brought different benefits. General Mills brought cereal marketing expertise, technical excellence and a portfolio of successful brands. Nestlé brought its distribution network, local market expertise, sales and supply chain capabilities, and its own portfolio of successful brands.

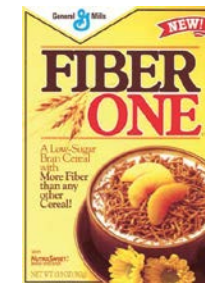
In December 1990, CPW began marketing in France, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom, and CPW has since expanded its reach to more than 130 markets around the world.

There were no cereal eaters in China before CPW launched in 2002. In fact, there were no cereal sections in grocery stores. CPW was not deterred.

The joint venture developed a strategy and a new cereal, Milk and Egg Stars. It was an adaptation of CPW's Honey Stars and was designed to cater to the taste of people in China, where the most common breakfast was milk, eggs and bread.



## A SURPRISING SUCCESS



America was in the midst of a trend where more people wanted foods with higher fiber content when brainstorming began on Fiber One in 1983.

General Mills didn't have a bran-based cereal that appealed to adults. But we didn't want just any bran cereal. We wanted a high-fiber cereal with less sugar. Fiber One debuted nationally in July 1985.

For the first five years, sales were steady despite very limited marketing. There was a core group of people who wanted to buy Fiber One whether it was advertised or not.

In the last 10 years, Fiber One has catapulted from a single cereal to a brand with dozens of products spanning several food categories, including bars, brownies and fruit snacks.

## UNIQUELY CANADIAN



Canadians were introduced to Cheerios in 1954 and Lucky Charms in 1966. We've also developed unique cereals for the Canadian market, Oatmeal Crisp Maple Nut among them.

General Mills Canada also boasts an array of U.S. favorites – Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Reese Puffs, Chex and Fibre 1. Our Canadian cereal packages always include Canada's two official languages – English and French.







Wheaties 1924



Kix 1937



Cheerioats 1941



Trix 1954



Twinkles 1960



Good News! 1964



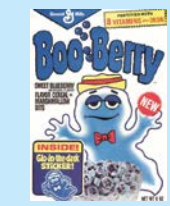
Corn Bursts 1967



Count Chocula, Franken Berry 1971



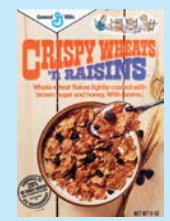
Crazy Cow 1972



Boo Berry 1972



Mr. Wonderful's Surprise 1972



Crispy Wheats 'n Raisins 1977



Cinnamon Toast Crunch 1984



Fiber One 1985



Oatmeal Raisin Crisp 1987



1990 General Mills and Nestlé establish a 50-50 joint venture partnership called Cereal Partners Worldwide.



Nesquik 1991



Reese's Peanut Butter Puffs 1994



Frosted Cheerios 1995



Millenios 1999



Fiber One Protein 2013



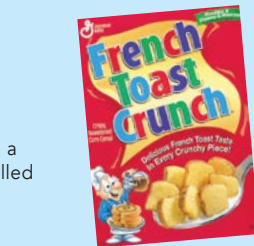
Gluten-free Cheerios 2015



Cascadian Farm Ancient Grains 2012



Gluten-free Rice Chex 2008



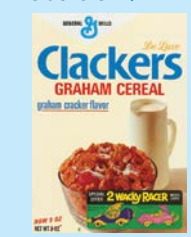
French Toast Crunch 1996



Cascadian Farm Oats & Honey Granola 2002



Lucky Charms 1964



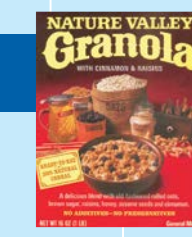
Clackers 1968



BucWheats 1971



Golden Grahams 1974



Nature Valley Granola 1973



Honey Nut Cheerios 1978



Raisin Nut Bran 1986



Clusters 1987



Basic 4 1991



Multi Grain Cheerios 1992



Berry Berry Kix 1992



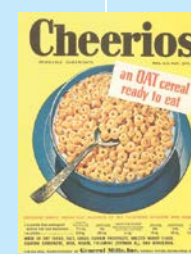
Fingos 1993



Washburn's Whole Wheat Flakes 1922



Rice Chex 1938



Cheerios 1945



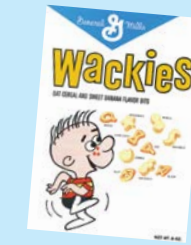
Sugar Jets 1953



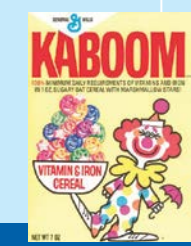
Cocoa Puffs 1958



Total 1961



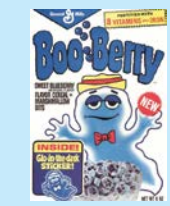
Wackies 1965



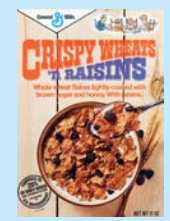
Kaboom 1969



Crazy Cow 1972



Boo Berry 1972



Crispy Wheats 'n Raisins 1977



Fiber One 1985



Oatmeal Raisin Crisp 1987



1990 General Mills and Nestlé establish a 50-50 joint venture partnership called Cereal Partners Worldwide.



Nesquik 1991



Reese's Peanut Butter Puffs 1994



Frosted Cheerios 1995



Millenios 1999



Fiber One Protein 2013



Gluten-free Cheerios 2015



Cascadian Farm Ancient Grains 2012



Gluten-free Rice Chex 2008



French Toast Crunch 1996



Cascadian Farm Oats & Honey Granola 2002

Some of the cereals General Mills has introduced over the years





## Down in the valley

It was the Roaring '20s. But "down in the valley," there was a rumbling as the Jolly Green Giant was born.

When the Minnesota Valley Canning Company developed the seeds for a tender and larger pea in 1925, the peas were dubbed "Green Giant." When the company trademarked the product, it also created a character to feature on labels.

He was no giant at first, and he was white, not green. Wearing bearskin and carrying a giant peapod, he was more like a small white gnome. But he evolved over decades – and had a big impact on the entire company.

In 1937, new science allowed field crews to know when a crop was mature. "Picked at the fleeting moment of perfect flavor" became the company's new slogan.

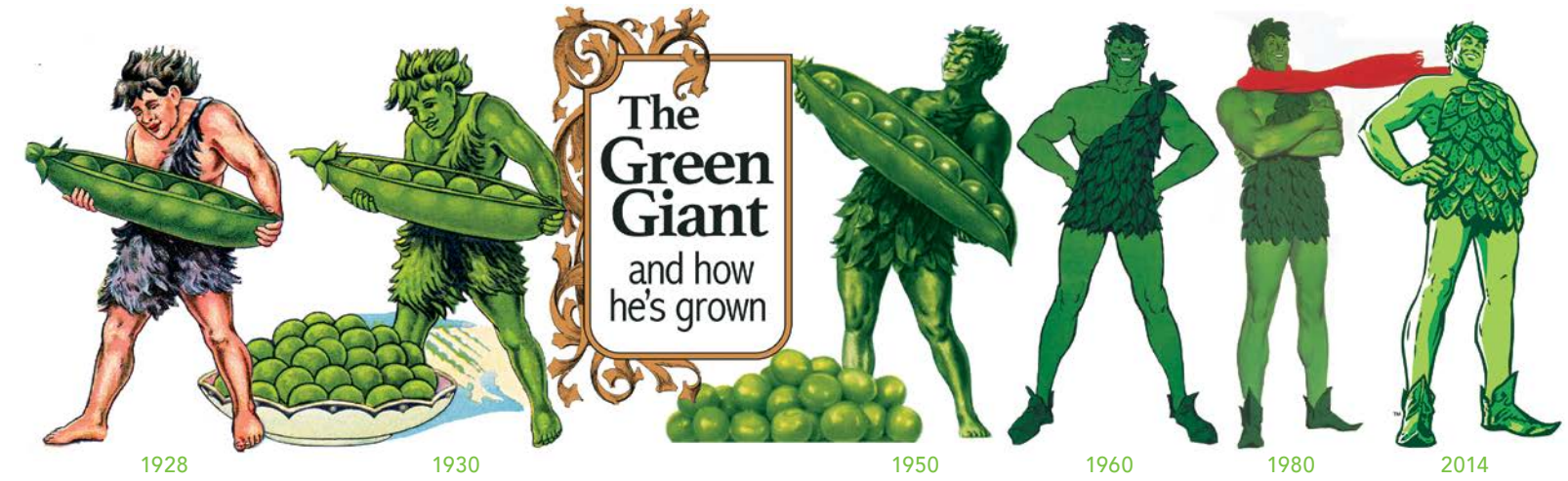
The giant character, too, was transformed into the Green Giant character we know today, with a proud, friendly and approachable persona and flashing a gleaming white smile.

At the suggestion of advertising legend Leo Burnett, the word "Jolly" was added to his name. That led the Minnesota Valley Canning Company, founded in 1903, to change its own name to the Green Giant Company in 1950. Yes, the Green Giant was so influential with shoppers that the company changed its name to match its Green Giant icon.

The first successful Green Giant television campaign was launched in 1961. That's when he first boomed his famous "Ho Ho Ho!" Previous attempts at putting the Giant on TV had failed, as the Giant seemed to move like a monster and scared little children.

And the valley? It's based on the fertile vegetable growing area around the Minnesota River near Le Sueur in south central Minnesota, where the Minnesota Valley Canning Company began – "The Valley of the Jolly Green Giant."

In 2015, General Mills sold the Green Giant business in the U.S., Canada and select other markets to New Jersey-based B&G Foods. But General Mills continues to own and operate the Green Giant business in most other markets around the world.



1907 Early June peas are launched.

1924 Minnesota Valley Canning Company's Del Maize brand introduces Cream-style corn.



1928 Original Green Giant appears in advertising.



1937 "Picked at the fleeting moment of perfect flavor" advertising is introduced.



1961 Frozen vegetables are launched.

1972 Little Green Sprout, one of the Jolly Green Giant's helpers, is created.



2009 Valley Fresh Steamers are introduced.

### Milestones in Green Giant history

1925 The Green Giant logo is born after the introduction of a large variety of pea.



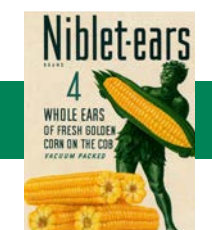
1929 Vacuum-packed Green Giant Niblets corn is launched.

# Green Giant®

1950 Minnesota Valley Canning Company officially changes its name to the Green Giant Company.



1963 Glass jar vegetables are introduced.



1969 Green Giant is the first to introduce frozen corn on the cob.

1979 Green Giant is purchased by the Pillsbury Company.

2015 General Mills sells the Green Giant business in the U.S., Canada and select other markets to B&G Foods.







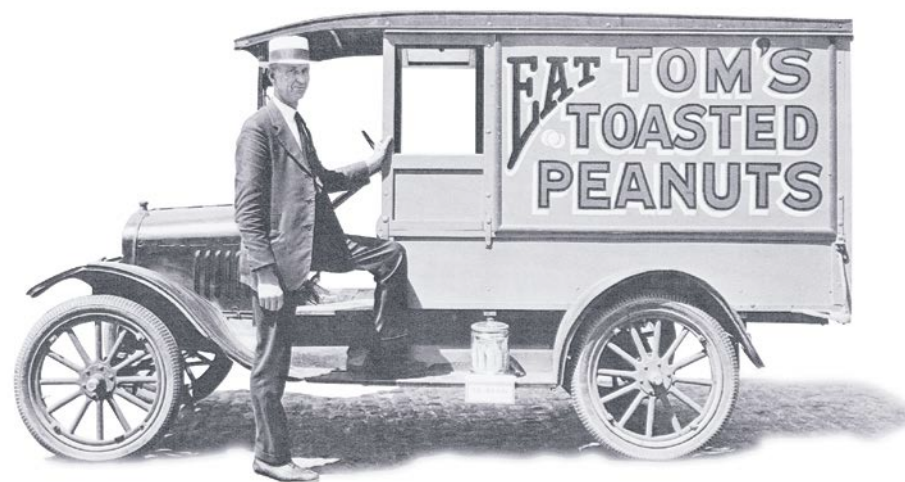
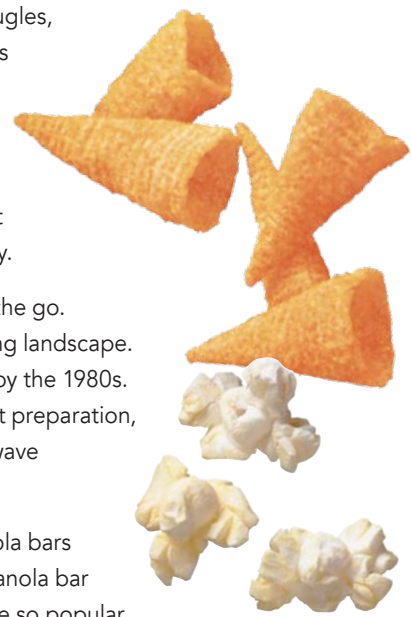
## Snack on this

When it entered the market with its regional introduction of Bugles, Daisy\*s and Whistles in 1964, venturing into the snack business was a bit of a gamble for General Mills.

Even as late as 1977, three out of four Americans didn't snack at all on any given day. But a huge shift was already underway. By 2007, 65 percent of Americans snacked at least twice daily, according to a U.S. Agriculture Department study.

Snacking grew as people found themselves increasingly on the go. But it was the microwave oven that first changed the snacking landscape. Microwave ovens became ubiquitous in homes and offices by the 1980s. After developing unique packaging that allowed convenient preparation, General Mills launched three varieties of Pop Secret microwave popcorn in 1985.

General Mills became the first major company to sell granola bars when Nature Valley introduced a rolled oats and honey granola bar in 1975. Over the next 40 years, Nature Valley bars became so popular that we created different varieties for everyone: crunchy, chewy, nut, yogurt-coated, protein-packed and gluten free.



### FOOD THAT'S FUN

General Mills acquired Dallas-based Morton Foods and its line of "fun foods" – potato chips, tortilla chips, corn chips, corn puffs, Twis-Tees and pork skins – in 1964.

In 1966, General Mills bought Tom's Foods, bringing peanuts, potato chips, baked goods and candy into the fold. We bought Slim Jim, Inc., with its beef jerky, dry sausage and pickled meat products in 1967.

Not long after that, General Mills moved into granola and fruit snacks. We examined the complex process of preserving fruit for a snack, and launched Apple Crunchies – dehydrated apples in a pouch – in 1976. Apple Crunchies missed the mark, and were discontinued in 1978. But we were intent on marketing a snack with fruit. In 1980, Fruit Roll-Ups debuted. Soon after, we introduced Fruit String Thing, Fruit-by-the-Foot and Gushers, to expand our popular fruit snacks line.



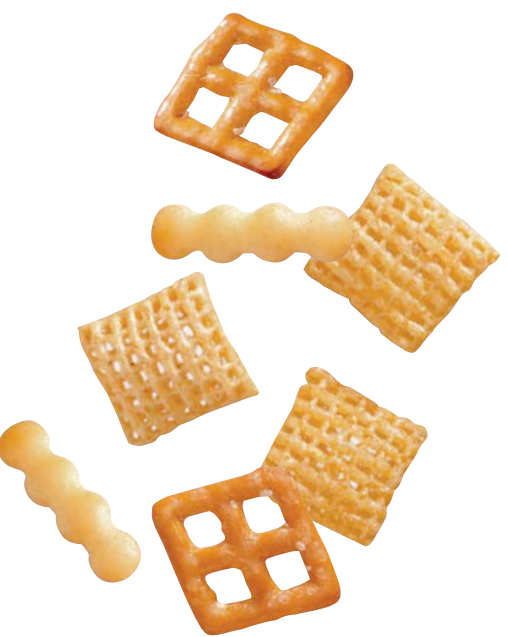
By the 1990s, General Mills was innovating to create products like IncrediBites, which were bite-sized granola sandwiches in chocolate, peanut butter and vanilla cream varieties. They came along in 1992.

There were also acquisitions. For example, Chex Mix joined the General Mills portfolio in 1997, and Gardetto's snack mix, based on an authentic family recipe, joined our family in 1999.

Beyond the U.S. shores, General Mills created a joint venture with PepsiCo – Snack Ventures Europe – in 1992. It was the continent's largest snack foods company at the time. PepsiCo completed a buyout of General Mills' interest in Snack Ventures Europe in 2005.







**SNACKING ON THE RUN**

With the introduction of Go-Gurt in 1999, people could now take their yogurt with them, with packaging that made it easy for kids. As the new millennium dawned, snacking had become as common as breakfast, lunch and dinner. And we had expanded what you could slip into a purse or toss into a backpack.

We found a new focus for snacks in club stores, which proved to be a location where shoppers welcomed experimentation and the opportunity to purchase snacks not available in other stores.

General Mills brands that had been successful in other categories also introduced snacks. An organic line,

Cascadian Farm, brought organic chewy granola bars to market. Fiber One moved into the snack category with great success, introducing chewy bars in 2007 and brownies in 2011. Fiber One continued to add products such as soft-baked cookies and fruit-flavored snacks in 2014.

Healthy snacks were especially hot, and in 2008, General Mills acquired Lärabar. It went national in 2016 with a campaign touting its high-fiber bars packed with vitamins and minerals, with no added sugar and fit for kosher and vegan diets.

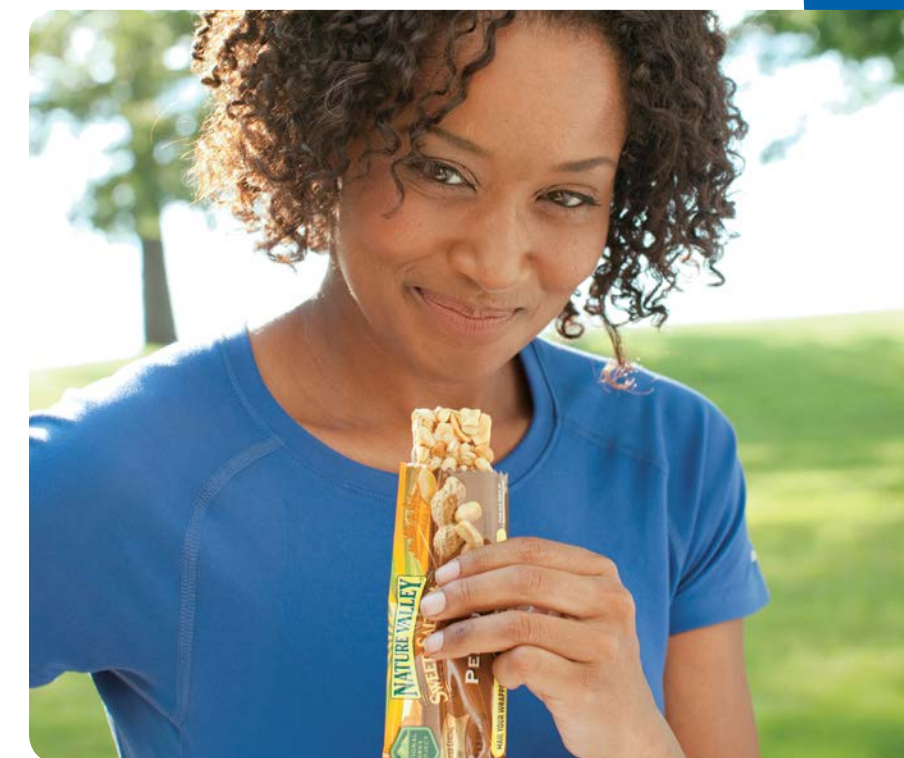
Snackers in the new millennium weren't satisfied with just a potato chip. So in 2012, we acquired Food Should Taste Good, a leading maker of all-natural tortilla chips, kettle-cooked sweet potato chips and other natural snacks.

In 2012, General Mills also acquired Yoki, a popular snack brand in Brazil. One of Yoki's six brands was found in most Brazilian homes, offering an ever-expanding range of flavors for popcorn, potato chips and peanuts – along with teas and soy beverages.

Immaculate Baking also joined the General Mills family in 2012. Started by a young entrepreneur in his garage, Immaculate Baking was recognized as North Carolina Business of the Year in 2002. Brownies, biscuits, rolls and cookies – many of them gluten free – drew people to this homespun brand.

Annie's, a leading producer of natural and organic foods, became a wholly owned subsidiary of General Mills in 2014. Annie's cheddar bunnies and fruit snacks are major mom favorites in the organic and natural category.

In 2016, with people searching for protein snacks, we acquired EPIC Provisions, a rapidly growing, premium meat snacks company based in Austin, Texas.





# What's for dinner?

General Mills has been helping answer that question for a very long time.

It could be lasagna made with Muir Glen organic tomatoes. It could be a loaf of bread baked fresh from Pillsbury dough. And Old El Paso practically invented taco night.

In the United Kingdom, we provide families with Jus-Rol pastry. In Brazil, cooks prepare chicken with Yoki Seasoned Cassava flour. And V.Pearl is a popular frozen brand for Cantonese dim sum in southern China.

Hamburger Helper, Annie's, Wanchai Ferry, Betty Crocker side dishes and Progresso soups all help answer the question of "What's for dinner?"

Latina created the fresh pasta category in Australia when it launched in 1989. Latina Fresh is now the leading pasta brand in both Australia and New Zealand. Our Pasta Master Australian brand also provides chilled Italian meals, including lasagna, baked meals, pasta and sauces.

We also add spice to life, literally. Parampara, the ready-to-cook spice and sauce mix brand, makes meals more flavorful in India, Canada, the United States and Japan.



## OFFERING A HELPING HAND

When it launched in 1971, Hamburger Helper dinner mix was revolutionary. For the first time, instead of browning meat in one pan and using additional cookware for pasta or potatoes, cooks could prepare an entire meal in one skillet.

Rising meat prices were stretching budgets in the 1970s, and convenience mattered. Hamburger Helper became so popular that we could barely keep up with the demand.

We even gave Helper fans a mascot. The "Helping Hand" debuted in 1977 as a friendly, knowledgeable kitchen assistant eager to help you with dinner. "Lefty" took a break in 1996, but he returned as helpful as ever in 2001.

All the while, Helpers continued to expand. We launched Tuna Helper in 1972 and Chicken Helper in 1984. Eventually, there were more than 50 Helper dinner mixes.





**MEXICAN NIGHT**

Old El Paso has been putting spice into meal planning since it emerged from the Mountain Pass Canning Company in the first half of the 1900s.

Old El Paso was the first to offer a full line of Mexican meals and the first to advertise Mexican food in the United States. Popular products include dinner kits, taco shells and seasonings. When offerings expanded in the 1970s, grocers established a Mexican food section in their stores. Pillsbury purchased Old El Paso in 1995.



**SOUP-ER SOUPS**

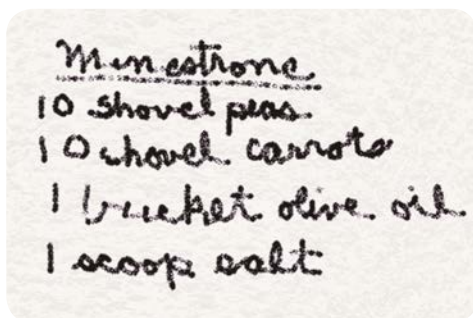
The Progresso name predates its soups. The company marketed items such as tomato paste and olive oil for about 20 years before its first launch of soups in the 1940s. Progresso soups were among the earliest ready-to-serve soups in America.

Soon, Progresso introduced minestrone and lentil soups, with employees following original family recipes that were scribbled on the walls of the building where they worked. Pillsbury acquired Progresso in 1995.

Annie's brought a certified organic soup to our table in 2015, insisting there is no reason for soup to be ho-hum and boasting "a whole bunch of delicious flavors." Annie's soups include "happy pasta shapes," which many kids find intriguing.



Original family recipes for the first Progresso soups were scribbled on the walls of the company's building in Vineland, New Jersey.



**SERVING UP SIDES**

In the 1960s, people were looking for more convenience at meal time. Betty Crocker had introduced Instant Mashed Potatoes in 1959, and by 1964, it was Mashed Potato Buds. Beginning with just one helpful potato side dish, our little extras that help dress up main dishes grew into about 30 varieties. Appearing on grocers' shelves were several varieties of Betty Crocker potato mixes, including hash browns, twice-baked potatoes and Seasoned Skillet.

Suddenly Salad, a salad mix launched in 1987 with four varieties, became an easy way to make fresh pasta salad. With microwave ovens becoming common, Bowl Appétit, a five-minute, microwavable meal made for an ideal lunch, with rice and pasta meals introduced in 2000.

Side dishes aren't unique to America. In Brazil, Yoki's brands were everywhere when General Mills acquired Yoki Alimentos S.A. in 2012. The company – originally named Kitano – was founded in 1960 by Yoshizo Kitano, a Japanese immigrant to Brazil. Yoki already marketed more than 600 items, including convenient meals, soups, desserts and seasonings when it joined General Mills. Yoki also sells Yokitos snacks, Lin Tea products and soy beverages under the Mais Vita brand.







**DUMPLINGS AND MORE**

Madame Chong Kin Wo began selling handmade dumplings from a wooden cart at Hong Kong's Wanchai Ferry pier in 1978.

Word spread, and soon her dumplings became the talk of the town. In 1997, Madam Chong partnered with Pillsbury to help grow her business.

With Pillsbury, and later General Mills, Wanchai Ferry soared. So did Madame Chong's reputation, with Hong Kong media calling her "The Dumpling Queen." Business and government leaders continue to honor her. From her one wooden cart on the Wanchai Ferry pier, Wanchai Ferry has grown into a leading brand, not only in Hong Kong and China, but worldwide.



Madame Chong

**EVERYONE LOVES PIZZA**

When Rose and Jim Totino took out a \$1,500 loan to start a business, they probably couldn't have imagined it would one day make and sell more than 1 million pizzas daily.

Totino's began in the 1950s as Rose and Jim's family pizza parlor in St. Paul, Minnesota, and was acquired by Pillsbury in 1975. In the late 1980s, Jeno Paulucci sold his beloved pizza and pizza rolls businesses to Pillsbury as well, creating a mighty pizza duo.

Today, Totino's Party Pizza and Jeno's Crisp 'n Tasty Pizza fly off grocers' shelves at a pace of more than 360 million a year. Totino's also markets bite-sized Pizza Rolls that have grown into a teen and man-cave favorite category.

Annie's also offers natural and organic frozen pizza, pizza poppers and pizza bagels. Co-founded by Annie Withey and Andrew Martin in 1989, Annie's joined General Mills in 2014.



Jim Totino







Photos from the General Mills 1984 Annual Report

## Yogurt worldwide

Yogurt was already wildly popular in the United States when General Mills purchased a majority stake of French-based Yoplait in 2011.

In 1977? Not so much.

General Mills ventured into the yogurt category when it secured the licensing and manufacturing rights for Yoplait in the U.S. from the Michigan Cottage Cheese Company in 1977. It proved to be a spectacular move.

It was 1964 when French farmers from six regional co-ops began working together to sell their products, including yogurt, nationally. They knew they would have a better chance to accomplish this goal with the creation of a new dairy cooperative that became known as Sodima. That auspicious decision led to the creation of the second-leading yogurt brand in the world – Yoplait.

The Yoplait brand married the names of two of the most recognizable co-ops – Yola and Coplait.

Voilà. Yoplait was born.



In 1990, Sodima changed its name to Sodiaal – Société de Diffusion Internationale Agro Alimentaire, and global growth for Yoplait continued. Sodiaal gained a partner in January 2002, selling a 50 percent stake in the company to private equity firm PAI Partners, a division of France-based banking giant BNP Paribas.

In July 2011, Yoplait’s U.S. licensee General Mills acquired a majority stake in Yoplait globally, purchasing a 51 percent stake – PAI Partners’ entire share as well as a 1 percent share from Sodiaal.

### COTTAGE INDUSTRY

In 1975, Steve Rothschild, a General Mills executive vice president, was tasked with exploring yogurt’s U.S. prospects.

“One day I saw Yoplait on a grocery shelf in Minneapolis, so I took it to our Corporate Growth department, and I said, ‘Can you tell me anything about this?’ Within a week, we were in Michigan,” he said.

Specifically, they went to the Michigan Cottage Cheese Company, which had licensed the rights to the Yoplait brand in the United States. The General Mills team felt yogurt could catch on in the U.S. and secured the licensing and manufacturing rights for Yoplait in the United States.



### COLOMBO

Colombo yogurt was created by Rose Colombosian. She made her first batch of yogurt in her kitchen in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1929, using yogurt cultures she brought from Armenia.

People soon learned of Rose’s delicious yogurt. So her husband, Sarkis, brought out the horses, hitched them to a carriage and began delivering Rose’s yogurt to customers in northern Massachusetts.

The company remained relatively small until yogurt became popular for its health benefits in the 1960s. General Mills purchased the business in 1993. We ended shipments of the brand in 2010.

### GO-GURT

The debut of Go-Gurt in 1999 marked the first yogurt packaged in a tube. Portable, it could be frozen overnight and packed in a lunch. It would be thawed, but still chilled, to accompany a midday meal.

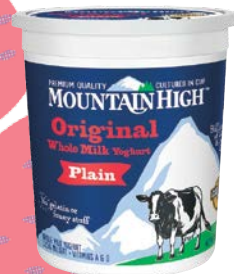


### YOPLAIT GREEK COMES TO THE U.S.

Yoplait entered the Greek yogurt category in 2010. At the time, Greek yogurt was less than 3 percent of U.S. yogurt sales, according to UBS investment research. Just two years later, Greek had exploded to almost 30 percent. Greek varieties went beyond cup consumption and straight into many dishes, because Greek and Indian cuisines incorporate Greek yogurt into many recipes. Yoplait crafted the first 100-calorie Greek yogurt – Yoplait Greek 100 – in 2012.







**MOUNTAIN HIGH**

Mountain High's all-natural yoghurt has been known for its unique twist. It is cultured in the cup in a process that lends the brand a smooth and creamy texture.

Mountain High was founded in Boulder, Colorado, in 1971, as an ice cream company. In 1976, it added refrigerated yogurt to its product line. General Mills acquired Mountain High in 2011.

**LIBERTÉ**

Founded in 1936, Liberté is known for its rich, signature yogurt. As the brand evolved, it also marketed sour cream and cottage cheese.

A leading brand of natural and organic yogurt in Canada, Yoplait acquired the Liberté brand in 2010, and brought its products to the U.S. in 2012.

**FRIENDS IN THE FIGHT**

When one of our co-workers was diagnosed with breast cancer more than 17 years ago, the Yoplait team rallied to help raise funds for her treatment. The effort evolved into Save Lids to Save Lives, a program where consumers collected and submitted pink Yoplait lids. Each lid triggered a donation to the Susan G. Komen Foundation, one of the leading organizations funding breast cancer education, treatment and research.



The program was restructured and renamed Friends in the Fight in 2014 to pay tribute to everyone impacted by this disease, including caregivers and family members. As many things have, the campaign has gone digital. Instead of sending in lids, supporters now enter codes online from specially marked pink lids with a choice of three charities to which to donate.

Over nearly two decades, General Mills has contributed more than \$50 million to the breast cancer cause.

**YOPLAIT TURNS 50**

In 2015, Yoplait marked its 50th anniversary with a four-day extravaganza in Paris.

A series of events, known as "Petite Fleur Folies" (Little Flower Follies), featured the work of world-renowned installation artist Gad Weil. Weil's work was inspired by Yoplait, which is known in France as "La Petite Fleur" (The Little Flower). Weil described the work as "an invitation to garden, an invitation to play, an invitation to believe in our common future."

Weil created a temporary garden spanning 4,000 square meters (nearly an acre) along the River Seine, covering both sides of the Pont d'Iéna – the bridge that links the Eiffel Tower to Paris' Trocadéro district. The garden, with more than a half million flowers, also contained eight interactive sculptures.

More than half a million people attended the events.

**THE LITTLE FLOWER**

The first Yoplait logo had six petals, representing the French regional cooperatives that united to create the Yoplait brand.

Affectionately known as "The Little Flower" in France, the logo was changed to five petals after two of the co-ops merged.

The Yoplait flower is widely recognized and much loved in France and around the world as a symbol of quality, sophistication, taste and nutrition.



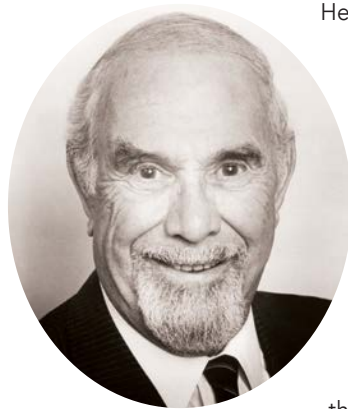
photo by Christophe Averty



Yoplait, the second-leading yogurt brand in the world, offers many styles and dozens of flavors to choose from. Yoplait is now available in more than 70 countries.



## Häagen-Dazs: Love at first bite



He was Polish, but Reuben Mattus put a map of Denmark on his ice cream package.

And there was that umlaut. Mattus placed an umlaut over the “a” in Häagen-Dazs, the brand name he and his wife dreamed up while sitting in the living room of their Brooklyn apartment in 1961. The intent was to make the name sound Danish, but Danish has no umlaut.

For Mattus, his ice cream was more than a unique name that rolled off the tongue. He had started Häagen-Dazs with the idea, “If I could use the best ingredients and watch everything, then people wouldn’t mind paying a little more money.” He grew the business for years.

When he and his family felt the work had become a bit overwhelming, he decided Pillsbury was a company that could remain true to his intensity.

An example of that intensity came years earlier when he had decided to add a strawberry flavor to his line. Mattus spent six years searching for the crop that would meet his standard. Eventually, his business would purchase entire Oregon valleys of strawberries.

Pillsbury bought the brand in 1983 and kept doing what Mattus had done: Celebrate quality and expand the venture. Under Pillsbury, the brand became an international hit.

More than five decades after the name was born, Häagen-Dazs still has no artificial stabilizers, emulsifiers or colorants.



An over-the-moon hit in China, Häagen-Dazs mooncakes are a coveted gift during the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival. In Shanghai alone in 2015, one in every five families has been known to consume one box of limited edition, premium Häagen-Dazs mooncakes during the Moon Festival.



It was the wife of a company executive who helped bring Häagen-Dazs to Japan. She convinced her husband to pursue Häagen-Dazs after tasting it on a trip to the United States. A deal was struck in August 1984 with Pillsbury to create the joint venture Häagen-Dazs Japan, and the super-premium ice cream has been in Japan ever since.

### ICE CREAM PARTNERS

In 1999, Pillsbury created an ice cream joint venture with Nestlé for the United States. With General Mills’ acquisition of Pillsbury in 2001, Nestlé had the right to purchase the venture’s licensing rights for Häagen-Dazs in the U.S. and Canada – and did. General Mills continues to own the Häagen-Dazs brand and operates the Häagen-Dazs business outside the U.S. and Canada.



This Eiffel Tower menu item is one of many decadent creations available in Häagen-Dazs shops around the world.



Häagen-Dazs is sold in more than 900 Häagen-Dazs shops in 50 countries, including this one in Thailand.



# Blazing trails in stores

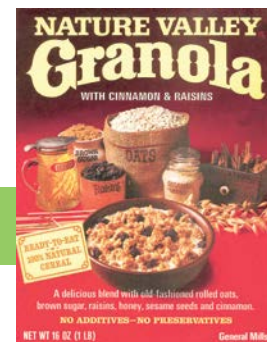
The brand that created an entirely new category, Nature Valley, got its start in 1973 with just one product: Nature Valley Granola cereal. It was the first attempt by General Mills at a 100 percent natural ready-to-eat cereal.

Healthy and versatile, granola can be eaten as a cereal, a snack, as a topping for yogurt or ice cream, or used as a baking ingredient.

When Nature Valley introduced a crunchy granola bar made with rolled oats and honey in 1975, General Mills became the first major food company to sell granola bars.

As snacking became the norm in a busy world, we responded by creating more bar options: crunchy, chewy, nut, clusters and protein-packed. Each come in many flavors, and are made from wholesome ingredients, with no artificial sweeteners, flavors or colors.

Even today, more than 40 years since its beginning, Nature Valley remains the anchor brand in the bar category and continues to be the leading granola snack bar in the U.S.



1973



1975



1980



1982



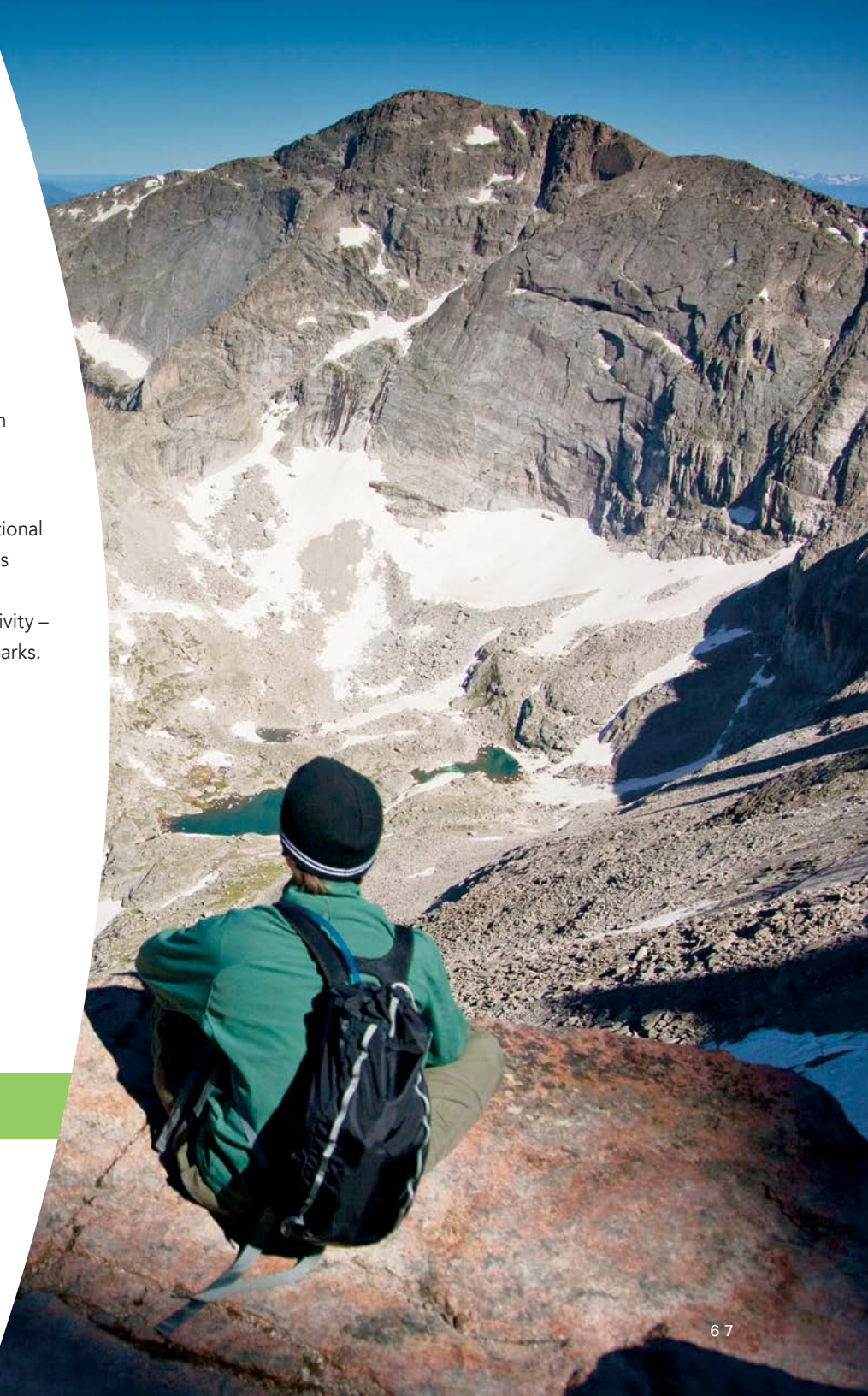
## PROMOTING THE OUTDOORS

As it grew, Nature Valley became synonymous with activity and the outdoors, creating partnerships with organizations such as the National Parks Conservation Association.

The Nature Valley National Parks Project boosted the brand's reputation for promoting the outdoors by helping support, restore and preserve America's national parks for generations to come. And in 2012, Nature Valley launched an ambitious effort called Nature Valley Trail View. Folks can go to their computers to interact online with more than 400 miles of national park trails, views, sights and interactivity – as Nature Valley continues to work to inspire people to visit America's national parks.



Nature Valley granola bars offer one-third of your daily recommended whole grains per serving.





## Natural and organic: Pioneering our journey

In 1999, General Mills approached one of the most highly regarded organic names, Small Planet Foods, owner of brands Cascadian Farm and Muir Glen, about joining the General Mills family.

Small Planet Foods was known for its frozen fruits and vegetables, tomato products and its well-developed sales and sourcing networks among natural and organic grocers.

Along with Small Planet Foods in 2000, came its founder, organic pioneer Gene Kahn, who continued to lead the business for General Mills. Kahn was a founding member of the board that set the standards for certified organic food production in the U.S., and later also led sustainability efforts for General Mills companywide.

Humm Foods, maker of Larabar fruit and nut bars, joined General Mills in 2008. Organic and natural yogurt brands Mountain High and Liberté were added in 2011.

Two more additions followed in 2012, when General Mills acquired Food Should Taste Good, a Massachusetts-based maker of all-natural snacks, and North Carolina's Immaculate Baking, a brand focused on baking and refrigerated dough products.

In 2014, General Mills acquired Annie's, a leading producer of organic and natural food products. And EPIC Provisions, a premium meat and snacks company, joined Annie's in 2016.



### FOUNDING CASCADIAN FARM

Gene Kahn was a 24-year-old graduate student, intrigued by the fragile balance between nature and people. He had little background in farming, but felt a strong passion for growing crops that would feed people, but not harm the land.

With friends, Kahn began farming organically on a small plot of land nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains of Washington in 1972.

Kahn was driven to work in harmony with nature, preserving the soil and protecting the rivers and streams. One by one, his friends drifted away from the farm, tired of pulling weeds. But Kahn remained – not knowing at the time that he would become one of the pioneers of an agricultural strategy that has enjoyed increasing growth in the years since.

Cascadian Farm remains a real place – a working farm in Washington producing fields ripe with organic blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, kiwis, peppers, corn and pumpkins. During summer, people find the farm's roadside stand still open daily.



### MUIR GLEN: FINE FROM THE VINE

Muir Glen was founded in 1991 by a group of entrepreneurs with extensive experience in the agriculture and tomato industries.

Named to honor famed naturalist John Muir, Muir Glen was the first large-scale certified organic tomato processor. Its tomatoes quickly became known for their vine-ripened quality grown in California's San Joaquin Valley and farmed using certified organic practices.

General Mills acquired Muir Glen with Small Planet Foods in 2000. Today, as always, Muir Glen continues to ensure that its vine-ripened organic tomatoes are picked only when ready, with the journey from vine to processing never taking more than eight hours.







**LÄRABAR: A MOUNTAIN OF AN IDEA**

Lärabar founder Lara Merriken was enjoying a hike in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains in 2000 when her mind shifted to food. What if there was a healthy, tasty, convenient food that had only a few natural ingredients, such as fruits and nuts? It would be ideal for people on the go.

The one-time social worker began immersing herself in research. She did her own product development in her own kitchen. Finally, she started her own company. The first 500 bars she made she sealed by hand.

Those first Lärabar flavors hit the stores in April 2003, and Merriken sold more than 1 million bars in her first year. High in fiber, vitamins and minerals, Merriken’s creations include no added sugar and are fit for kosher and vegan diets.

With the world embracing “better for you” snacking, General Mills acquired Lärabar in 2008. Additional innovative products, including Lärabar ALT, a pea-based, gluten-free, dairy-free bar with 10 grams of protein, followed.



**SMOOTH, CREAMY, AND OH SO GOOD**

We added two delicious natural and organic yogurts to our family in 2011. Mountain High yoghurt, the leading large-size yogurt brand in the western United States, was founded in Boulder, Colorado, in 1971. The all-natural yogurt brand brings with it a strong heritage of quality.

Rich and creamy Liberté yogurt has been the yogurt aficionado’s delight in Canada for decades. Liberté joined General Mills with the Yoplait acquisition in July 2011, after Yoplait International purchased the Montreal area-based Liberté in 2010.



**FOOD SHOULD TASTE GOOD**

Pete Lescoe had worked in grocery stores and restaurants all his life. He liked natural ingredients and thoughtful preparation in his food.



So in 2006, Lescoe began creating distinctively flavored snacks in his Waltham, Massachusetts, apartment, and Food Should Taste Good was born.

The company turns out natural tortilla chips in flavors such as Multigrain, Sweet Potato, Lime, Olive and Jalapeño.

Food Should Taste Good won the “Best New Product” designation at the Natural Products Expo East in 2007, and joined General Mills in 2012.

**EPIC PROVISIONS**

EPIC Provisions was co-founded in 2013 by Taylor Collins and Katie Forrest, two competitive athletes seeking a convenient way to add nourishing animal protein to their diets. General Mills acquired the premium meat and snacks company in 2016.



- SWEET POTATO
- MULTIGRAIN
- LIME
- CANTINA
- GUACAMOLE
- JALAPEÑO
- FALAFEL
- KIMCHI
- BLUE CORN
- OLIVE

**IMMACULATE BAKING**

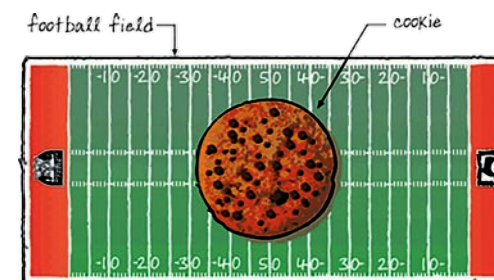
As a youth, Scott Blackwell loved to create and sell treats. It was his grandmother who took him under her wing and taught him the fine art of superior baking. An entrepreneur at heart, Blackwell’s interest in food never waned. His adult endeavors included a restaurant and selling artisan coffee – out of a garage.



Determined to create mouth-watering, wholesome cookies, Blackwell launched Immaculate Baking Company in 1995, and in 2002, his company was recognized as North Carolina Business of the Year.



Immaculate Baking joined the General Mills family in 2012 – continuing and expanding its successful line of refrigerated baking doughs.



Immaculate Baking’s 40,000-pound chocolate chip cookie made it into the Guinness Book of World Records on May 17, 2003.

**ANNIE’S**

When Annie Withey co-founded Annie’s with Andrew Martin in 1989, she chose her pet rabbit as the logo to represent the simplicity, care and goodness in all of her products, which included pastas, snacks and soups.

Withey wanted to be socially responsible, and put her address and telephone number on packaging so customers could connect with her directly.

A leading producer of branded organic and natural foods, Annie’s joined General Mills as a wholly owned subsidiary in 2014. Today, Annie’s is one of the most recognized natural and organic brands in the U.S.







1928

## Changing identity

A traditional millwheel formed the nucleus of the first logo for General Mills in 1928. The millwheel logo was used, with slight modifications, for more than 20 years. In 1949, the millwheel logo was imprinted on a flag that became the corporate symbol for seven years.

In the mid-1950s, the company developed a new visual identity shaped like a television screen.

A successful 1960s cereal ad campaign, carrying the theme of "goodness" with every package, displayed a handwritten "G" in a white triangle.



Within months, the "Big G" became synonymous with both "goodness" and General Mills. As a result, the "Big G" was refined and adapted as the corporate logo in 1963. Variations of this blue "G" represented General Mills throughout the remainder of the 20th century.

With the acquisition of the Pillsbury Company in 2001, the identity was revised to reflect the combination of the two companies. The familiar "G" symbol changed color, adopting the rich, deep blue from the Pillsbury identity. A series of dots – derived from the Pillsbury "barrelhead" logo – was added to symbolize the continued growth and progress of the General Mills family of brands.



1949



1956



1963

General Mills

2002



.....  
GENERAL MILLS

## Celebrating 150 years





# Our milling roots



1877 Washburn partners with John Crosby. Washburn Crosby exports its first flour to Europe with whiter flour made possible by the innovative middlings purifier.



1866 Cadwallader Washburn builds his first flour mill on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis.



1878 A flour dust explosion destroys the Washburn Crosby A mill.



1872 Pillsbury begins using four Xs and the Pillsbury's Best trademark to signify the high quality of its flour.



1881 Pillsbury completes construction of the world's largest flour mill in Minneapolis.



1917 Pillsbury temporarily halts production of Pillsbury's Best flour because of a wheat shortage during World War I.



1921 Betty Crocker is created as a pen name for responding to inquiries about Gold Medal flour.



1903 The Minnesota Valley Canning Company (later renamed Green Giant company) is founded.



1905 Pillsbury and General Mills use trade cards to advertise flour. These cardboard, post-card sized pieces have illustrations on one side and product and grocery information on the other.

1922 The Washburn Crosby Company introduces its first ready-to-eat cereal, Washburn's Whole Wheat Flakes. The name is later changed to Wheaties.



1905

1922

1921

1917

1880

The Washburn Crosby Company wins the gold medal at the first Millers' International Exhibition, inspiring the popular flour's name.



1925 The "Green Giant," a new variety of canned peas is launched.



1925

# Our brands



1926 The Wheaties Quartet debuts what is believed to be the world's first singing radio commercial.

1926



CHAIRMEN

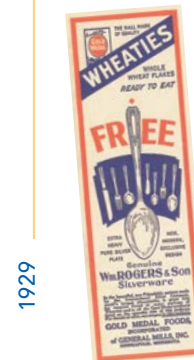
1928 James Ford Bell

The Washburn Crosby Company merges with several other regional flour milling companies to create General Mills on June 20, 1928. GIS stock first trades on the New York Stock Exchange on Nov. 30, 1928.

1928

Mills from Michigan to California join the newly formed General Mills.

1929



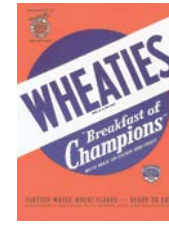
1931 A teaspoon offer marks the first step in the development of the Betty Crocker catalog.

1931



1930s General Mills' research laboratories discover a cost-effective process for producing vitamin D.

1930s



1933 The "Breakfast of Champions" slogan is created.

1933



Jack Armstrong, The All-American Boy, debuts on radio, sponsored by Wheaties.



1936 The first official portrait of Betty Crocker is released.

1936



1937 Kix, the first ready-to-eat puffed corn cereal, is introduced.

1937



General Mills' Mechanical division is recognized with four Army-Navy "E" awards for excellence.

1943



Cheerioats cereal is introduced. The name is changed to Cheerios four years later.

1941



The Lone Ranger, sponsored by Kix, debuts on radio.

1941

General Mills' test kitchens are renamed "The Betty Crocker Kitchens."



1946



General Mills introduces its first cake mix.

1947



Betty Crocker gives home-makers a recipe for a radically new dessert - Chiffon cake.

1948



The first Pillsbury Bake-Off Contest is held.

1949



Betty Crocker introduces her first Picture Cook Book.

1950



The "black box" (Ryan flight recorder) is developed in partnership with the University of Minnesota.

1953



Pillsbury launches its entry into the refrigerated dough market with the acquisition of Ballard & Ballard.

1951

1948 Harry A. Bullis

The General Mills Foundation is established.

General Mills builds its first Canadian plant.

Project Skyhook balloon reaches a record altitude of 116,700 feet.

1954









# Food around the world



Just 12 years after Cadwallader Washburn built his first flour mill, the Washburn Crosby Company began expanding overseas – with the first shipment of Gold Medal flour to Scotland in 1878.

By the late 1880s, more than one-third of flour milled in Minneapolis, including from our then-rival Pillsbury, was being exported. And by the 1890s, Gold Medal could be found as far north as Norway and as far south as the tip of South America.



About this same time, the Sperry Flour Co., one of the mills that merged to form General Mills in 1928, was selling its flour in the Hawaiian Islands (then an independent country) and Alaska (not yet a territory of the United States), as well as China and Europe.

## DELIVERIES WITH REINDEER AND DOG SLEDS

Sperry used dog sleds to deliver flour in Alaska and Washburn Crosby used reindeer to bring Gold Medal to the northern most point of Finland. Renowned explorer Roald Amundsen even brought 35 tons of Gold Medal flour on one of his arctic expeditions.

Until the 1950s, the international businesses for both General Mills and Pillsbury were primarily export operations.

**Cheerios** But in 1954, General Mills opened its first plant in Ontario, Canada, bringing Cheerios and Betty Crocker to Canadians. Pillsbury built its first Canadian plant in Ontario in 1958. **Betty Crocker**

In the 1960s, both Pillsbury and General Mills expanded their international operations, bringing flour production to Central and South America. In addition to baking flour, General Mills produced Torti-Ya, a corn flour for tortillas, at its mill in Guatemala.



Pillsbury, through a series of acquisitions, expanded its international presence as well. The company acquired a French food manufacturer, a German canner, an English baking mix firm, a Swiss cookie company, an interest in an Australian baking mix company, and flour mills in the Philippines.

By the end of the 1960s, General Mills had snack foods businesses in Europe; consumer foods businesses in Canada, Chile, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico and Venezuela; mineral water in Italy; and soy products in Sweden.

## KEY JOINT VENTURES

In 1984, Pillsbury made an important move with the establishment of Häagen-Dazs Japan, a joint venture with Suntory and Takanashi Dairy. It was the wife of a company executive who persuaded her husband to bring Häagen-Dazs to Japan, and Häagen-Dazs Japan is now our longest-running joint venture.



In 1990, General Mills joined with Nestlé to create Cereal Partners Worldwide, a 50-50 joint venture marketing cereals outside the United States and Canada.

Later in the 1990s, Pillsbury built wholly owned businesses in key international markets with its largest global brands, including Green Giant, Häagen-Dazs, Old El Paso and Pillsbury. General Mills was concentrating at the time on establishing joint venture partners in Europe, South America and Asia.



One of the largest was Snack Ventures Europe, created in 1992 to join General Mills' snacks business with PepsiCo's snack operations in Europe.



Pillsbury also acquired important local brands, including Latina, a chilled pasta brand in Australia; Diablitos Underwood, a century-old canned meat spread especially popular in Venezuela; and Wanchai Ferry, a line of Chinese dumplings.



With all of this activity, General Mills' international business still represented less than 5 percent of total sales by the year 2000.

## BUILDING OUR INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

The October 2001 acquisition of Pillsbury, with its iconic Green Giant, Häagen-Dazs, Pillsbury and Old El Paso brands, gave new life to General Mills' international expansion.



In 2011, General Mills acquired a controlling interest in Yoplait International, the second-leading yogurt in the world with sales in 70 countries, as well as Pasta Master, a maker of ready-to-cook Italian meals in Australia.



In 2012, we acquired Parampara's line of ready-to-cook spice and sauce mixes in India, and have since brought

Parampara to Australia and Europe. We also acquired Yoki Alimentos, marketing more than 600 items under nine brands in Brazil,



including Yoki and Kitano branded flour mixes and other foods such as popcorn, convenient meals, soups, desserts and seasonings.



In 2015, we began making and selling Yoplait in China. Later that same year, we acquired Carolina, a Brazilian yogurt maker.

We continue to bring our brands and businesses to new geographies. Today, in 2016, including our joint ventures, our international sales make up about a third of our total sales. And we continue to see opportunities to continue growing globally – particularly in emerging markets.





## We were always on the go

We began providing food outside the home in the 1800s. Both our predecessor company, Washburn Crosby, and the Pillsbury Company sold flour to bakeries and other merchants almost from the time the mills began in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

It was just a hint of the future.



Fast forward to the 1950s. Americans were beginning to do some nibbling outside their homes. General Mills anticipated this rising popularity and the chance to serve people beyond the grocery store aisles.

So in 1954, the company created the Institutional Products department. It began with 30 products from which more than 2,000 varieties of foods could be prepared for the foodservice market. Those products included cake mixes, available in 5-, 25-, or 100-pound sacks, and enriched yeast mixes, which could be used to prepare different types of rolls and pastries.

Pillsbury, too, saw that “food service” outside the home was in our future and developed mixes with “built-in quality, convenience and ease of use.”

Along with America’s eating habits, the General Mills Institutional Products department evolved – both in focus and name. In 2013, the division was renamed General Mills Convenience and Foodservice to reflect the growing number of places where we were providing food to a fast-paced society.

### AT YOUR CONVENIENCE

In the late 1900s, we began delivering our brands to convenience stores, schools, hotels, hospitals, restaurants and bakeries across the U.S. Many of our products are made specifically for some of these locations and have become convenience store staples – classic bars, chips and snacks from brands like Nature Valley, Chex Mix, Gardetto’s and Bugles.



Leading the way for this business in the 2000s was yogurt. In addition to individual cup sales, General Mills sells bulk yogurt to hospital and university campuses, and to restaurants. And we do more than just provide food in these venues. General Mills takes a culinary approach, showing operators how to easily incorporate products, such as yogurt, into many dishes.

### SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS

As the 2000s picked up steam, the company’s foodservice business was growing, focusing on quality and devising techniques to make life easier for convenience stores, bakeries, restaurants, schools, hospitals and hotels.



An example is the debut of Pillsbury Place & Bake Muffins in frozen batter “pucks.” These creations go straight from the freezer to the oven. The pucks can be combined to create different sizes of end product, and the flavor options give bakers flexibility with recipes. That translates into simplicity and consistency for operators.

Another instance of serving our customers surfaced in 2015, after college students began to clamor for gluten-free options. In addition to our expanding list of retail gluten-free products from cereals to yogurt to snacks, we now offer gluten-free flour and mixes, plus a collection of gluten-free recipes tailored to operators in campus dining settings.

### EASY SCHOOL MEALS

General Mills has been helping foodservice operators provide school breakfasts since the 1970s. In the span of a decade during the early 2000s, U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics noted a 60 percent increase among children participating in free and reduced-cost school breakfast programs. In 2013, when new USDA regulations for healthier meals in U.S. schools were proposed, we were ahead of the curve.

General Mills provides kid-friendly brands that are easy to serve. The “bowlpak,” with a peel-away top that secures cereal in its own plastic bowl, was an exclusive packaging format. We also offer Yoplait yogurt cups, whole grain biscuits and snacks. There are hot breakfast choices, too. Thanks to Pillsbury, whole grain Mini Pancakes and Mini Waffles are an option for hungry kids.





# Taking a measure on health



At General Mills, we've worked hard over the years to make food people love, while at the same time delivering nutrition.

To set clear goals for delivering nutrition, we decided a tangible measurement was needed. So in 2005, we created the "Health Metric" to gauge improvements to our food. Developed by the General Mills Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition, the Health Metric helps quantify and encourage the company's progress on nutrition and health improvements.

As a result, in a span of 10 years, we improved the nutrition profile of more than 800 U.S. products. We achieved this by introducing new products or reformulating existing products to increase nutrients such as whole grain, dietary fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals, or by decreasing nutrients of concern, such as sodium, sugar and fat.

We believe that nutritious foods made with quality ingredients contribute to overall health and wellness, and we have reformulated recipes and made nutritional improvements in hundreds of products around the world.

## EARLY FOCUS ON NUTRITION



Lela E. Booher, Ph.D., a nationally recognized authority in the field of nutrition, became the first chief nutritionist for General Mills on Jan. 1, 1943. We began enriching foods during World War II, when the United States and other countries became concerned about the nutrition of people who often found food in short supply. By 1944, we had a vitamin

division. In 1963, we established a nutrition department to strengthen the company's expertise in nutrition science.

The department became the Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition in 1998, where experts in nutrition science and public health provide guidance for both the business teams at General Mills and for health professionals. The Bell Institute leads General Mills' health strategy.

The Institute's scientists also develop educational materials and programs that health professionals and their clients can use.

## DELIVERING MORE WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains provide needed nutrients and health benefits. As the 2000s dawned, we began working to deliver more servings of whole grains in our cereals.

As studies increasingly recognized benefits associated with whole grain consumption – including weight management and reduced risk of heart disease – we made the single biggest health-driven commitment in our history. In 2005, we reformulated all of our Big G cereals to include at least 8 grams of whole grain per serving. That's one-sixth of the daily recommendation for Americans.

Later, we raised the bar to at least 10 grams of whole grain per serving – an improvement that meant all Big G cereals



contained more whole grain than any other single ingredient. Because of that improvement, "whole grain" is now listed first on each package's nutrition panel.

## PROVIDING GLUTEN-FREE CHOICES

The issue of gluten intolerance gained steam in the 2000s, with an estimated 1 in 100 people believed to be adversely reacting to gluten, a protein found in grains such as rye, wheat and barley.

Oats do not contain gluten, but from the field to our milling facilities, the nature of grain-handling systems couldn't fully assure that oats could not be co-mingled with the remnants of other grains that do contain gluten. So we went to work to ensure the oats used in our Cheerios were gluten free.

In 2015, with the culmination of years of hard work by hundreds of General Mills colleagues, the company developed a way to separate those tiny gluten-containing remnants from our oat supply. The result? For the first time in the lives of many, they could enjoy gluten-free Cheerios.

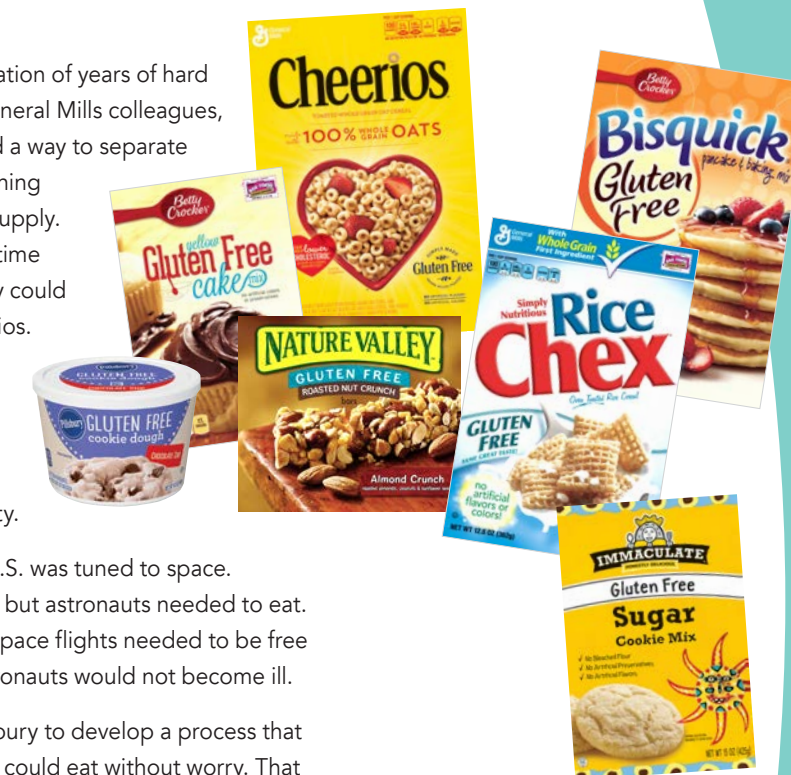
## A FOOD SAFETY GOLD STANDARD

General Mills is committed to food safety.

In the early 1960s, the U.S. was tuned to space. The moon was the goal, but astronauts needed to eat. The food eaten during space flights needed to be free of contamination so astronauts would not become ill.

NASA approached Pillsbury to develop a process that ensured space pioneers could eat without worry. That process, HACCP, which stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, is a science-based management system for managing food safety systems in business operations. It became the gold standard for food safety and is still widely used around the world today.

Howard Bauman, a Pillsbury food safety expert, developed the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) process in 1971 to ensure food safety.







#### BENEFITS OF CEREAL

Cereal is one of the healthiest breakfast choices.

Ready-to-eat cereal has a long history of helping people meet vitamin, mineral and whole grain recommendations. People who eat cereal tend to have better intakes of nutrients, including fiber, calcium and vitamin D. And ready-to-eat cereal is a leading source of whole grain. For kids who eat cereal, cereal provides more than 25 percent of daily intake of B vitamins, vitamin A and iron. Research has also shown that frequent cereal eaters tend to have healthier body weights.

We make nutrition improvements to our cereals over time, such as reducing sugar and sodium, ensuring that all General Mills cereals provide whole grain, and in Big G cereals, delivering vitamins and minerals. In our Cheerios and other family-favorite cereals, we deliver calcium and vitamin D – two nutrients often underconsumed. We also offer options to meet a variety of health and wellness needs, including organic, high fiber, heart healthy and gluten free.

Outside North America, Cereal Partners Worldwide, our joint venture with Nestlé, is the second-largest cereal provider in the world. CPW is also increasing whole grain and calcium in cereals while reducing sugar and sodium.

Recognizing the importance of breakfast in helping children excel in school, we also offer nutritious food for breakfast and lunch programs in schools around the world.

#### BENEFITS OF YOGURT

Yogurt provides key vitamins and nutrients – including vitamin D, calcium, protein and more – that contribute to good health.

The vitamins and nutrients in yogurt – especially calcium and vitamin D – contribute to health in many ways, particularly when it comes to bone health. The vitamin D and calcium in yogurt help build and maintain strong bones and teeth. Calcium is critical to help kids' bones grow strong and stay strong. Vitamin D helps aid in calcium absorption.

General Mills has several unique brands of yogurt, multiple styles and dozens of flavors to choose from. Yoplait, the second-leading yogurt brand in the world, is available in more than 50 countries.



#### STAYING ACTIVE

We've long known that a good diet isn't the sole path to better health.

Wheaties began sponsoring Major League Baseball in the early days of radio, and from the beginning, we've urged American kids to get out and play the game. By 1958, the Wheaties Sports Federation, in conjunction with U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's Council of Youth Fitness, was launched to advance proper diet and exercise among kids. In 2002, we began our Champions for Healthy Kids program – and we've since funded more than 500 U.S. programs with grants exceeding \$6.5 million.

In 2013, we helped launch the Presidential Youth Fitness Program with the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, committing \$10 million over six years to cultivate skills and habits to combat childhood obesity.

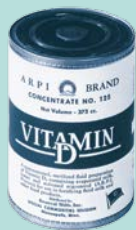




1921 The whole wheat flakes "with all the bran" have been "The Breakfast of Champions" since they were created by a health clinician in 1921.



To prevent rickets, we begin providing vitamin D to dairies to add to milk.



1940s We begin enriching Gold Medal flour with thiamine, calcium and iron in response to studies that showed Americans were suffering from inadequate diets.



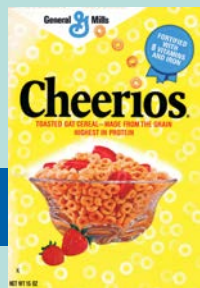
Total launched as the first U.S. cereal to contain 100 percent of the U.S. government's minimum daily adult requirement for eight vitamins. Today, Total provides 100 percent of at least 11 vitamins and minerals.



1963 The General Mills Nutrition department is created to focus on health and nutrition for U.S. consumers.



1980s We begin to add folic acid to our cereals and promote its importance, especially for women of childbearing age.



1989 Diet-conscious yogurt consumers have a tasty new choice with Yoplait Light, a 90-calorie pre-stirred yogurt.



Ingredients: Whole Grain Corn, Sugar, Peanut Butter (peanuts, monoacylglycerols), Whole Grain Oats, Whole Grain Sorghum, Whole Grain Barley, Whole Grain Rice, Corn Syrup, Dextrose, Salt, Canola and/or Rice Bran Oil, Peanut Oil, Corn Starch.  
Vitamins and Minerals: Calcium Carbonate, Iron and Zinc (general nutrients), Vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), A & B Vitamin (niacinamide), Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (pyridoxine hydrochloride), Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> (cobalamin), Vitamin B<sub>9</sub> (thiamin mononitrate), Vitamin A (palmitate), A & B Vitamin (folic acid), Vitamin B<sub>5</sub>, Vitamin D.  
**CONTAINS PEANUT; MAY CONTAIN MILK, WHEAT AND SOY INGREDIENTS.**  
DISTRIBUTED BY GENERAL MILLS SALES, INC., MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55449 USA

1996 We pioneer food allergen labelling on all products to increase awareness and reduce risk for allergic consumers.

2000s Fiber One began as a cereal brand in 1985. Today the brand offers 49 fiber-added products – everything from cereal and bars to pancakes and fruit snacks.



Calin+ yogurt, CPW cereals and all Big G cereals are fortified with calcium.



In the most significant health-driven product improvement in our history, we reformulate all of our Big G cereals to provide at least 8 grams of whole grain, with many providing 16 grams or more.



We initiate the "Health Metric" to measure our progress on nutrition and health improvements. Over the next decade, the nutrition profiles of more than 800 U.S. products are improved.

2008 We begin focusing on gluten-sensitive consumers with the reformulation of Rice Chex to make it gluten free. Today we have more than 800 gluten-free products.



General Mills acquires Larabar organic food bars.



The introduction of Progresso Light soups creates a "light" segment in the ready-to-serve soup category.

2012 The purchase of Immaculate Baking gives us tasty and natural cookies, cinnamon rolls, biscuits and scones – all wholesome and organic.



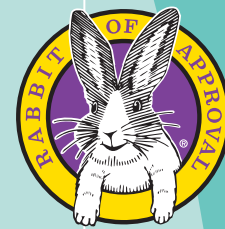
One of the largest natural food snack brands, Food Should Taste Good, joins General Mills.



2015 "Yellow-box" and four other varieties of Cheerios become gluten free.



2014 Annie's, a leading producer of branded organic and natural food products, joins the General Mills family.



2016 EPIC Provisions is acquired, giving us wholesome meat snacks.

General Mills has been committed to health for decades.

1937 Kix cereal is one of the first General Mills products to be fortified, or "vitalized" as it was referred to then, with vitamins B and D, calcium, phosphorus and iron.

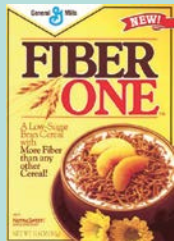


1950s Wheaties and General Mills are among the first to respond when U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower launched his Council on Youth Fitness in 1956. The Wheaties Sports Federation promotes youth fitness and education throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

Responding to findings of nutrient deficiencies by the 1969 White House Conference on Nutrition, General Mills leads the industry in fortifying cereals with key nutrients lacking in the diet, including B vitamins and iron.

1970s General Mills leads the way in providing voluntary nutrition labeling on all products.

1985 We create Fiber One cereal for people who want a high-fiber cereal with less sugar. Options with only 80 calories are later added.



1990s Recognizing that children weren't taking in enough calcium or vitamin D, we begin fortifying all of our kid cereals with those nutrients.

1998 After 50 years of dedication to nutrition, the General Mills Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition is launched with the goal of creating a world-class, science-based organization to lead nutrition and health efforts for the company.



2000 General Mills expands to organic with the purchase of Cascadian Farm and Muir Glen.

2007 We begin lowering sugar levels in all Big G cereals advertised to children.



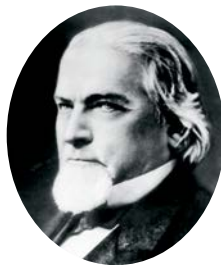
2011 We purchase Mountain High and Liberté organic and natural yogurts.





Our commitment to our communities continues, and we are more inspired than ever by the remarkable work of our community partners.

## More than a century of giving



From our very beginnings in the 1860s, General Mills has understood the precious opportunity and responsibility we have to create a positive and lasting impact on the world.

After a devastating explosion at one of his mills that killed 18 people in 1878, Cadwallader C.

Washburn envisioned a home for the children who were orphaned by the disaster.

Washburn, the flour milling pioneer, laid out his plans for the Washburn Memorial Orphan Asylum.

A century and a half later, General Mills is still supporting what has grown into the Washburn Center for Children in Minneapolis.

Born into a large family of “modest circumstances,” Washburn was generous beyond money.

After that mill explosion, Washburn insisted that such a calamity should never happen again. Through innovation, Washburn succeeded in developing a new air filtration technology that filtered the explosive flour dust from the air inside his new mill.

With the new safety systems in place, Washburn gathered his competitors around the millers table at the Minneapolis Club, and gave the new technology to his counterparts to make the entire milling industry safer for workers.

### GENERAL MILLS FOUNDATION STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES

The General Mills Foundation was created in 1954 to “disperse funds for scientific, literary, charitable and educational purposes.” Gifts for that fiscal year totaled \$18,500.

Until the creation of the Foundation, the company’s Contributions and Donations Committee had granted donations ranging from college funds to nutrition research to safety councils. But it was after the creation of the General Mills Foundation that a formal resource dedicated to helping others really took wing.

Since the inception of the Foundation, the company and the Foundation have contributed nearly \$2 billion to charitable causes. A milestone was reached in fiscal year 2013, when more than \$150 million was donated annually. That’s nearly \$3 million a week.

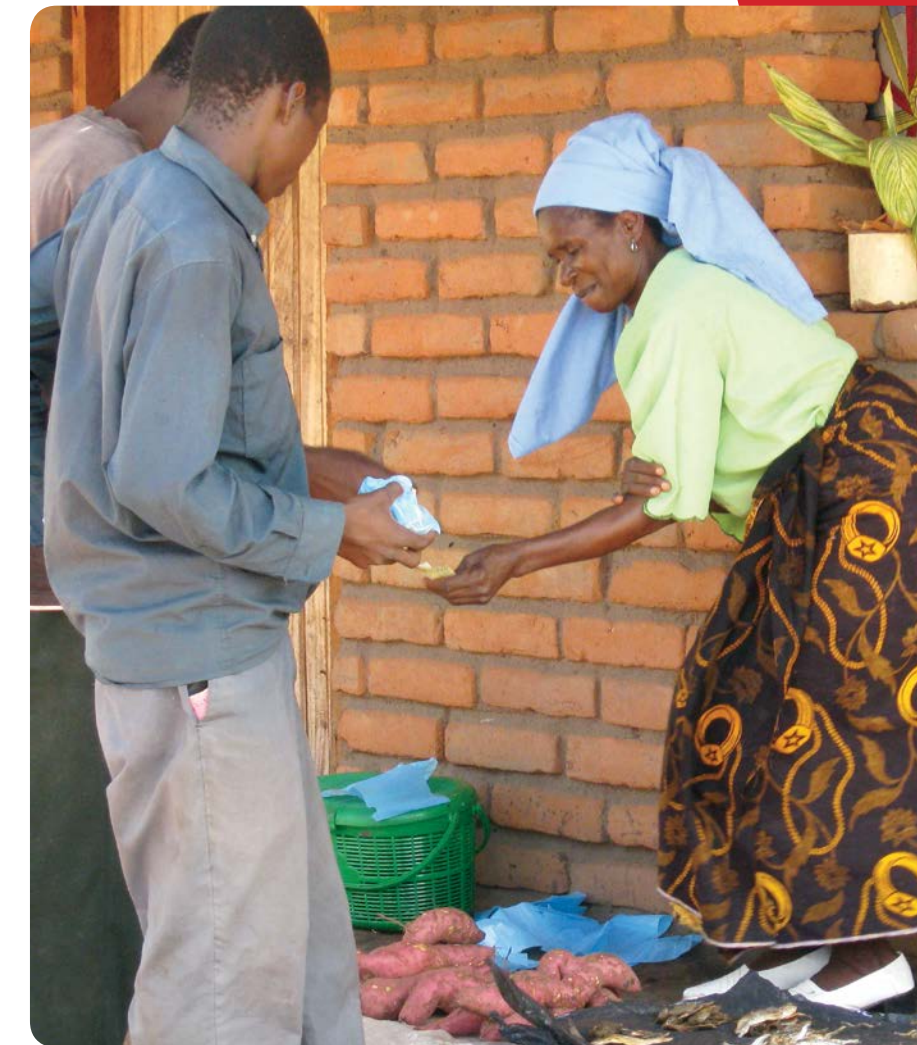
### HELPING WITH HUNGER

As a food company, General Mills has long felt a deep commitment to helping feed people in need.

A founding member of Feeding America and its more than 200 foodbanks across the country, General Mills has grown to become a Top 10 contributor of food in the United States.

Our efforts to alleviate hunger became global in scope in the 2000s, with the company donating more than \$4 million of food donations to the Global FoodBanking Network in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Argentina and Australia.

Join My Village was established by General Mills in 2009 in partnership with the international humanitarian organization CARE USA. It was launched as a unique initiative uniting corporate philanthropy with public engagement to make real progress toward ending global poverty and hunger. It began with work in Malawi, Africa, and then India in 2011. In 2015, it expanded support to include projects in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire.



Thanks to a micro-loan from Join My Village, Astrid Kalinde proudly runs her own business in Malawi, Africa. By buying fish and reselling them from her front doorstep, she has tripled her income and is able to send her daughter to school.



**VOLUNTEERISM RUNS DEEP IN OUR CULTURE**

Even in the 1800s, Cadwallader Washburn knew that money alone is rarely the answer. So General Mills has long worked to develop solutions by also engaging employee volunteers.

The nonprofit organization Partners in Food Solutions was created to share our food processing expertise with food producers in Africa in 2008. Partners in Food Solutions was soon linking the technical and business expertise of volunteer employees – from General Mills, Cargill, Royal DSM, Bühler and Hershey – to help small and growing food processors and millers in the developing world. Since 2008, hundreds of General Mills employees have helped this cause.



One of the organizations Partners in Food Solutions has been able to help is Project Peanut Butter, which produces a high calorie, peanut-butter-like paste called chiponde. The food has been recognized as one of the most effective ways to treat severely malnourished children. General Mills and our employees were able to improve production efficiencies, increase quality and provide marketing support to expand the Project Peanut Butter program.



General Mills' long tradition of outstanding employee volunteerism is impressive. Eighty-three percent of our U.S. employees typically volunteer, an uncommonly high mark among large companies surveyed.

Our volunteers are found almost everywhere, working on civic projects to address hunger, housing and homelessness, among other efforts.

In 2014, some 2,500 employees around the world participated in the annual "Think Global, Volunteer Local" initiative held in conjunction with Earth Day and National Volunteer Week.

Whether it's weeding and mowing a Scottish landscape, building homes for Habitat for Humanity, or delivering meals to the elderly, employees at General Mills continue to invest their time and talents to lend a helping hand.

**DISASTER RELIEF**

General Mills has consistently stepped forward to help in times of disaster, whether it's donating food products, or to provide financial or other humanitarian support.

For example, when a devastating tornado hit Joplin, Missouri, in 2011, the General Mills Foundation Trustees quickly approved a \$50,000 grant to the American Red Cross to support urgent response efforts. A year later, we presented a \$100,000 grant to help rebuild a school that had been destroyed by the Joplin tornado.

We were there in 2013, when one of the strongest typhoons on record hit the Philippines. We contributed \$150,000, divided between the humanitarian agencies CARE and the Philippine Red Cross.

**EDUCATING KIDS ON HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**

In 2002, the General Mills Foundation – in concert with then Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation and the President's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports and Nutrition – launched Champions for Healthy Kids.

The program was designed to support healthy eating and active lifestyles for kids and their families. Each year, the program provided grants to nonprofit organizations throughout the United States. Among the aims of these nonprofit organizations were teaching wellness, cooking skills and physical activity, and family activities that promoted life skills and healthy habits.

Champions for Healthy Kids was estimated to have made an impact on the lives of more than 5 million children.

**BUILDING BETTER FUTURES**

Helping schools and expanding educational achievement is something we've supported for some time. One notable effort, Box Tops for Education, began in California in 1996. It started small, but by 1998, more than 30,000 schools were clipping Box Tops, redeemable for cash to buy items such as books, computers, playground equipment and more.

In its first 20 years, America's schools earned more than \$719 million through General Mills' Box Tops for Education program. Cheerios launched another education effort in 2002, when it began distributing free bilingual books in cereal boxes. The program became Cheer on Reading in 2013, when it expanded its partnership with the Little Free Library, a group that champions free book exchanges in neighborhoods worldwide.

**FOCUS ON FOOD SECURITY, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

In 2016, the General Mills Foundation narrowed its focus to two new global areas: food secure communities and sustainable agriculture.

The new strategic direction will help expand food access for at-risk populations, strengthen foodbank networks worldwide, empower smallholder farmers in General Mills sourcing communities, restore watersheds, and improve pollinator health and habitats.





# Gone but not forgotten

1940s

1950s

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

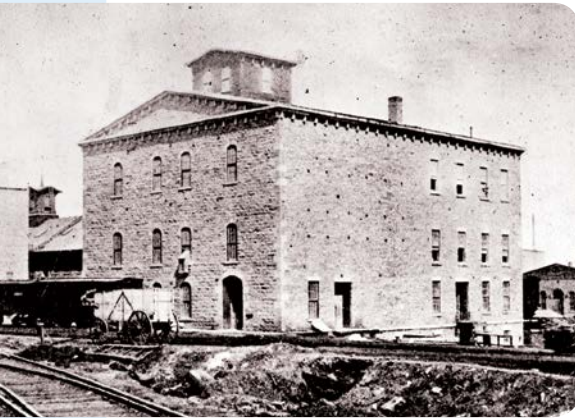
2010s





## Our Origins:

### *Two mills on opposite sides of the Mississippi River*



Washburn Mill, circa 1866

General Mills has its roots in two mills built on opposite sides of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In the 1800s, entrepreneurs flocked to St. Anthony Falls first for the lumber business and later to build flour mills. Cadwallader C. Washburn and Charles A. Pillsbury were among the first.

Washburn's mill, built in 1866, was originally dubbed "Washburn's Folly." The Washburn mill cost \$100,000 to build and had a capacity of "12 run of stone," or 840 barrels of flour a day. Because it was using spring wheat instead of the more popular winter wheat to make flour, most thought that the markets would never absorb all the flour the huge new mill would be able to produce. In those days, winter wheat was preferred because milled spring wheat retained some of its darker bran fragments, resulting in less attractive grayish flour.

But Washburn was an innovator. He installed a new machine called the middlings purifier to remove the bran. Washburn almost immediately began producing high-quality flours that rivaled winter wheat in whiteness and offered superior baking properties. The demand for flour from spring wheat suddenly increased – and "Washburn's Folly" was a success.

Around the same time, Charles Pillsbury began his milling company on the opposite bank of the Mississippi River.

Along with his father, George A. Pillsbury, and his uncle, John S. Pillsbury, Charles purchased an interest in an old, run-down Minneapolis flour mill in 1869. Although they had no experience with flour milling, the Pillsburys managed to turn a profit the first year.

Both companies grew rapidly in the late 1800s. Washburn built a second, even larger facility in 1874, called the Washburn A mill. Four years later, this new mill was completely destroyed in a massive flour dust explosion that wiped out five other mills and several city blocks. Undeterred, Washburn immediately set about rebuilding the mill, this time outfitting it with revolutionary new steel rollers and exhaust systems that not only made the mill safer, but also produced even higher-quality flour.

Businessman John Crosby joined Washburn as a business partner in 1877 – creating the Washburn Crosby Company. That same year, William Hood Dunwoody joined the company as a salesman, traveling to England in an effort to open Europe as an export market for Minnesota flour.

The British were skeptical, as the flour was whiter than what they were used to. But Dunwoody persisted and was eventually successful – the export business for Minneapolis mills grew from a few hundred barrels of flour in 1877 to 4 million barrels in 1895. In 1879, Dunwoody became a partner in the Washburn Crosby Company.

In 1880, the Washburn Crosby Company entered several grades of its flour in the first Millers' International Exhibition in Cincinnati, Ohio. The company's flours won the gold, silver and bronze medals for quality, and the company subsequently changed the name of its highest-quality flour to Gold Medal – which remains the top-selling flour brand in the United States today.

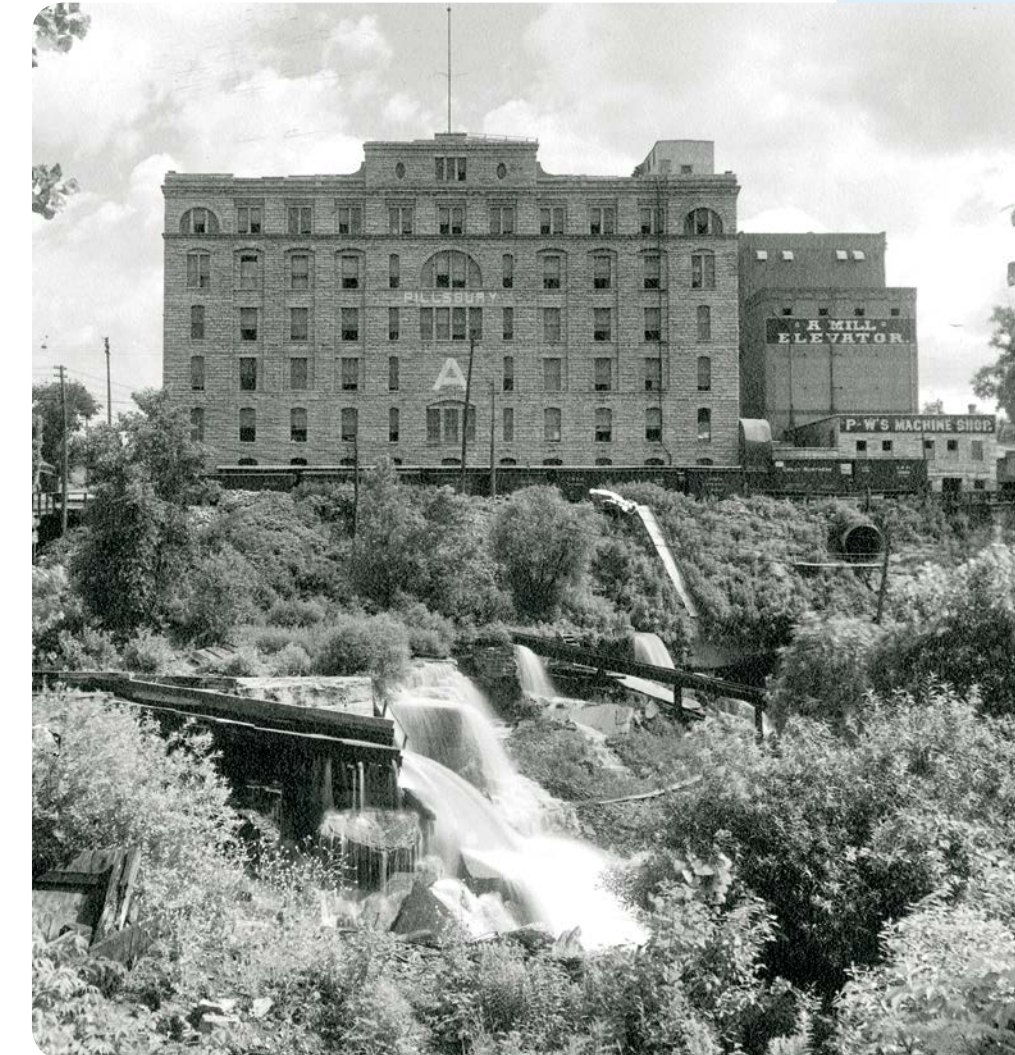
Meanwhile, the Pillsburys also were building their milling company. To distinguish his product, Charles Pillsbury began adding a fourth "X" to his Pillsbury's Best flour packaging in 1872, adding one more than the three "X" mark typically used by millers to designate their best grade of flour.

In 1881, the Pillsburys completed construction on their new A mill, then the world's largest flour mill. The Pillsbury A mill set a one-day production record on October 12, 1882, when it produced 5,107 barrels of flour.

Innovative thinking at Chas. A. Pillsbury & Co. went beyond flour milling. In 1883, Pillsbury established an employee profit-sharing plan, one of the first of its kind in the U.S. Originally, all employees with five or more years of service shared in the profits. That eligibility requirement was soon reduced to two years.

The founders of the Washburn Crosby Company both passed away during the decade – Washburn in 1882 and Crosby in 1887 – and in 1888, James Stroud Bell joined the company. He was named president in 1889. Bell, considered the greatest merchant miller of his time, began to expand Washburn Crosby's presence across the United States.

To drive expansion, Bell assembled a team of intelligent and persistent young businessmen with a wide variety of backgrounds. Rivals referred to the group as Bell's "kindergarten," but there was nothing childish about the men's dedication to the company, or the energy with which they worked to make the business a success.



Pillsbury A mill, 1890



Washburn Crosby expanded to Buffalo, New York, first with a warehouse in 1893, and then with a mill in 1904. This new mill was instrumental in making Buffalo one of the world's greatest milling centers.

In 1889, the Pillsbury-Washburn Flour Mills Company was created when Chas. A. Pillsbury & Co. and the [W.D.] Washburn Mill Company were merged and purchased by a British syndicate. By 1909, after some financial difficulties, there was a reorganization, and the Pillsbury Flour Mills Company was established.

Around this time, World War I put a strain on the U.S. wheat supply. Strict regulations on wheat flour milling went into effect on Christmas Day 1917. The effect was so adverse that Pillsbury ceased production of Pillsbury's Best flour for the duration of the war.

packaged foods market with a line of products marketed under the Gold Medal name. One was a whole wheat flake cereal that, in 1924, became known as Wheaties.

A change of leadership also occurred during this decade. James Ford Bell, James S. Bell's son, who had been working for the company since 1896, became president in 1925.

In response to a milling downturn in the late 1920s, Washburn Crosby considered dire options, at one point accepting an offer to sell the company. At the last moment, the unnamed buyer withdrew – and James Ford Bell instead launched a bold plan to form a new company by consolidating with several mills across the U.S. He envisioned a "horizontal integration" of companies with representation from all over the nation, instead of simply consolidating companies in Minneapolis.

Bell saw his vision become a reality in June 1928. He led the formation of General Mills, Inc., consolidating Washburn Crosby and several other regional milling companies to create what would become the largest flour miller in the world. Among the mills consolidated were the Red Star Milling Company of Kansas, the Royal Milling Company of Montana, Kalispell Flour Mills Company and the Rocky Mountain Elevator Company. Other mills joined the new company early in 1929, including the Sperry Flour Company of California, the Kell Group in the Southwest, the El Reno mill of Oklahoma, and the Larowe Milling Company of Michigan, which allowed entry into the feed business.

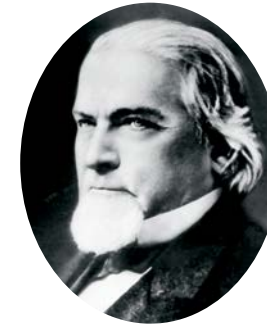
And General Mills was born.

The market rebounded after the war, and Pillsbury entered the Buffalo market in the early 1920s. By 1923, another reorganization created Pillsbury Flour Mills, Inc., and in 1927, it began trading on the New York Stock Exchange, officially becoming a public company.

The Washburn Crosby Company entered the



## Cadwallader Washburn: milling visionary



Cadwallader C. Washburn was born on April 22, 1818, one of 10 children of Israel and Martha Washburn. During his life, he would become a congressman, a governor, an army general, a lumberman and a flour miller. He was successful at all of these occupations.

Washburn grew up in Livermore, Maine. His childhood was filled with hard physical farm work, financial insecurity and little formal education. Almost immediately after his 18th birthday, he left Livermore in search of a more fruitful life. Washburn was a man of dreams, full of restless energy constantly propelling him onto bigger projects.

He worked as a teacher, a store clerk and a manager of a survey team. In 1840, he began to study law and two years later was admitted to the bar. He settled in Mineral Point, Wisconsin, about 30 miles from Galena, Illinois, where his brother, Elihu, was practicing law.

In Mineral Point, Washburn formed a law partnership with Cyrus Woodman, an agent of the New England Company. The firm flourished, and in 1852, they established the Mineral Point Bank in Wisconsin. Eventually, Washburn discontinued his law practice and began a successful lumber business with Woodman. Despite their success, the partnership dissolved in 1855.

That same year, Washburn ran successfully for Congress, beginning a 20-year political career. He served 10 years as Wisconsin's representative, leaving Congress in 1861 when the Civil War began. To aid the efforts of the North, Washburn immediately formed the 2nd Wisconsin Cavalry and served as its colonel. Though Washburn had no military training, he learned quickly and served well. At the end of the war in 1865, Washburn held the rank of major general. He returned to Congress from 1867 to 1871, and served as Wisconsin's governor from 1872 to 1874.

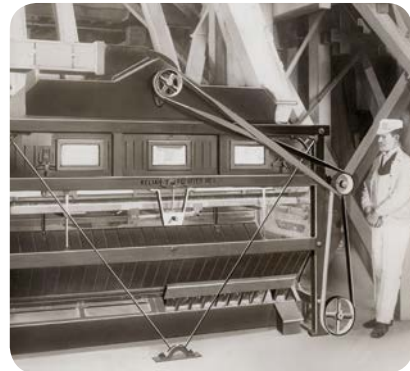
During Washburn's illustrious political and military career, he also was playing a major role in developing the milling industry near St. Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River in Minnesota. On an earlier trip to Minnesota, Washburn had been quick to realize the power-generating potential of the 16-foot waterfalls at St. Anthony, and in 1856, the Minneapolis Mill Company was incorporated with Washburn as one of its owners. The company controlled and leased the water power on the west side of the falls.

After the Civil War, Washburn returned to develop his company. He had long dreamed of building a flour mill near the falls, and in 1866, he built the first Washburn mill. It was the largest mill of any kind in Minneapolis, and its capacity was the second-largest in the country. Critics dubbed the mill "Washburn's Folly" due to its stunning size and cost.



Washburn Crosby Mill, circa 1910





Middlings purifier, 1870s

Washburn’s mill was built to produce flour from spring wheat. In those days, winter wheat flour was much more desirable because the harder spring wheat retained some of its darker bran fragments when milled, resulting in less attractive, grayish flour. But with the installation of an innovative new middlings purifier designed to remove these bran fragments, the mill was able to produce whiter, more attractive flour from spring wheat. The flour also offered superior baking properties.

With the success of his first mill, Washburn began construction on a second, much larger mill. The Washburn A mill, completed in 1874, was three times the size of the first mill and, at the time, one of the largest in the world.

On May 2, 1878, disaster struck Washburn and the Minneapolis milling industry as a whole. The huge A mill exploded, taking with it two other mills, causing fires that affected three more mills and effectively leveling several city blocks.

The initial blast was so powerful that a stone from the A mill crashed through the roof of a house eight blocks away. “As soon as things quit flying through the air, I looked out the front window and saw that the big mill [Washburn A] was gone and the canal was full of stone and stuff,” said one witness. “The place where the mill had stood was a mass of flame and the elevator was on fire from top to bottom.”



Washburn A mill explosion, 1878

The cause of the explosion was not new to millers. Flour dust had long been known to be a powerful explosive when exposed to the right conditions and circumstances. Prior to the A mill, flour mills tended to be smaller, therefore producing less flour dust. The size and capacity of the A mill meant more flour dust was produced, making it a more dangerous place to work.

More concerned with the loss of lives and jobs than with the destruction of his mill, Washburn immediately set about establishing a fund to provide for the families of the 18 men killed in the explosion. Men who had lost their jobs because of the explosion were given work building the Washburn C mill – which was already under construction at the time of the explosion. Originally planned as an addition to his first mill, which came to be called the B mill, Washburn wisely decided to make it a separate mill.

Washburn also wanted to ensure that an explosion of that magnitude would never happen again. As he began rebuilding a newer and even larger A mill, Washburn searched for ways to make the milling industry safer. With the help of engineer William de la Barre, a safety exhaust system was devised that reduced the chances of explosion by reducing the accumulation of flour dust. Washburn’s mills were the first in the country to adopt this safety system on more than an experimental basis.

Washburn wanted to make his new mill more efficient as well, and he had been intrigued for years by rumors of an improved milling method in Hungary. He sent de la Barre to Europe to learn more. The Hungarian millers had stopped using traditional millstones and instead were using steel rollers to grind their wheat. Posing as a mill worker, de la Barre observed and sketched the European design and, returning to Minneapolis, modified the rollers to work in the Minnesota mills. Washburn’s new mill was the first in the United States to install these new rollers. The combination of the middlings purifier, the exhaust system and the new steel rollers led to a milling revolution in Minnesota – producing a higher-quality flour than ever before in a much safer work environment.



William de la Barre

Washburn was not possessive of his new technologies. He readily shared the innovations with his competitors – ensuring that the entire milling industry would become a safer place to work. “My mills are only a small part of the whole. I can’t make all the flour people want, even if I wished to. I have no liking for any dog-in-the-manger business,” he once said.

Washburn also made organizational changes to his company. In September 1877, Washburn entered into a partnership with John Crosby and his brother William D. Washburn, forming Washburn Crosby and Company.

In 1879, a new partnership was formed when William H. Dunwoody and Charles J. Martin, a Civil War comrade of Washburn’s, joined the company as partners.

In 1881, Washburn suffered a debilitating stroke. One year later, the same year that the Minneapolis mills were achieving worldwide prestige and fame, Cadwallader C. Washburn died. He was 64.

The Northwestern Miller memorialized Washburn as “generally conceded to have been the most able, active and enterprising” member of the milling trade.

Throughout his life, Washburn made certain that his family, employees and communities were well taken care of. Sometimes it was as simple as widening a sidewalk so that millers could walk side-by-side to work. Other works are more well-known, like the observatory he built at the University of Wisconsin. Washburn’s reputation as a generous, philanthropic man was exemplified in his will. In addition to leaving a generous income for his two daughters and his wife, Jeanette, whom he married in 1849, he willed his home, near Madison, Wisconsin, to a Catholic sisterhood for use as an educational establishment. Washburn also endowed a public library in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and funded an orphanage in Minneapolis.



Washburn’s orphanage, 1886





## Charles A. Pillsbury: flour legacy



When Charles Alfred Pillsbury ventured west to Minnesota in 1869, he had no experience in the flour milling industry. Within 13 years, he would be the owner of one of the largest flour milling companies in the world.

Charles Pillsbury was born in 1842 in Warner, New Hampshire. His father, George A. Pillsbury, was a prominent businessman in Concord, New Hampshire. Charles graduated from Dartmouth College in 1863. Although he was well-liked, one fellow student pointed out that “no one would have selected him as the one member of the class who was to gain a world-wide reputation.”

After graduation, Charles went north to Montreal, where he worked as a clerk for Buck, Robertson & Co., a produce commission company. He became a partner in the firm, and worked long hours but, according to an early biographer, the business was not successful. “It is stated by good authority that his business venture in Montreal, before going to Minneapolis, came near being a total failure. When he left that city for Minnesota, all that he had to carry with him was \$1,500 in cash and a keenly disciplined business mind.”

Most speculate that Charles chose Minneapolis because his uncle, John S. Pillsbury, had established a successful

hardware business there, and was a prominent member of the state senate.

Shortly after arriving, Charles, along with his father, George, purchased a one-third interest in the failing Minneapolis Flouring Mill. Under the agreement, Charles was responsible for managing the mill.

“Up to that time, Minneapolis flour was way down at the bottom of the heap and the mill had been losing money almost steadily,” said Charles. “The other fellows in the business rather pitied me, and said that another poor devil had got caught in the milling business of which he would soon get enough.”

When they purchased the mill, it employed seven people and produced approximately 200 to 300 barrels of flour a day. In comparison, at the same time, the first Washburn mill was producing 840 barrels a day.

Later in 1869, Pillsbury’s uncle John purchased a one-sixth interest in the mill, bringing the family’s ownership to half. Under Charles’ management, the mill began to operate at a profit within the first year.

On April 12, 1871, Charles purchased the 200-barrel-a-day Alaska mill, with the help of his uncle. He quickly changed its name to Pillsbury and sold a one-third interest to his father – maintaining a three-way partnership in Chas. A. Pillsbury & Co.

Charles continued to build and acquire mills, and in 1875, Charles’ younger brother, Fred, joined the partnership. By the end of the decade, the capacity of Chas. A. Pillsbury & Co. was about 3,000 barrels a day.

Charles understood the importance of employee loyalty and, in 1883, he initiated one of the first employee profit-sharing plans in the country. Within the first decade, the plan had distributed about \$150,000 to Pillsbury employees.

In the company’s first 20 years, Charles and his partners had built a dilapidated old mill into one of the world’s largest flour producers. They did it by emphasizing quality, efficiency and marketing, and by recognizing good ideas and good people. Business changed for Pillsbury in 1889, however, when the British appeared in Minneapolis.

It was first reported that several British visitors had arrived in Minnesota to investigate the flour mills and waterpower companies on July 4, 1889. Speculation about a sale of the Pillsbury properties continued until October 29, 1889 – when the four owners of Chas. A. Pillsbury & Co. signed a deal with the British to sell their mills to the newly formed Pillsbury-Washburn Flour Mills Company Ltd. (The Washburn involved was William D., brother of Cadwallader.)

Charles remained at Pillsbury-Washburn as the managing director, and worked there until his death on September 17, 1899.



Three days after Charles Pillsbury’s death, the Northwestern Miller ran an obituary.

*“Mr. Pillsbury possessed exceptional executive ability, was keen of perception, and had wonderful capacity for mastering details. Being quick to analyze and to see a point, his decisions were made with electrical promptness, even in most momentous matters, and with a judgment that was seldom at fault. As an employer, Mr. Pillsbury was generous and considerate, and had a faculty of making those under him feel they had a personal interest in the business. No man was more loyal to his business representatives than Mr. Pillsbury, and knowledge of this trait filled them with an interest and enthusiasm in their work that contributed in no small way to the success of the company.”*



Pillsbury A Mill, 1881



### John S. Pillsbury



The first of his family to move from New Hampshire to Minnesota, John Pillsbury was born in 1827. He settled near St. Anthony Falls and opened a hardware store in 1855.

His involvement in flour milling began in 1869, when, along with his brother and nephew, John purchased interest in the Minneapolis Flouring Mill. He would later help launch the Pillsbury Company.

John also was very active in government. He became a Minnesota state senator in 1863, and was elected governor of Minnesota in 1876.

He also served on the board of regents of the University of Minnesota for many years. The university had fallen deeply in debt after the Civil War. Pillsbury traveled the state from 1863 to 1867 selling land grants to raise funds to get the university out of debt and on its way to becoming Minnesota's leading institution of higher education. He was appointed "regent for life" in 1895 by the state legislature.

It is said that John carried his own set of keys, and even locked up the university at night. Today, John S. Pillsbury is regarded as "the father of the University of Minnesota."

He died in 1901.

### George A. Pillsbury



Charles' father, George Pillsbury, was a leading citizen of Concord, New Hampshire.

Born in 1816, he was a purchasing agent for the Concord Railroad Corporation for 24 years. George furnished the majority of the money used to purchase interest in the first of Pillsburys' mills, the Minneapolis Flouring Mill, in 1869. He was also president of the Northwestern National Bank beginning in 1880 and the mayor of Minneapolis from 1884 to 1886. He remained a partner in the flour business until his death in 1898.

### Fred C. Pillsbury



Charles' younger brother Fred joined Chas. A. Pillsbury & Co. in 1875. Fred had worked at John Pillsbury's hardware store prior to joining the business, and when the store was sold, Fred purchased a one-seventh interest in the milling company.

Fred was instrumental in the company's entrance into the feed business. During the mid-1880s, he conducted a series of experiments on bran's effectiveness as a cattle feed. The results were confirmed by studies at the University of Minnesota, and millfeed began to grow as an important commodity associated with the milling industry.

Fred died in 1892.

### John Crosby



John Crosby was born in Maine in 1829. Before entering the milling industry, Crosby worked for his father at a paper mill and later for his father-in-law at an iron foundry. Ultimately, it may have been family connections that secured his position with Washburn – he married a sister of Mrs. W.D. Washburn.

Crosby was a well-respected businessman, earning the nickname "Honest John." His devotion to his employees inspired intense loyalty. He served as the president of the Millers' National Association and became known for his frank, no-nonsense character, admired by millers across the U.S.

Under his leadership, the Washburn Crosby Company prospered. He died on December 29, 1887.

### William de la Barre



Born in Vienna, William de la Barre came to the United States in 1866.

De la Barre was responsible for bringing an important new system for the diffusion of millstone dust to the attention of Cadwallader Washburn. The exhaust system made mills safer for workers and diminished the risk of explosion by reducing the accumulation of flour dust.

Washburn later sent the young engineer to Hungary to learn more about a new milling method being used there. De la Barre studied, adapted and modified the new process, which used steel rollers to grind wheat instead

of traditional millstones, making Washburn's new mill the first in the United States to use this new technology.

De la Barre died in 1936.

### William D. Washburn



William Drew Washburn, brother of Cadwallader, served in both the U.S. Congress and Senate. Although he built the dam and canal that enabled "Mill Row" to happen at St. Anthony Falls, he was fired three times from his brother's Washburn Crosby Company. Undaunted, he built his own flour milling empire and then combined it with the Pillsbury's to form the largest milling company in the world.

Washburn also launched many other enterprises, including railroads, serving as president for what is now known as the Soo Line Railroad.

In the late 1800s, the only route for Midwest flour to get to the East Coast by train was through Chicago, where railroad barons often delayed the wheat and charged extra fees.

Washburn built a railroad through Canada to New York, shortening the trek by 200 miles. His railroad also extended 500 miles west across the wheat fields to Montana. He overcame every adversity – from near-bankruptcy to the outrage of James J. Hill, a great American railroad leader – to complete the route through miles of swamp and forest without a penny of government aid. Considered one of his greatest achievements, he built the railroad to "ensue the future of all flour millers in Minneapolis."

He died in 1912.



## James Ford Bell: innovator



The man who created General Mills as the world's largest milling company was a child of the milling industry. James Ford Bell grew up with the Washburn Crosby Company. Born in Philadelphia in 1879, he moved to Minneapolis when his father, James Stroud Bell, became general manager of the Washburn Crosby Company. James Stroud Bell, often called the greatest merchant miller of his time, was named president of the Washburn Crosby Company in 1889.

By the time James Ford Bell was in college, he was actively involved in the company. While majoring in chemistry at the University of Minnesota, he created a laboratory for testing flour in a space over a saloon in downtown Minneapolis. This dedication to science and research would continue throughout his lifetime.

Upon graduation in 1901, Bell plunged into a career at the Washburn Crosby Company. After apprenticing as a millwright, carpenter, electrician, clerk and bill collector, he took a post as a salesman in Michigan. In 1909, he was made a director. After his father's death in 1915, he became a vice president.

During World War I, Herbert Hoover appointed Bell as chairman of the new U.S. Food Administration's milling division. Bell directed operation of the nation's mills during the war. In 1918, he accompanied Hoover on a European relief mission. In appreciation for his services, he was awarded the Belgian Order of the Crown and made a member of the French Legion of Honor.



Packing flour, 1935

When Bell became president of the Washburn Crosby Company in 1925, times were tough for millers. Facing dwindling margins and declining per capita consumption, Bell realized that economies of scale could be realized through a consolidation of a national network of mills. With that in mind, Bell masterminded the formation of General Mills.

In June 1928, the merger of Washburn Crosby and four other mills created the largest milling company in the United States. The new corporation was named General Mills. Later, in 1929, additional mills joined the merger including Sperry, the leading West Coast milling company.

Bell expanded the company's interest beyond the flour business. When General Mills incorporated, it sold only a few consumer products: Gold Medal flour, several specialty flours and Wheaties. Under Bell's leadership, consumer products expanded to include a variety of cereals, mixes and home appliances.

Bell established some of the first, full-fledged research laboratories in the food industry and, in 1930, he recruited Dr. C.H. Bailey – one of the world's leading cereal chemists – to lead the research department.



In addition to developing new food products like Cheerios and Kix, the laboratories studied vitamins and introduced an inexpensive process for producing vitamin D. Bell was fond of saying, "Where research leads, the company follows." Bell established a dedication to research that is still at the core of General Mills today, especially at the James Ford Bell Technical Center, the research facility named in his honor.

By the time Bell retired in 1948, almost half of General Mills' sales volume came from non-flour businesses – packaged foods, formula feeds, and chemical and mechanical products.

Throughout his life, Bell was a man of many interests and tremendous personal commitment. When he died in 1961, he left behind a legacy as a businessman, outdoorsman, conservationist and philanthropist. An avid supporter of the arts, he made many contributions to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Bell was committed to the University of Minnesota, serving as regent, creating the James Ford Bell Library to house his rare book collection, and enthusiastically supporting the Museum of Natural History (later renamed the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History).

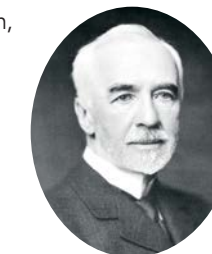
## James Stroud Bell



Born in Philadelphia in 1847, James S. Bell came naturally to the flour business. His father, Samuel, had been a miller and established a flour commission business, which was the Washburn Crosby flour representative in Pennsylvania where the younger Bell worked. After the death of John Crosby in 1887, Bell moved to Minneapolis in 1888 and was named president of the Washburn Crosby Company in 1889.

During his tenure, Bell saw the building of a new milling complex in Buffalo, New York, and watched the capacity of all Washburn Crosby mills grow from 10,000 to almost 45,000 barrels a day. Bell was considered the greatest merchant miller of his time and believed in encouraging close association of management with employees. He died in 1915.

## William H. Dunwoody



Born in Pennsylvania in 1841, William Hood Dunwoody joined the Washburn Crosby Company as a salesman in 1877. He had come to Minneapolis with extensive experience in the milling industry in 1871.

Hired by John Crosby to introduce spring wheat flour to markets in Europe, Dunwoody was initially opposed by Europeans who mistrusted the whiteness of the midwestern flour. Dunwoody persuaded bakers to try the new flour by giving them samples. As a result, exports grew substantially. Dunwoody became a partner of the Washburn Crosby Company in 1879. He died in 1914.



# 1930s: Innovations beyond flour

**FOOD COMPANIES PROSPER AS CONSUMERS TURN TO NEW, CONVENIENT PACKAGED FOOD ITEMS.**



Despite the Great Depression, General Mills made great strides during the 1930s.

General Mills launched two revolutionary products. The first, Bisquick baking mix, was introduced in 1931 to immediate success. Within a year, 95 imitators came to market, but none could displace the original Bisquick. Homemakers quickly realized that the mix could be used for much more than just biscuits, and Bisquick eventually developed the slogan “A World of Baking in a Box.”

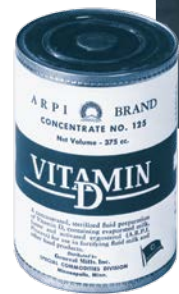
The second product, Kix cereal, was the result of the invention of an innovative new machine – the puffing gun. General Mills had entered the ready-to-eat cereal category a decade before with the introduction of Wheaties. But Kix was very different.

The puffing gun, developed by General Mills engineer and chemist Thomas R. James, expanded cereal dough pellets into different shapes – bubbles in the case of Kix. Launched in 1937, Kix was the first puffed corn cereal on the market. Later the puffing gun would be used to produce Cheerios and Trix, among other cereals.



While the food divisions were busy introducing innovative new products, the Chemical division was expanding rapidly, with substantial research on vitamins. The company began “hitting the vitamin trail,” in the words of then-CEO James Ford Bell, when the newly formed General Mills research laboratory discovered that the uncrushed embryo of a wheat kernel was a rich source of vitamins B1 and B2, protein, carbohydrates, iron and phosphorus – a virtual “storehouse of nutrients.”

By studying the effects of vitamins on rats, General Mills was able to produce several different products, including wheat-germ oil, and vitamin A and vitamin D concentrates. The division also developed a process for creating vitamin D cheaply and efficiently, which allowed General Mills to become one of the largest producers of vitamin D in the world.



Toward the end of the decade, in a move to increase efficiency, the board of directors adopted a plan “for the complete liquidation and dissolution of all subsidiary companies.” Effectively, General Mills became a centralized company in all aspects, operating all of its mills and associated companies across the U.S. from one location.

Bell created two distinct divisions within the company. One was responsible for flour and feed, while the other took charge of grocery products. The large feed division sold farm animal products, including turkey feeds, cattle fattener and pig and hog meal. The grocery products division sold flour, Wheaties, Bisquick and Kix.

While the new organization had central headquarters in Minneapolis, executives in the regional locations still had great responsibility for day-to-day operations. Centralization simply gave Minneapolis more overall responsibility for activities such as quality control, mill construction and order processing.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Minnesota, the Minnesota Valley Canning Company (later the Green Giant Company) was developing vegetable technology that would make it one of the premier vegetable producers in the world.

In 1933, Minnesota Valley Canning began using gravity separators to separate tender young peas from the more mature; tender peas were less dense and therefore floated. The company then combined this process with a tenderometer, which tested the tenderness of a pea, allowing the company to separate peas into 10 distinct grades.

One year later, a company researcher created the “heat unit theory,” which improved planting and harvesting techniques. Effectively, it allowed the company to harvest day or night and to program the vegetables to arrive at canneries in an orderly manner. As a result, the slogan “picked at the fleeting moment of perfect flavor” was created.

## BISQUICK BURSTS ONTO THE SCENE

The curiosity of a General Mills sales executive led to the creation of a new baking mix category with the development of Bisquick. When served fresh biscuits on a train, the salesman questioned the chef on how he could have mixed and baked fresh biscuits so quickly. The chef showed the salesman his special mixture, and the salesman brought the idea to a company chemist, who worked to develop the unique baking mix. Introduced in 1931, Bisquick became so popular that within months, there were nearly 100 competing biscuit mixes on the market.





## On the radio

Washburn Crosby Company, the largest predecessor company of General Mills, purchased WLAG, a failing radio station, in 1924. Changing the station's call letters to WCCO, the company's acronym, it began using the new radio station as a vehicle for groundbreaking advertising and promotions. The 50,000-watt clear channel signal reached far and wide, and WCCO became the region's major source of entertainment.

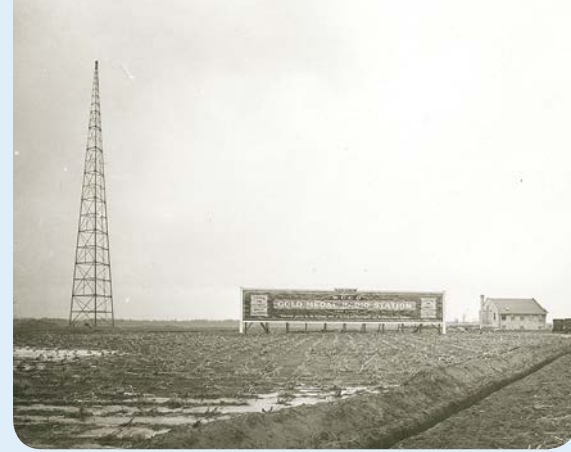
Washburn Crosby's first shows were the "Gold Medal Flour Home Service Talks" and the "Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air." The cooking school was an immediate success, expanding to more than a dozen stations in its second year. It joined the young NBC national radio network in 1927 and continued in various formats for 27 more years.

The Wheaties Quartet made its singing debut on WCCO on Christmas Eve in 1926. It is believed to be the first singing advertisement, and is credited for increasing sales with the jingle "Have You Tried Wheaties?"

WCCO was purchased by CBS in 1932, but General Mills continued to be involved in radio advertisements and sponsorships, including Wheaties sports endorsements, which began in 1933. The company's first baseball sponsorship appeared only on WCCO, but Wheaties ads quickly expanded to 95 stations across the country.

Wheaties also sponsored "Jack Armstrong, The All-American Boy," the first juvenile adventure serial on radio. The program debuted in 1933 and ran through 1951. In the last few years of its run, the show was called "Armstrong of the SBI" (Scientific Bureau of

Investigation). As a tie-in to the cereal, Jack Armstrong would regularly use items that would later appear as premiums offered on Wheaties boxes. The program was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1989.



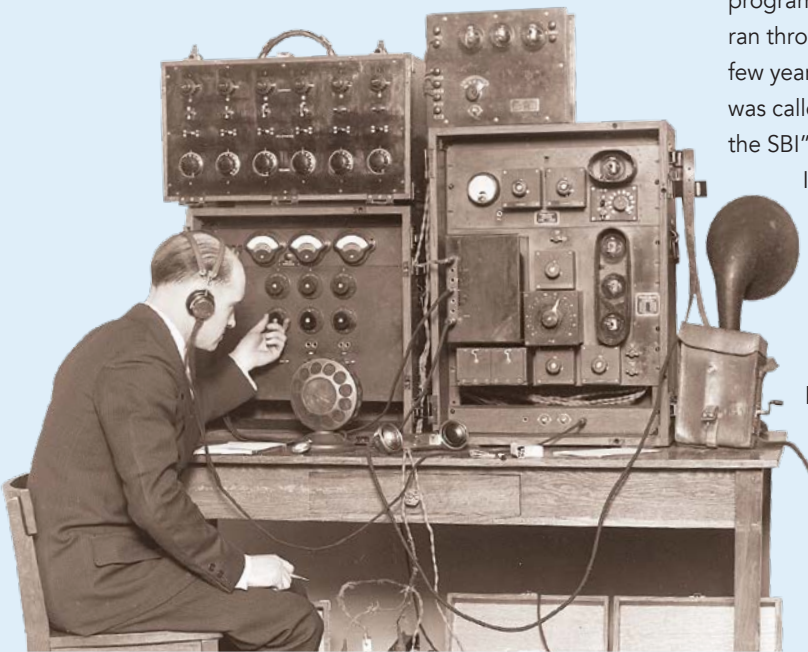
The radio tower and advertising billboard for WCCO radio, dubbed "The Gold Medal Station."

Bisquick was responsible for the first radio "soap opera." "Betty and Bob" debuted in 1932 and ran through the end of the decade. The first serial to use melodrama to drive the story, "Betty and Bob" used the central themes of love, hate, jealousy and

misunderstanding to tell the story of Betty, a secretary who worked for Bob Drake, the heir to a large fortune. Betty and Bob's world was filled with divorce, murder, betrayal and insanity – daily events that would come to define soap operas. Soap companies would eventually become the principal sponsors of most

programs, and unfortunately the name "baking mix operas" just never caught on.

General Mills sponsored nearly 200 shows through the mid-1950s, ranging from serials such as "Dr. Kate" and "Today's Children" to musical programs like "Beat the Band."



## 1940s: Food marches on

AMERICAN COMPANIES RALLY AROUND THE WAR EFFORT, PITCHING IN AND HELPING OUT.



After the United States entered World War II in 1941, both General Mills and Pillsbury helped the war effort in several ways. Government contracts had General Mills building military equipment, while Pillsbury developed special packaging to ensure that the troops received fresh, quality food. And both companies made concerted efforts to educate the public on nutrition and efficient food consumption.

By 1941, the General Mills Mechanical division had become well-known as a world-class manufacturer of precision machines and equipment. During the war, it changed its focus to military equipment, developing several important advances. For example, the hedgehog, an instrument that would guide missiles to their target regardless of the target's movements, was credited with playing a significant role in sinking more than 300 German submarines.

At Pillsbury, most of the wartime efforts focused on food and its packaging. Pillsbury developed several products for the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, including dehydrated soup mixes. The company also provided food for liberated countries as well as for prisoners of war.

On the home front, both companies provided the public with valuable nutrition and recipe information to help consumers during periods of food rationing. General Mills distributed more than 7 million Your Share Betty Crocker booklets across the nation,



providing easy, nutritional meal ideas that housewives could create using war-rationed foods.

In 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt held a National Nutrition Conference for Defense in part to address concepts of food enrichment. General Mills had launched Vibic flour – enriched with vitamin B, calcium and iron – in 1940. And the Pillsbury Flour Mills Company (renamed Pillsbury Mills, Inc. in 1944) had begun enriching its flour with vitamins and iron in 1941, giving consumers across the nation easier access to foods containing important nutrients. By 1943, bread was required by law to be enriched with vitamins. Reductions in several nutrition-related illnesses were attributed to the enrichment program, called the "greatest contribution ever made to the program of public health."

Another helpful product introduced during the war years was Cheerioats, the first ready-to-eat oat cereal. Launched in 1941, the name changed to Cheerios in 1945. It also supplied several vitamins and minerals that were the adult requirements at the time.

After the war, both companies returned their focus to nonmilitary products and innovations. Both launched cake mixes in the late 1940s. The General Mills Mechanical division developed a series of consumer appliances in 1946, including the popular Betty Crocker Tru-Heat Iron.







In 1947, a 64-year-old California man approached General Mills with a secret recipe. “I wanted Betty Crocker to give the secret to the women of America,” Harry Baker explained. Refined in the Betty Crocker test kitchens, General Mills

debuted Chiffon cake. Heralded as the “cake discovery of the decade,” and “the first new cake in 100 years,” the new Chiffon cake used a secret ingredient – salad oil.

General Mills also developed Brown ‘n Serve rolls – a revolutionary technological development in the grocery world. The idea came to Joseph Gregor, a Florida fireman, in 1949. Gregor had rolls in the oven when the fire alarm sounded, so he turned off the oven. Upon returning, he noticed that the half-baked rolls had kept their shape, so he continued baking them. Thus par-baked rolls and biscuits were born. Gregor, a bakery owner, tested the rolls on his customers with great success.

A General Mills salesman brought the idea to the company’s bakeries research laboratories, which perfected the baking process, and obtained a patent. The patent was then given to the entire baking industry. “What is good for the baking industry is also good for the milling industry,” said Leslie Perrin, then-president of General Mills.

## The ‘General’ in the war

The “General” did its part in the war. Like many companies, General Mills adapted its production and products to help with the effort. Food was important, of course, not just for the troops, but also for families stretching war-rationed supplies back home.

The company’s Mechanical division played a particularly important role. In the 1940s, the division was known as one of the best precision manufacturers in the world. Its engineers were meticulous about producing machinery with incredible accuracy. The U.S. Army Navy and Air Force all looked to tap that innovative precision technology with the division being contracted to produce numerous control instruments, various torpedoes and gunsights.

Thomas R. James, a legendary General Mills engineer, took on the difficult task of redesigning the gunsight for the 8-inch gun on Navy warships. For five days, James studied the gunsight and sketched on his drawing board. In those five days, he slept a total of five hours. He continued to work day and night for more than 40 days, sleeping an hour or two each night on a cot in his office or at his desk. In just over one month, he produced an entirely new design for a significantly improved gunsight. It would be put to use months later in the Battle of Iwo Jima.

The Mechanical division ambitiously tackled myriad projects of wide-ranging importance. One project was the jitterbug torpedo. Designed to create a feeling of false security on board the targeted ship, the torpedo would appear

to go in the wrong direction, then at the last minute turn at a right angle to hit its mark. The torpedo could even do U-turns and figure 8s in what the Navy called “unusual trajectory patterns.”

But the division’s most unusual project may have been the training of live pigeons to be bomb pilots. Famed Professor B.F. Skinner trained the pigeons to guide the bombs to their targets, while the Mechanical division built precision guidance equipment to allow a three-pigeon team to tap their way to the target – directing this early “smart bomb” with their beaks. Although “pigeon bombers” never played an actual part in the war, the project remained classified for a decade.

While General Mills was producing military machinery, Pillsbury was assisting the troops by developing special foods and unique packaging to better suit the needs of soldiers. For example, Pillsbury worked with several companies to develop waterproof sacks of food that could be dropped out of enemy range and float to soldiers in need.

Both General Mills and Pillsbury developed products for the Army’s K and C rations, including a dry cereal bar – oblong to fit into K rations and disc-shaped to suit the C rations. Also produced were dehydrated green pea and bean soup mixes.



## Revolutionary technology

For almost 40 years, the General Mills Mechanical division designed and manufactured a wide range of products, from milling and flour packing equipment to submarines.



The division had its roots in Washburn Crosby Company’s Manufacturing Service department, established in 1926 with only six employees. Headed by Helmer Anderson, the department was charged with keeping the flour milling machinery running smoothly. Along the way, the group developed extraordinary capabilities and some revolutionary machinery, such as the Anderson sealer, a machine that glued flour packages closed rather than tying them with string. The Long packer, an innovative machine designed by George Long, filled different size flour bags, automatically knowing when the bag was full.

The division expanded and began working on projects beyond the scope of food, including working with the U.S. Navy. With war looming, government contracts continued to arrive.

General Mills’ largest mechanical facility was known as a “defense plant,” and was part of President Franklin Roosevelt’s “Arsenal of Democracy.”

Immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack, it became a “war plant,” complete with armed guards. General Mills’ involvement with the military eventually became so extensive that nearly 90 percent of the plant’s employees were working on war-related projects. Most of the milling-related work was moved to a smaller facility in Iowa. The company’s dedication and hard work earned the Mechanical division four U.S. Army-Navy “E” awards for excellence.

After the war, the Mechanical division turned its attention back to nonmilitary work, providing consumer appliances such as irons, toasters and pressure cookers.

In 1947, residents in Minneapolis began reporting strange silvery objects overhead. They were assured they had nothing to worry about, but when the balloons first started appearing, General Mills could not tell the witnesses that its Mechanical division had begun working with the U.S. government on hot air balloon projects. The majority of the flights were to collect information about the upper atmosphere, though some were estimating the spread of potential radioactive fallout in the cold war atomic era.

The balloon department did projects for the Air Force, Office of Naval Research, Atomic Energy Commission and North American Aviation, among others.

Project Strato-Lab, which began in 1946 and continued through the 1950s, yielded valuable information about cosmic rays as well as atmospheric observations not possible from the ground.

By 1963, General Mills decided to once again concentrate on consumer goods and convenience foods, divesting its electronics and mechanical holdings.







**PROJECT SKYHOOK RESULTS IN GUINNESS WORLD RECORD**

Although the Mechanical division began working with high-altitude, lightweight balloons in the 1940s, its involvement took off in the 1950s. Among the endeavors was "Project Skyhook," which required General Mills to develop a bigger and better plastic balloon that could reach heights of more than 100,000 feet. The purpose of Skyhook was to collect information on phenomena in the upper atmosphere. On May 17, 1954, a Skyhook balloon reached the record altitude of 116,700 feet – more than 22 miles above the earth's surface. This particular balloon was the largest ever built – 282 feet long when deflated and 200 feet in diameter when inflated. Sent up to study cosmic rays, the huge balloon could be seen at distances of up to 90 miles.

Two General Mills researchers, Keith Lang and Harold "Bud" Froehlich, even made it into the Guinness Book of World Records for ascending in an open gondola to 42,150 feet in 1956. They were researching the weight of various papers, wind direction and scatter patterns for leaflet drops.

**BLUE SKY TECHNOLOGY**

In the winter of 1953, the General Mills Mechanical division worked in conjunction with the University of Minnesota to develop technology that forever changed the way airplane flight data is recorded. The Ryan flight recorder evolved into the "black box" found today in every commercial airliner – one of the most important tools in airline disaster investigations.

James Ryan, the University of Minnesota professor for whom it is named, designed the box. "The extreme cost of air failure in terms of human lives and demolished equipment worth millions of dollars makes it important to constantly measure the atmospheric conditions surrounding the aircraft," said Ryan in 1953. "Eliminating the cause of just one crash would make the instrument worthwhile."



*1950s: Peace and prosperity*

**THE POSTWAR ECONOMY BOOMS, AS CONSUMERS ENJOY THE MANY CONVENIENT NEW PRODUCTS SEEN ON TV.**

The 1950s was a time of change in the United States. World War II was over, and the country was enjoying the prosperity of a postwar economy. It was a decade of change for Pillsbury and General Mills, too, both domestically and internationally.



In 1951, Pillsbury purchased Ballard & Ballard Co., Inc. Pillsbury's then-CEO Paul Gerot said, "They had one interesting product, Ballard OvenReady biscuits, and a good piece of their profit was coming from this product. If we could build a mix business with a variety of products – pancake and pie crust and cake mix and hot roll mix, and so on – why can't we put research behind this refrigerated idea and develop a wide range of refrigerated products – cinnamon rolls and so on?"

Ballard & Ballard held the patent for a packaging technology for refrigerated dough, which came with

the acquisition. Although Ballard hadn't moved its products beyond regional distribution, Gerot saw opportunity.

Gerot asked Ballard employees to list every product they thought was possible using the packaging technology and refrigerated dough. They came to him with a list of about 50 products. Three years later, Pillsbury Quick Cinnamon Rolls hit the market, the first of that list.

Pillsbury was producing 10 different biscuit and roll varieties by 1957. By the end of the decade, refrigerated dough reached profits of \$5.6 million.

In 1958, Pillsbury built a food production plant next to its flour mill in Ontario, and several flour mills in Guatemala. In 1960, Pillsbury snatched an opportunity to purchase interest in a mill near Caracas, Venezuela, beginning an international expansion trend that would continue for many years.

General Mills also expanded internationally in the decade, creating General Mills Canada and constructing a facility in Rexdale, Ontario. General Mills Canada launched its first products, Cheerios and Wheaties cereals and Betty Crocker dessert mixes, later that year.



The decade saw continued expansion of General Mills cereal brands, with the company's first presweetened cereal, Sugar Jets, coming in 1953, followed by Trix the next year and Cocoa Puffs in 1958.

The General Mills Appliance division continued to expand in the 1950s as well, with the addition of food mixers, waffle bakers, coffee makers and deep fryer-cookers. The appliance business was sold to Illinois-based McGraw Electric Company in 1954. Revenue from the sale was used to expand the Mechanical division.





## On the tube

General Mills was truly a television pioneer. In 1939, Wheaties sponsored the first televised commercial sports broadcast, a game between the Cincinnati Reds and the Brooklyn Dodgers. The audience for that inaugural baseball broadcast was the roughly 500 owners of television sets in New York City, with Red Barber providing the commentary.



The Betty Crocker Television Show with Adelaide Hawley

General Mills immediately recognized the potential of the new medium and quickly began using popular radio personalities on television, including the Lone Ranger, and George Burns and Gracie Allen to market General Mills products.

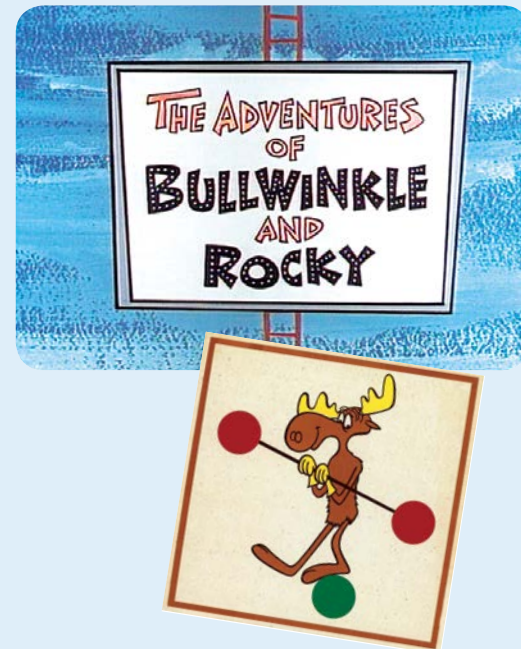
The popularity of the General Mills-sponsored "The Lone Ranger" radio show, which began in 1941, quickly carried over to the new medium. Since he was always on the side of justice, high standards were set for the western hero. George Trendle, who created the character, said, "We try to convey messages that subtly teach patriotism, tolerance, fairness, and respect."

When "The Lone Ranger" first moved to television in 1949, there were only about a million television sets in the United States. By 1952, that number had grown to approximately 16 million. The Lone Ranger, his horse Silver and his faithful companion Tonto appeared regularly on television until 1961.

Following in the footsteps of the popular Betty Crocker radio show, General Mills developed "The Betty Crocker Television Show," with Adelaide Hawley as Betty Crocker.

Hawley also appeared as Betty Crocker in segments of the "Bride and Groom" television show, giving advice to new homemakers. In 1952, Bisquick, Gold Medal and other brands began sponsoring the show, which also had begun on radio. The show was set in a specially designed studio chapel where viewers would watch a wedding take place.

From the mid-1950s through the 1970s, General Mills and Pillsbury sponsored myriad shows. Pillsbury supported popular programs hosted by Arthur Godfrey and Art Linkletter. General Mills sponsored "Ding Dong School," featuring real-life preschool teacher Mrs. Frances Horwich, which was a surprise hit. It received fan mail from young children across the country and won a Peabody Television Award for "Outstanding 1952 Children's Program."



One of the most well-known shows sponsored by General Mills featured Rocket J. Squirrel and his sidekick Bullwinkle J. Moose. When "Rocky and His Friends" made its ABC debut on November 19, 1959, audiences watched a moose and squirrel soaring toward earth on a return visit from the moon. The two residents of Frostbite Falls, Minnesota, had been blasted into outer space when the quick-rising moose-berry cake they were baking exploded. Subtle, humorous references to General Mills were often woven into the show's plots. In one storyline airing over 12 episodes, Boris Badenov hatched a scheme to counterfeit cereal box tops, since they were "the real basis for the world's monetary system."

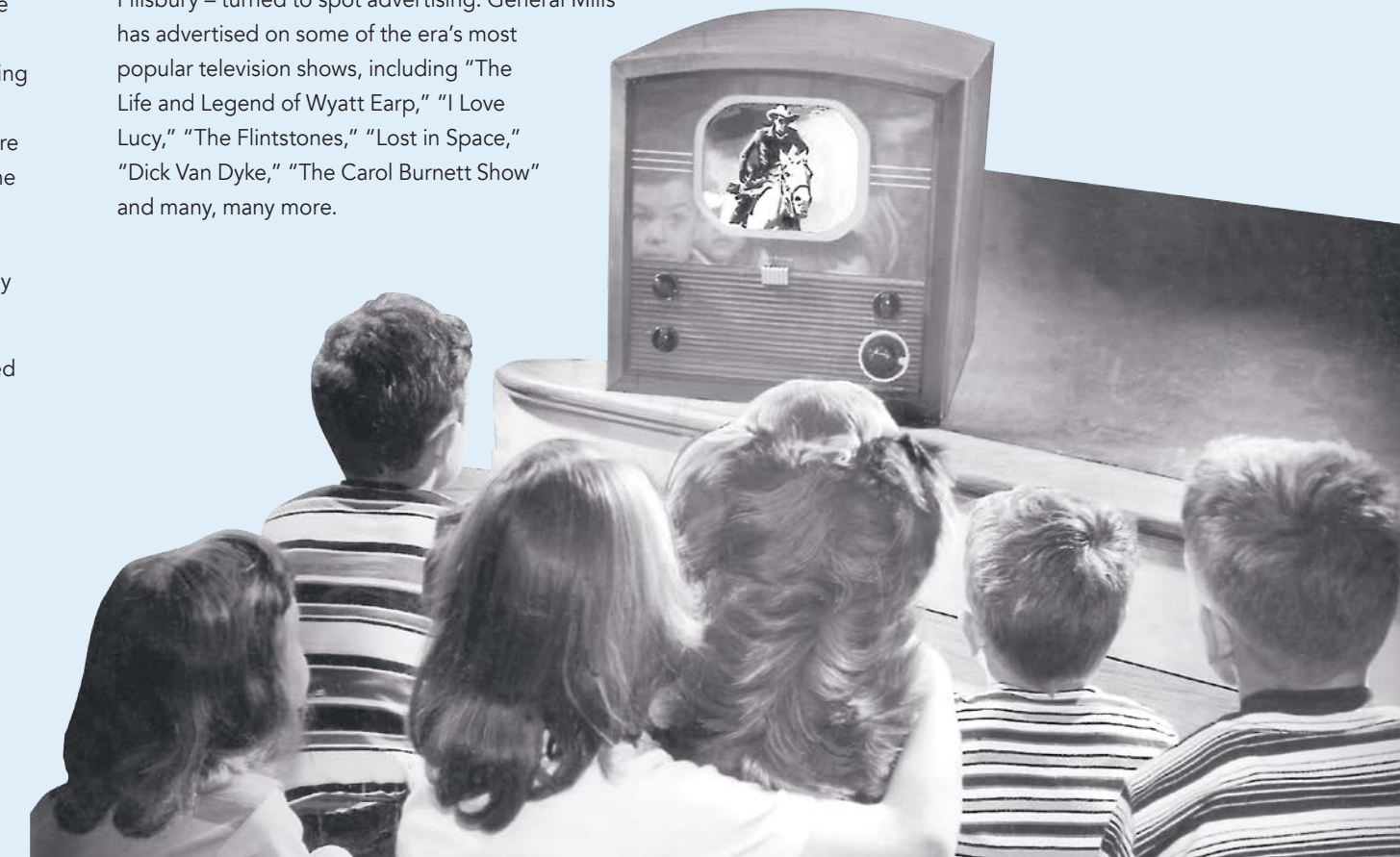
In its first season, "Rocky and His Friends" topped the Nielsen ratings for daytime shows. In 1961, it joined NBC's evening lineup. Renamed "The Bullwinkle Show," the prime-time version was produced in color. New characters were added to the cast, including the lovable, but bumbling Dudley Do-Right of the Canadian Mounties and his nemesis, Snidely Whiplash.

Although the last new "Rocky and Bullwinkle" episode ran in 1964, the squirrel and his sidekick have never really left the airwaves. Thanks to syndication, new generations of children know the crazy capers of the lovable moose and squirrel and their Cold War counterparts, Boris and Natasha. Adults love Bullwinkle, too – and even today the clever stories appeal to a broad audience.

Sponsorship of television shows diminished in the latter 1950s through the 1960s as television's gain in ratings made sponsorship prohibitively expensive. Most major advertisers – including General Mills and Pillsbury – turned to spot advertising. General Mills has advertised on some of the era's most popular television shows, including "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp," "I Love Lucy," "The Flintstones," "Lost in Space," "Dick Van Dyke," "The Carol Burnett Show" and many, many more.

Pillsbury aired commercials on "The Ed Sullivan Show" for many years, including that famous episode in February 1964, when the Beatles appeared on U.S. television. An estimated 70 million viewers, more than 40 percent of the homes with TV sets, tuned in. The Beatles rocked America that night with "She Loves You" and "I Want to Hold Your Hand."

General Mills today remains one of the biggest advertisers in America, spending millions each year promoting its products, much of it on television.





# 1960s: Not just toying around

## SOCIETY CHANGES, AND BUSINESSES CHANGE, TOO, DIVERSIFYING AND EXPANDING INTERNATIONALLY.



Kenner Products introduced children to the world of baking with the Kenner Easy Bake Oven in 1963. With General Mills' purchase of Kenner Toys in 1967, it became known as the Betty Crocker Easy Bake Oven.

General Mills welcomed the 1960s by introducing a new method of flour milling. The Bellera Air Spun milling process drastically reduced the amount of time and number of people necessary to mill high-quality flour.



Research on a new flour milling process had begun about 30 years earlier with James Ford Bell's instruction to "simplify" the cumbersome milling process. Bellera, named after James Ford Bell and his son Charles Bell, not only simplified the process, but also milled a higher quality, more uniform flour in one-third less space.

Early in the decade, General Mills dramatically changed its focus from commodity-oriented to consumer-oriented. Within years, the company closed half of its flour mills, exited the feed business, and divested its mechanical and electronic holdings – beginning a period of dramatic growth through acquisition.

Between 1961 and 1969, General Mills went on a buying spree, purchasing 37 companies in the United States and abroad – the majority nonfood companies. Although six of those acquisitions were rather quickly divested, General Mills was still a "power to be reckoned with" according to Financial World magazine.

During this period, General Mills developed a formidable Toy division, with the acquisition of Rainbow Crafts, makers of Play-Doh modeling compound, in 1965, Kenner Products in 1967, and Parker Brothers, in 1968. General Mills began building its clothing and fashion business with the acquisition of Monocraft Products, maker of Monet jewelry, in 1968 and David Crystal, Inc., maker of Izod and Lacoste shirts, in 1969.



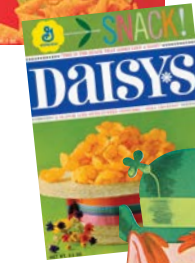
General Mills' Izod and Lacoste clothing brands were at the center of the preppie craze that erupted in the 1970s. If you didn't have an alligator on your polo shirt, you simply weren't in style.



The food business was still central to the company, even during this time of great acquisition. Not only did Betty Crocker dessert mixes expand with a variety of flavors, but the company began its snack business with a bang, as Bugles, Whistles and Daisy\*s were introduced in the middle of the decade. Total and Lucky Charms cereals were created as well.

While General Mills was expanding its operations domestically, Pillsbury was continuing its rapid international growth, acquiring mills in Ghana and Venezuela, and eyeing the European market.

Pillsbury's first European acquisition was Etablissement Gringoire, S.A., with headquarters near Paris. It was an important purchase for Pillsbury, as the 100-year-old Gringoire name was well-respected, and it had several market-leading products.



A year later, Pillsbury made three more European purchases: Paul Erasmi, G.M.B.H., a West German fruit and vegetable canner; H.J. Green & Co., an English baking mix company; and Dorai, S.A., a Swiss cookie company.

Pillsbury also acquired interest in an Australian mix company, as well as flour mills in the Philippines. This rapid expansion added about \$40 million to Pillsbury's total sales.

The company also was active on the home front. Pillsbury's most important domestic acquisition was the Burger King Corporation in 1967, its first restaurant acquisition. Pillsbury quickly grew the Florida-based chain from 275 restaurants in 1967, to 489 locations in 1969.

Additionally, Pillsbury developed a low-calorie drink mix called Funny Face. Six flavors of the drink quickly entered the national market in 1969.

## DEPTHS OF INNOVATION

General Mills was awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute to develop a small, deep-diving submarine in 1962.

Harold "Bud" Froehlich of General Mills' Aeronautical Research Labs drafted the first design for the 15-foot submarine. Within a couple years, the submarine – nicknamed ALVIN after Allyn Vine of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute – was deployed.

Since 1964, ALVIN has been part of many important expeditions, including the first dives to the Titanic in 1986 and the recovery of a hydrogen bomb from the ocean floor. ALVIN is still operating and in use today.





# 1970s: From yippies to yuppies

**CONVENIENCE AND HEALTH GAIN  
PROMINENCE IN GROCERY AISLES AS MORE  
WOMEN ENTER THE WORKFORCE AND BABY  
BOOMERS LOOK FOR HEALTHIER CHOICES.**



Consumer demographics were changing dramatically. More women were entering the workforce and baby boomers were starting their careers, representing a formidable new consumer base.

To assist busy families, General Mills introduced Hamburger Helper dinner mixes in 1971 in five flavors. Tuna Helper was released the following year.

General Mills rolled out Nature Valley brand granola cereal in 1973. It was the company's first attempt at a 100 percent natural ready-to-eat cereal. The new cereal was touted as healthy and versatile. Advertising pointed out that granola could be eaten as a snack, used as an ice cream topping or as a baking ingredient, as well as a breakfast cereal.

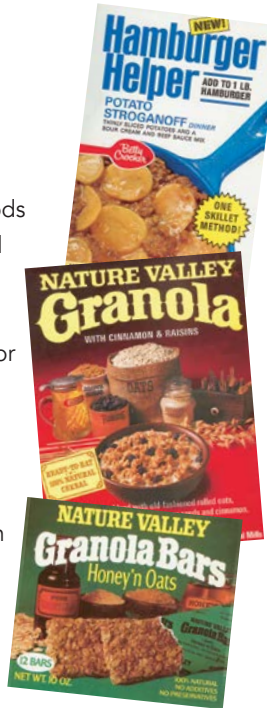
Two years later, Nature Valley granola bars were introduced. The bars were 100 percent natural with no additives or preservatives. General Mills was the first major food company to sell granola bars.

General Mills introduced French-style blended Yoplait yogurt, after securing the licensing and manufacturing rights to Yoplait in the U.S. from the Michigan Cottage Cheese Company. A French dairy cooperative, Sodima, had launched the product in France in the early 1960s and had marketed the product regionally in the United States through licensees in the mid-1970s. The product caught the attention of General Mills, and Yoplait USA was created in 1977.

During the late 1970s, Pillsbury divested some of its "toe-hold acquisitions," including a wine business, interest in a Minneapolis housing developer,

a flower business and several magazines. The company also made a series of consumer foods acquisitions. Pillsbury acquired Totino's Finer Foods, Inc. in 1975. For several years, Pillsbury had been searching for an avenue to enter the frozen food category. Minneapolis-based Totino's provided the perfect solution. Totino's held the No. 2 position in the frozen pizza category and had yet to expand to the populous East Coast. In 1978, after patenting a "crisp crust," Totino's became the top-selling frozen pizza in the country.

A second important consumer foods acquisition came in 1979, when Pillsbury purchased the Le Sueur, Minnesota-based Green Giant Company. The Jolly Green Giant was as well-known as the Pillsbury Doughboy, and the company had sales of nearly a half-billion dollars. Green Giant was the country's leading producer of canned and frozen vegetables, with a line of frozen entrees in development.



With the emergent use of microwave ovens, both General Mills and Pillsbury helped consumers make use of this new technology. Betty Crocker began a newsletter called Microwave Memos in 1976, with directions and recipes for the new appliance. In 1978, Pillsbury introduced microwave popcorn and pancake products.

**Talbots** *Eddie Bauer*

Outside of the grocery aisle, General Mills expanded into the retail sector, acquiring Eddie Bauer and The Talbots.

General Mills found success in its Toy division when Kenner Products purchased the



"galaxy-wide" rights to the Star Wars movies in 1977. The Star Wars licensing opportunity had been turned down by other leading toy companies, but Bernard Loomis, then president of Kenner, thought the movie had potential. He was right.

The movie was so popular and the demand for toys was so overwhelming, dramatically outstripping supply, that General Mills had to sell "certificates of ownership" assuring children they could purchase the popular toys when they actually made it off the production line.



In 1970, General Mills' Parker Brothers subsidiary released Nerf products. It was the first time Parker Brothers strayed from family games, but Nerf became an instant hit, with more than 4 million Nerf balls sold the first year.

A memory maker, General Mills' Lionel trains brightened countless gift occasions. General Mills acquired the rights to manufacture and sell Lionel products under license in 1970.





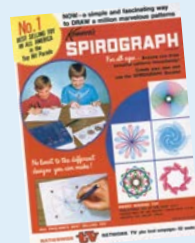
# Something for everyone

Growth through acquisitions has been a key strategy for General Mills throughout its history. In the beginning, General Mills acquired companies that were close to its milling roots. Later, the company branched out, purchasing toy companies, restaurants, clothing companies and more.

In the 1960s, General Mills underwent a dramatic transformation, shifting its focus from commodity-based goods to consumer products. It closed half of its flour mills, exited the feed business and divested its electronic and mechanical businesses.

Then the company went on a bold shopping spree, buying a wide range of consumer products, including toys, furniture and clothing. Rainbow Crafts, maker of Play-Doh modeling compound, was General Mills' first toy company acquisition in 1965. Two years

later, the company purchased Kenner Products, gaining a toy box full of popular playthings including the Easy Bake Oven and Spirograph.



The next move was to purchase Parker Brothers in 1968, makers of classic board games including Monopoly, Risk and Clue. The addition of Craft Master Corporation and its subsidiary, Model Products Corporation, added craft kits and Lionel trains to the General Mills family of products.

In the late 1960s, General Mills moved into the fashion business with its purchase of Monet jewelry and its parent company, Monocraft. Soon after, Izod's iconic alligator joined the General Mills family with the purchase of David Crystal. Other David Crystal brands included Lacoste and Haymaker.



Later additions to the company's wardrobe included Foot-Joy footwear, with its leading line of golf shoes; Ship 'n Shore, a producer of women's shirts and blouses; and Kimberly Knitwear.

With garment industry experience under its belt, General Mills expanded into the retail sector in the 1970s, acquiring Eddie Bauer and The Talbots. Other retailers soon followed, including LeeWards and Wallpapers To Go.

As the decade progressed, General Mills acquired collectible stamps (H.E. Harris & Co.), a travel agency (Olson-Travelworld) and fine furniture (Kittinger, Pennsylvania House and Dunbar). Pillsbury, too, explored new ventures with the purchase of Bon Appétit magazine and Souverain, a California winery.



Because consumers were increasingly dining away from home, both companies made significant investments in restaurant businesses throughout

the 1960s and 1970s. Pillsbury acquired Burger King in 1967. A few years later, General Mills picked up a fledgling chain of seafood restaurants – Red



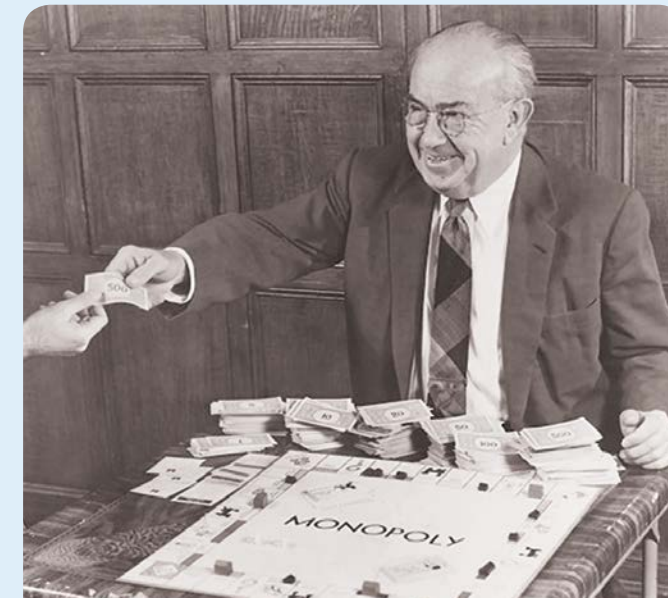
Lobster – and later developed The Olive Garden Italian restaurant concept.



Growth through acquisition was important to both companies' consumer foods businesses as well. General Mills bought snack company Tom's Foods in 1966 and seafood producer Gorton Corporation in 1968. Pillsbury entered the pizza business with its 1975 purchase of Totino's Finer Foods. Green Giant was a big acquisition in 1979, and Häagen-Dazs was scooped up a few years later.



General Mills acquired the rights to what is perhaps America's greatest board game – Monopoly – when it purchased Parker Brothers in 1968. Created by Charles Darrow (right), the game was introduced during the Great Depression. Monopoly is still one of America's top-selling games.



General Mills began the 1980s with a diverse portfolio of consumer-focused businesses. The company consisted of five divisions: Consumer Foods, Fashion, Toys, Restaurants and Specialty Retailing. As the 1980s progressed, the company divested most of these businesses, and by 1990, General Mills had narrowed its focus to two businesses: Consumer Foods and Restaurants.

In 1989, Pillsbury underwent a major change, being purchased by Britain's Grand Metropolitan plc. Under GrandMet, Pillsbury bought Pet, Inc. in the mid 1990s, acquiring important new brands, including Old El Paso and Progresso. When GrandMet merged with British-based Guinness in 1997, Pillsbury became part of the newly formed Diageo plc.



With the spinoff of its restaurant businesses into Darden, Inc., in 1995, General Mills began a new round of acquisitions. The Chex and Chex Mix franchise was purchased from Ralcorp in 1997. Other acquisitions soon followed, including Gardetto's snacks;

organic food brands Cascadian Farm and Muir Glen; and Lloyd's Barbeque Company. By the end of the decade, General Mills was positioned to make the largest acquisition in its history – the purchase of the Pillsbury Company.

General Mills' Toy division developed Care Bears in conjunction with American Greetings in 1983. Care Bears followed on the Toy division's success with the Strawberry Shortcake doll, originally released in 1981.





## Service with a smile

In the 1960s, both General Mills and Pillsbury ventured into the restaurant business.

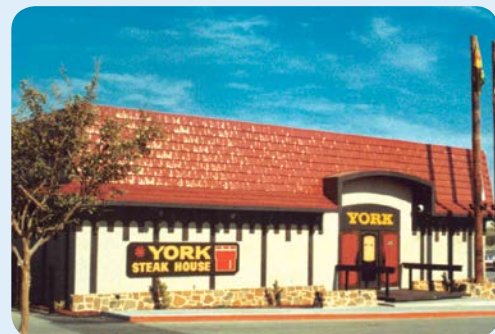
Pillsbury purchased Burger King in 1967. Originally founded in 1954, the Florida-based fast food chain consisted of 275 restaurants in 28 states at the time. With the acquisition, Burger King co-founder James McLamore predicted there would be more than 1,250 restaurants and \$400 million in annual sales by 1975. Pillsbury did better. By 1975, there were 1,395 stores with total sales of \$706 million.

General Mills purchased its first restaurant, Red Lobster Inns of America, in 1970. Then just a three-restaurant operation, the Florida-based seafood chain expanded quickly, adding 350 restaurants in a single decade.

With the success of their first ventures, both companies delved further into the restaurant business. Pillsbury began testing the Poppin Fresh Pie Shop concept in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1969. When it was sold in 1983, its name was changed to Bakers Square. Pillsbury acquired Steak & Ale and Bennigan's to expand its restaurant portfolio.

General Mills developed The Olive Garden restaurant concept on its own in 1982, with the initial restaurant opening in Orlando, Florida. It was one of the first Italian restaurant chains, opening up to 50 new restaurants every year at its peak of growth. At various times, General Mills also owned Leeann Chin, Darryl's, Good Earth, Casa Gallardo, York Steak House and China Coast.

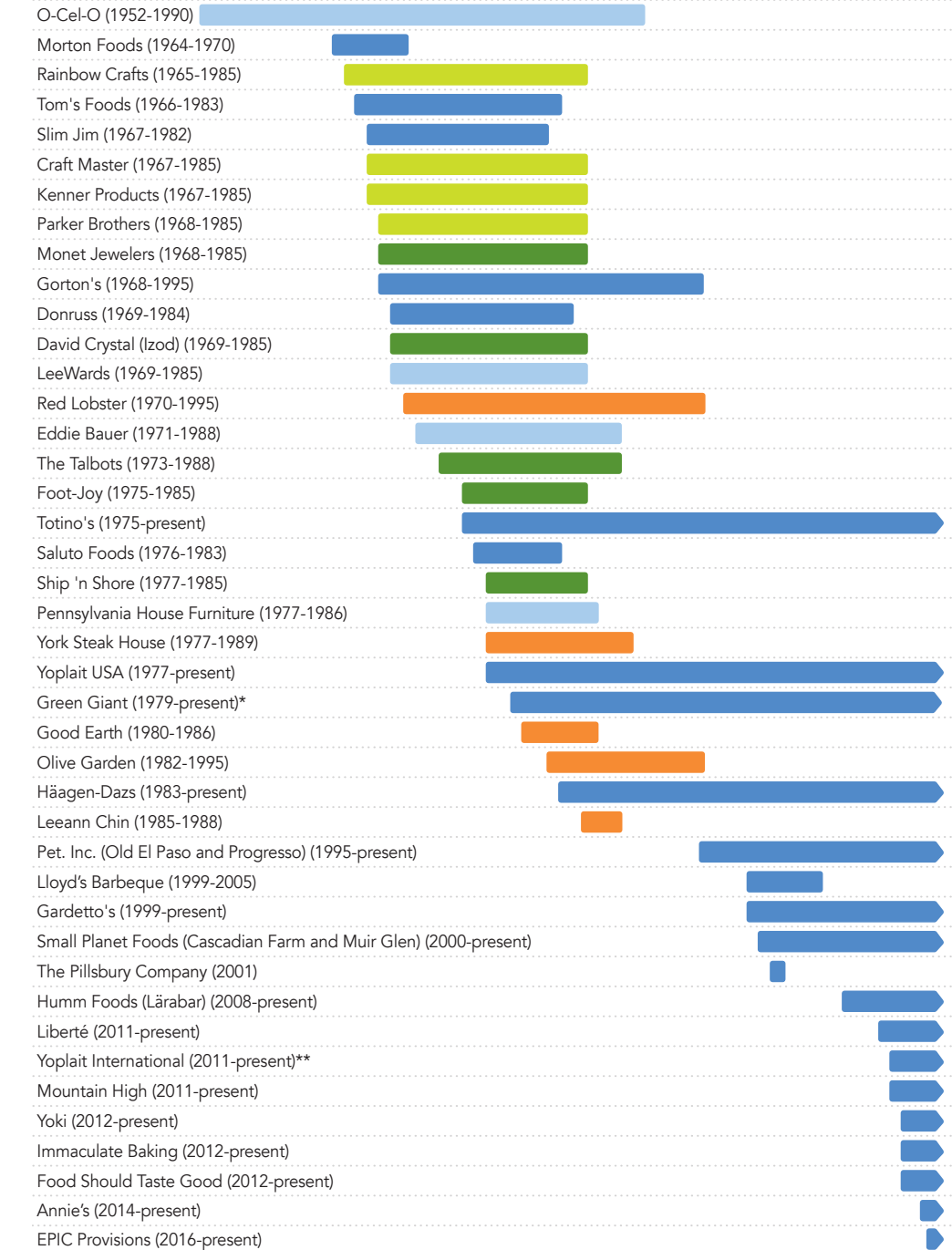
When the Pillsbury Company was purchased by Grand Metropolitan in 1989, Pillsbury's restaurants were separated from consumer foods to operate as a separate division. In 1995, General Mills spun off its restaurant businesses to shareholders as Darden Restaurants, named in honor of William Darden, the founder of Red Lobster. Today, Darden remains a leader in the dining category, listed on the New York Stock Exchange.



## Major acquisitions and divestitures

Growth through acquisitions has been a key strategy for General Mills throughout our history. In the beginning, we acquired companies that were close to our food roots. Primarily in the 1960s and 1970s, we branched out, purchasing toy manufacturers, restaurants, clothing companies and more. During the 1980s, we began narrowing our focus, and by 1990, the company consisted of two businesses – consumer foods and restaurants.

With the spin-off of our restaurant businesses into Darden, Inc. in 1995, we began a new round of acquisitions, this time focusing on consumer foods. We made the largest acquisition in our history – the Pillsbury Company – in 2001.



\* General Mills sold the Green Giant business in the U.S., Canada and select other markets, but continues to own and operate the business in most other markets around the world.  
 \*\* General Mills purchased a 51 percent controlling interest in Yoplait S.A.S., and a 50 percent interest in a related entity that holds the Yoplait brands.



## 1980s: When less is more

**CONGLOMERATES STREAMLINE, RETURNING GREATER SHAREHOLDER VALUE THROUGH RENEWED FOCUS.**



General Mills was one of the largest toy makers in the world by the beginning of the 1980s. Profit fluctuations in both the toy and clothing divisions, however, led General Mills to make a very important business decision mid-decade. With shareholders in mind, General Mills decided to divest both divisions and concentrate more fully on its main strength – food.

General Mills' focus was solely food when it spun off its Fashion division (as Crystal Brands, Inc.) and its Toy division (as Kenner Parker Toys, Inc.) in 1985, and its Specialty Retailing division, which included shops

and mail-order catalogs such as The Talbots and Eddie Bauer, in 1988.

After the divestitures, General Mills consisted of the Consumer Foods division, and the Restaurant division.

Explaining the company's actions, then-CEO Bruce Atwater said, "The companies with the very best results concentrate their resources and their management in a very limited number of businesses which they know well." General Mills owned both Red Lobster and The Olive Garden, and had acquired three more restaurants – Darryl's and Good Earth in the early 1980s and Leeann Chin in 1985.

Yoplait achieved national distribution of its original French-style yogurt in 1982, followed by successful launches of Yoplait Light, Yoplait Custard Style and snack-size packs.

By the mid-1980s, microwaves had proven themselves indispensable in U.S. kitchens. After considerable development, General Mills introduced Pop Secret popcorn in butter and natural varieties. It quickly built a devoted following.

Similarly, Fruit Roll-Ups fruit-flavored snacks made a big impact in the 1980s. The concept expanded into Fruit Bars, Fruit Wrinkles, and shaped fruit snacks, such as The Berry Bears and Shark Bites.



The new salad mix product Suddenly Salad was launched in 1987. It capitalized on consumers' interest in lighter meals and pasta. The unique packaging included a pouch that was used both as a cooking bag and a colander for quick preparation.

Pillsbury made a critical acquisition in 1983. The company purchased New York-based Häagen-Dazs, already established as the premier ice cream brand in the United States. Pillsbury also established Häagen-Dazs Japan, a joint venture with two Japanese companies in 1984.

By the end of the decade, an unsolicited offer was made to purchase the Pillsbury Company. Drawn by the strength of Pillsbury's brands and the scope of its consumer-based businesses, the British company Grand Metropolitan plc, known as GrandMet, approached Pillsbury with an offer. Pillsbury management initially refused, but after GrandMet tendered its offer to Pillsbury shareholders, management negotiated a sale. It was 1989. For the second time in its history, Pillsbury was British-owned.

Under GrandMet, Pillsbury's full-service restaurants, including Bennigan's and Steak & Ale, were sold, and Burger King was separated from the rest of the business. The remaining parts of Pillsbury were organized into four areas: Pillsbury, GrandMet Foodservice, Häagen-Dazs and GrandMet Foods Europe.

## 1990s: A world of change

**THE WORLD BECOMES SMALLER, WITH GLOBALIZATION IN THE INTERNET AGE.**



Two important joint ventures were formed to drive General Mills' international growth in the new decade. Cereal Partners Worldwide, a 50-50 joint venture with Nestlé, coupled General Mills' cereal expertise with Nestlé's powerful sales and distribution network to form a new ready-to-eat cereal company outside of North America in 1991.

Snack Ventures Europe combined General Mills' European snack operations, including Smiths Foods and Biscuiterie Nantaise, with those of PepsiCo to form continental Europe's largest snack foods company the following year.

General Mills decided to exit the restaurant business in 1995, spinning off its restaurants to shareholders as a separate company. Named Darden Restaurants, Inc., and listed on the New York Stock Exchange, it was a \$3.2 billion public company. As the General Mills 1995 annual report explained to shareholders, "We believe that highly focused companies with tightly integrated strategies, organization and incentive programs produce the strongest growth performance, so we separated General Mills into two independent companies – one for consumer foods and one for restaurants."

That same year, Pillsbury acquired Pet, Inc., gaining the Progresso and Old El Paso brands. Old El Paso was already a market leader in the Mexican food category, but Progresso was well behind Campbell's in the canned soup category in the United States. Under Pillsbury, the Progresso brand began gaining – positioning itself with a quality message as the ready-to-eat soup for adults.

General Mills' Cheerios brand was expanding in the 1990s, adding new varieties, including Apple Cinnamon and Frosted. In 1999, to help celebrate the new millennium, Cheerios offered a once-in-a-lifetime flavor – Millenios, with brown-sugar sweetened "2"s mixed in with the "O"s.



In December 1997, Grand Metropolitan, Pillsbury's parent company, merged with Guinness, a British spirits company, to form Diageo plc.

General Mills acquired the Chex franchise in 1997, adding both Chex cereal and Chex Mix snacks; then added Gardetto's snacks and Lloyd's Barbeque Company, both in 1999.

The 1999 launch of Go-Gurt, yogurt in a tube, offered consumers a nutritious

food to eat on the go. Initially, the production of this yogurt couldn't keep pace with the high consumer demand.

Already fortified with vitamins and minerals, many Big G cereals strengthened their health profile in the late 1990s. Cheerios has been clinically shown to lower cholesterol levels when eaten as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol. In 1997, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a health claim linking the soluble fiber from oats – like that found in Cheerios – to a reduced risk of coronary heart disease. In 1999, calcium was added to several cereal brands. Many Big G cereals, including Cheerios, Wheaties and Whole Grain Total, also qualified to carry the FDA-authorized claim that whole-grain foods play a role in the fight against heart disease and certain cancers.





## Together even better

**WITH ITS ACQUISITION OF PILLSBURY, GENERAL MILLS BECOMES ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST FOOD COMPANIES.**



In the spring of 2000, General Mills CEO Steve Sanger had dinner with Paul Walsh, head of Diageo. Walsh was interested in selling Diageo's food businesses. The late 1990s had been a frenzied period of consolidation within the food industry. Kraft and General Foods merged. PepsiCo bought Quaker. Kellogg's bought Keebler. Companies were looking for product variety and scale.

Sanger saw tremendous opportunity in the potential merger of Pillsbury and General Mills. Both companies had started as flour milling companies on the banks of the Mississippi River. From these milling roots, General Mills had leveraged its grain expertise into breakfast cereals, cake mixes and grain-based snacks, adding other food businesses along the way.

Pillsbury had evolved in a different direction, developing unmatched expertise in refrigerated dough products, a strong bakeries and foodservice business and a growing international portfolio.

Their individual strengths complemented each other. Each was among America's most respected food companies; together, they could become one of the largest, most respected food companies in the world. Even more importantly, Sanger believed the two companies could grow faster together than either could separately.

A deal was struck, and in July 2000, General Mills announced the most significant event since James Ford Bell made the effort to unite several regional millers to create General Mills.

The acquisition of Pillsbury would dramatically increase General Mills' international sales and quadruple its foodservice sales. General Mills would be required to divest Pillsbury desserts and several smaller flour brands, but would substantially increase its presence in a variety of new categories, from refrigerated dough to frozen foods to ready-to-serve soup.

After 16 months of regulatory review, Sanger rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange on November 1, 2001, to mark the first day of the new General Mills, trading as a new "blue chip" company. Specially created "blue chip" cookies were distributed to commemorate the event.

The acquisition was a huge undertaking with more than its share of challenges. But the combination of General Mills and Pillsbury proved prescient, crafting an even stronger company that has continued to deliver a solid record of growth and performance.

## 2000s: Expanding our horizons

**RAMPING UP OUR NATURAL AND ORGANIC BUSINESSES AS CONSUMER PREFERENCES CHANGE, GENERAL MILLS ALSO DRAMATICALLY INCREASES ITS INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE.**



The decade of the 2000s was one transformational change for our company. Overnight, General Mills basically doubled in size and dramatically increased its global footprint with the acquisition of rival Pillsbury.

Small Planet Foods, which began with a band of idealistic hippies in the state of Washington, joined the company in 2000, taking General Mills into the organic food business. And we redoubled our efforts to create healthier food options.

Initially announced in July 2000, General Mills finally closed on its acquisition of the Pillsbury Company after 16 months of regulatory review on October 31, 2001. In addition to quadrupling our foodservice business and adding such iconic brands as Totino's, Green Giant and Häagen-Dazs, the deal also significantly expanded the company's international business.

### INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

Prior to 2000, General Mills' international business was relatively small – less than 5 percent of sales.

But Pillsbury – with its Green Giant, Häagen-Dazs and Wanchai Ferry brands – had a much broader international presence. And General Mills continued

to build on those successes, posting double-digit sales increases many years since.

We also acquired – or assumed a controlling interest in – several companies. In 2011, we acquired a

controlling interest in Yoplait International, the second-leading yogurt in the world with sales in 70 countries. We also acquired Pasta Master, a maker of ready-to-cook Italian meals in Australia. We would bring Yoplait to China in 2015, and later that same year, would acquire Carolina, a Brazilian yogurt maker.

In 2012, we acquired Yoki Alimentos, S.A., which markets more than 600 items under nine brands in Brazil, including Yoki and Kitano branded flours and other basic foods, popcorn, convenient meals, soups, desserts and seasonings. That year, we also acquired Parampara's line of ready-to-cook spice and sauce mixes made in India and have since brought the mixes to Australia and Europe.

By 2016, including our joint ventures, international sales made up about a third of General Mills' sales. And we continue to see opportunities to continue growing globally – particularly in emerging markets.





**ORGANIC FOODS**

The year 2000 also marked our entry into the organic food business with our purchase of Small Planet Foods and its Cascadian Farm and Muir Glen brands. Organic food pioneer Gene Kahn, who was pursuing a master’s degree in English literature at the University of Washington, began the business with a single organic farm in 1972.

It took years and a lot of effort, but Kahn – with a few friends – carved out a successful farm on about 20 acres of land. He called it the “New Cascadian Survival and Reclamation Project.”

When General Mills acquired Small Planet Foods, Kahn joined the company, initially as president of Small Planet Foods and later as chief sustainability officer for General Mills, overseeing our corporate social responsibility programs. His efforts helped transform General Mills from the inside out.



General Mills created the Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition in 1998 and the Health and Wellness Center of Excellence in 2004. These initiatives led to extensive improvements in the health profile of many General Mills products.

For example, in 2005, we began reformulating all of our Big G cereals so they contained at least 8 grams of whole grain per serving – the most significant product improvement in our history. We also created a “Health Metric” that same year to gauge, quantify and encourage healthy improvements in our portfolio.

As a result, in a span of 10 years, General Mills improved the nutrition of more than 800 products in the U.S. by making changes such as adding whole grain, calcium or fiber; or removing calories, fat and sugar; and creating products that are gluten free.



In August 2008, we acquired Humm Foods, maker of Larabar, the simple, all-natural nutrition bar made of fruit and nuts.

Our natural and organic portfolio continued to grow with the acquisition of Mountain High yoghurt; Food Should Taste Good snack chips; Immaculate Baking cookie mixes; Annie’s food products; and EPIC Provisions, a premium meat and snacks company.

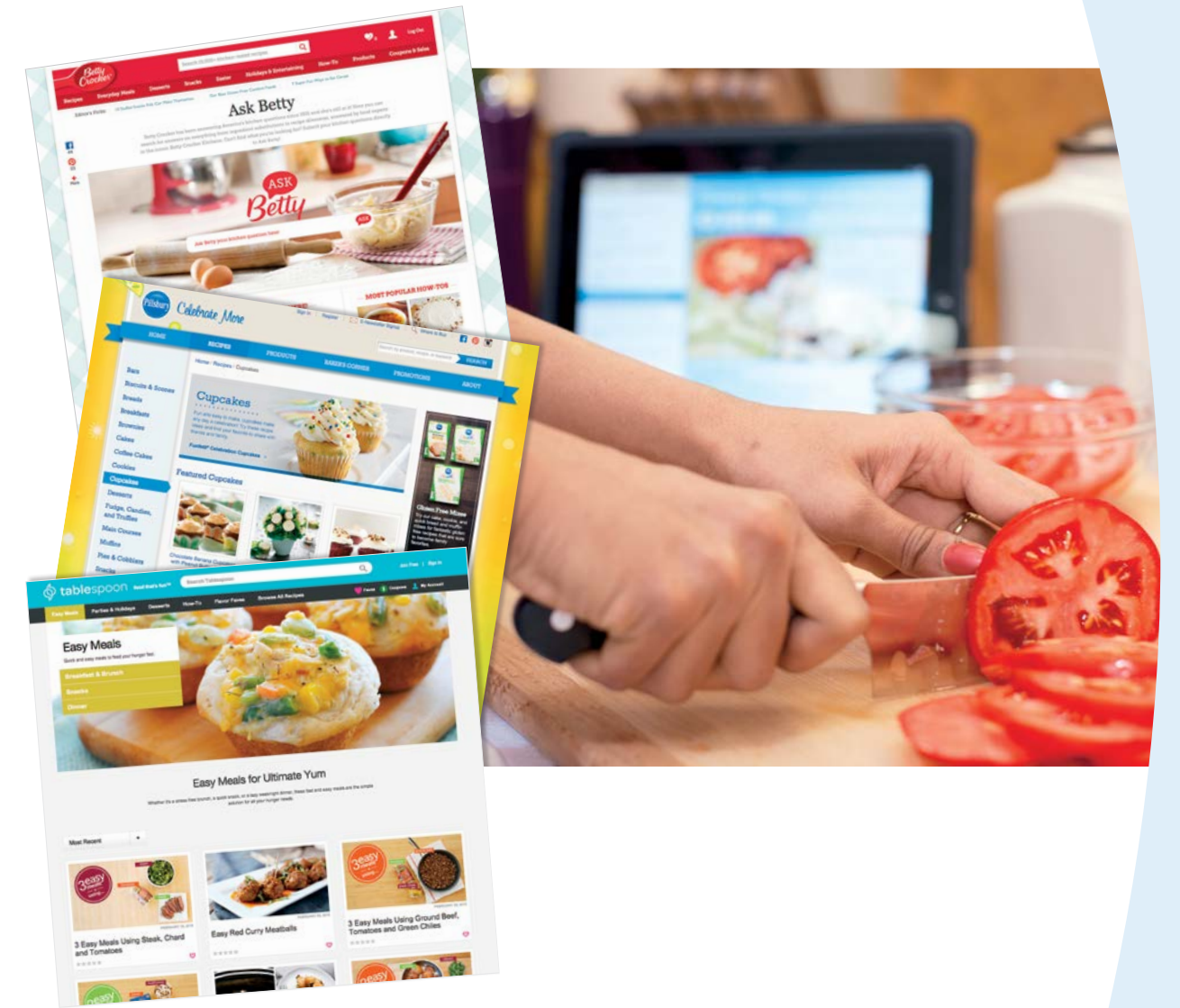
By 2016, General Mills was the fourth-largest maker of natural and organic food with annual U.S. sales of more than \$675 million.

**EMBRACING THE DIGITAL AGE**

The 2000s brought rapid technology advances, including the explosion of the Internet. General Mills kept pace by developing new methods of reaching consumers online.

The Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air dated to Betty Crocker’s first radio broadcast back in 1924. But Betty was very quick to adapt to digital. Betty Crocker recipes – as well as those from her trusty “Big Red” cookbook – were made available through an iPhone app in 2009 and on the iPad the following year. In the weeks following the iPad launch, the application was among Apple’s top 25 free downloads.

Today, our Betty Crocker, Pillsbury and Tablespoon websites remain among the most visited recipe sites on the Internet with millions of visits every month.





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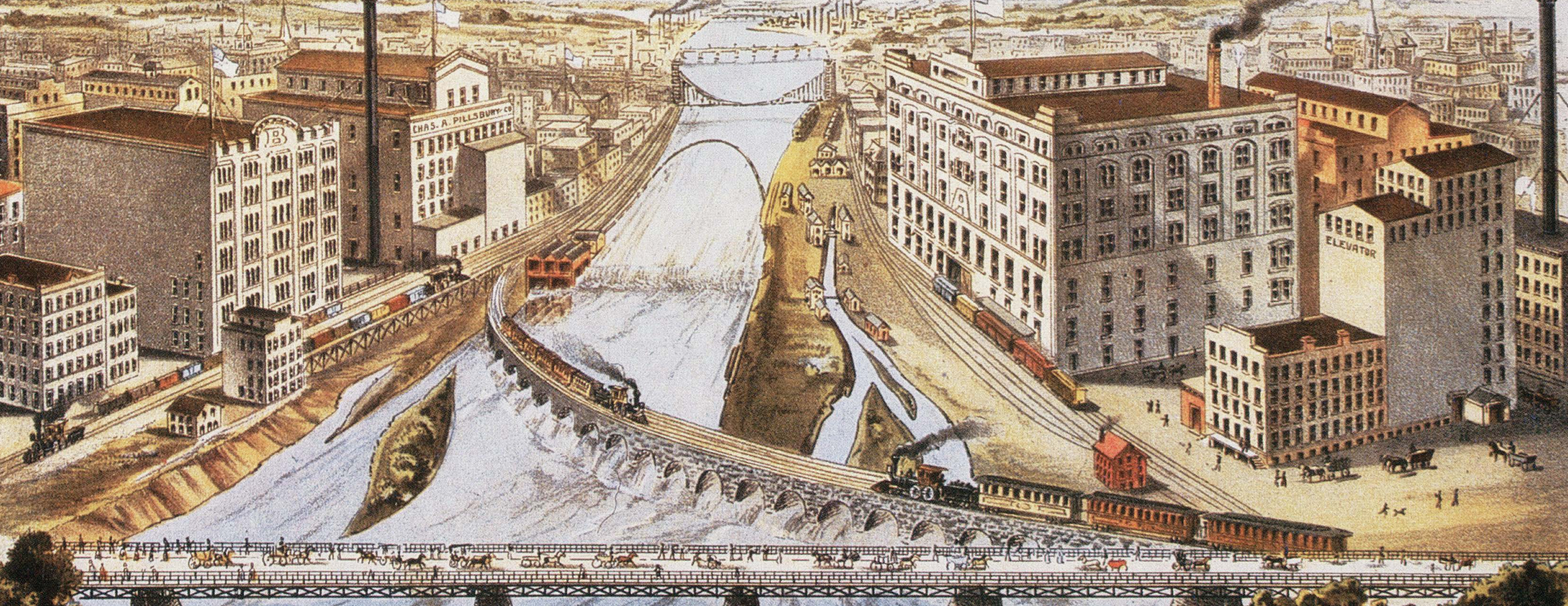


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Number One General Mills Boulevard  
Minneapolis, MN 55426  
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