

# The Exposition

---

Volume 6 | Issue 1

Article 7

---

January 2022

## How Cereal Helped Shape the American Diet in the 20th Century

Maxwell T. Shoemaker

Buffalo State, shoemamt01@mail.buffalostate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/exposition>



Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Public Health Commons](#), and the [Public History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Shoemaker, Maxwell T. (2022) "How Cereal Helped Shape the American Diet in the 20th Century," *The Exposition*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 1 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/exposition/vol6/iss1/7>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the History and Social Studies Education at Digital Commons at Buffalo State. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Exposition by an authorized editor of Digital Commons at Buffalo State. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu).

# How Cereal Helped Shape the American Diet in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

## Maxwell Shoemaker HIS 300 Dr. Chesterton



BUFFALO STATE  
The State University of New York

### The Farmer's Breakfast

(The Farmer's Breakfast is a traditional breakfast dish for American farmers (hence the name). It consist of a portion of eggs, a couple sausages or strips of bacon, and other such foods farmers have on their farms. This made breakfast economically viable for the farmers, as it cost little to make and eat, and gave them a large amount of calories for them to burn off during the work day.



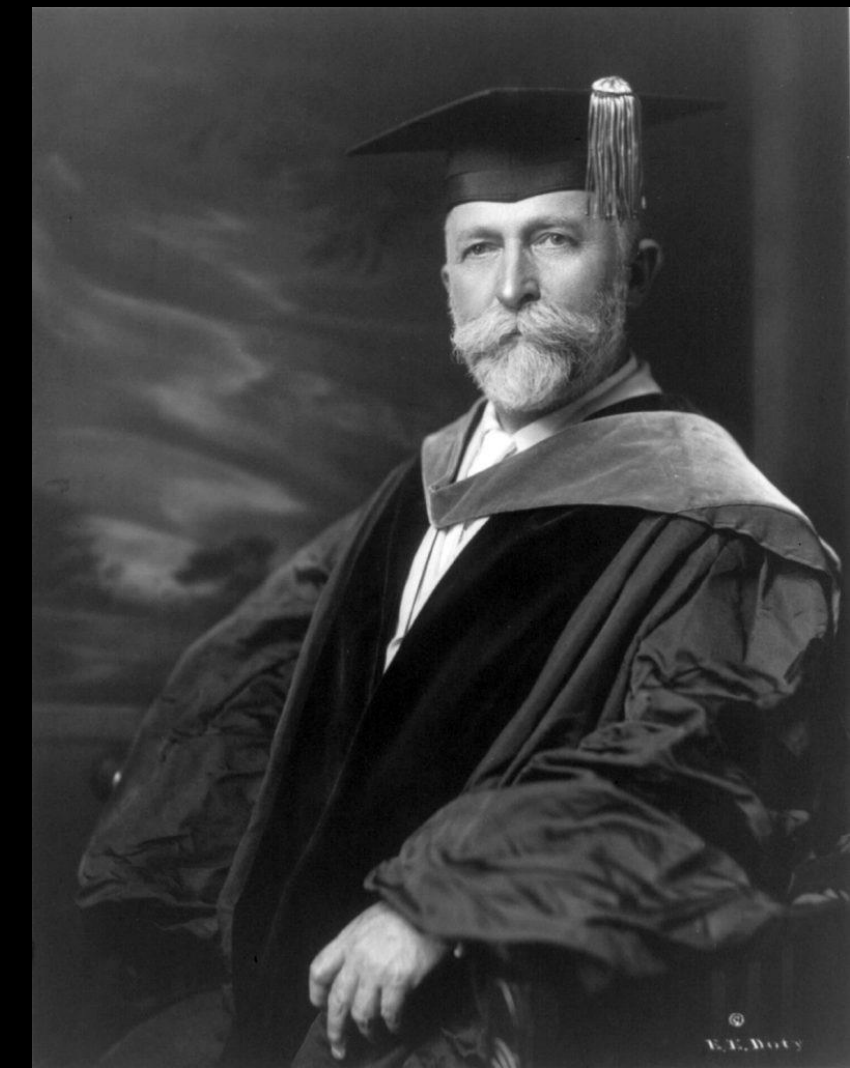
### Hash

Hash was a popular dish for urban residents as it was a mix of many foods which were easy and cheap to buy such as, potatoes, tomatoes, eggs, onions and meat, often beef or sausage. This dish was also high in calories as factory workers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century needed to go the entire day without break and needed the calories to sustain themselves.



### Changing times

With the industrial Revolution rapidly increasing technology, The need for high calorie breakfast foods were coming to an end. The calorie intake would exceed the numbers burned off during the day. This led to a build up of fat and a rise in obesity rates among Americans. Inventions like the tractor allowed farmers to work less as they no longer needed to walk the fields all day. Instead they could sit atop a tractor and relax. This would lead to a build up of fat and gave farmers their signature "pot bellies".



### The Kellogg Brothers

**W.K. Kellogg** was the owner of The Kellogg's company. He made the first Corn Flakes on accident by accidentally leaving out a wet sheet of a corn mixture meant to be processed to be made into wet cereal. The result was a toasted and dry cereal which was loved by residents of the Sanitarium. W.K, being a business man, took the new discovery into the world of business and founded one of the most successful cereal companies in the world

**Dr. John Harvey Kellogg** was a medical doctor who focused on food and their effects on health. He believed that the more people chewed their food, the better it was for them. This is why many of the foods given to his patents at the Battle Creek Sanitarium were high in fiber and very chewy. He also was one of the first doctors to believe in "Germ Theory" and mandated his workers to wash their hands and tools as this would stop the spread of "germs".

#### Sources:

- (1) Epstein, Rachel. W. K. Kellogg: Generous Genius. (Scholastic Publishing, 2000)
- (2) Markel, Howard. The Kelloggs: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek. (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2017)
- (3) (10)History. "John Froelich, inventor of the gas-powered tractor, is born". On This Day. last modified November 20, 2020. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/john-froelich-inventor-of-the-gas-powered-tractor-is-born>