



GENERAL MILLS

75 *years of*

innovation invention food & fun



ON NOVEMBER 30, 1928, a new company was listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Formed through the merger of several regional milling companies, General Mills would grow to become one of the largest food companies in the world.

To mark that 75th anniversary, this book celebrates 75 years of innovation, invention, food and fun – both inside and outside the kitchen – in America and around the world.

PROLOGUE

It would be difficult to capture our rich history in a thousand pages. There are simply too many stories to tell.

But this opportunity only comes once – and we couldn't let it pass.

On the 75th anniversary of the creation of General Mills – in our 137th year as a company – we wanted to pause to commemorate at least some of the historical highlights of a great American company.

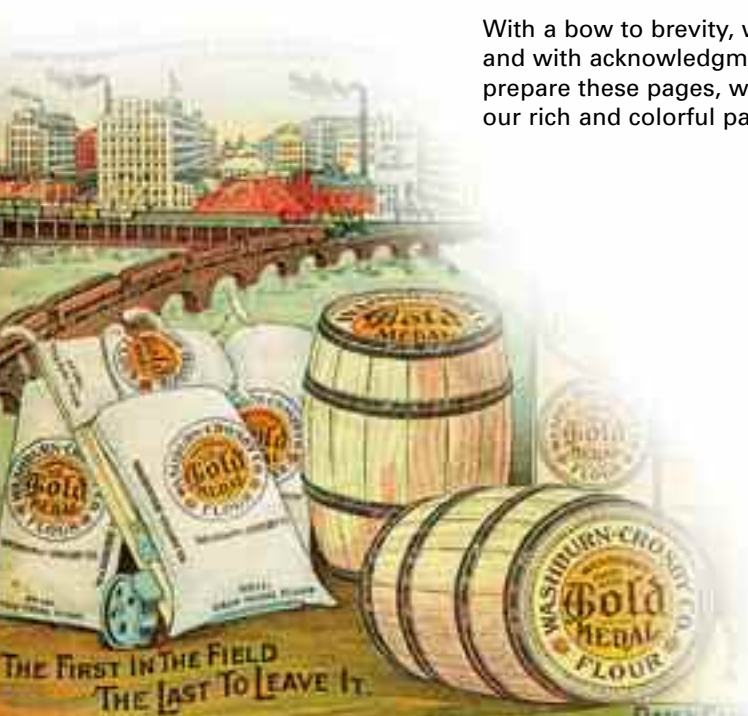
But where to start? With the creation of General Mills in 1928? Or at the beginning, on the banks of the Mississippi River in 1866? And what of the many companies with which General Mills has been intertwined? What of Pillsbury and Green Giant? What of Kenner and Parker Brothers, Red Lobster and Burger King? What of the products we invented together and the brands we built together?

It was simple really. Pillsbury's history is our history. Green Giant, Old El Paso, Colombo and Häagen-Dazs are here – alive within General Mills. Of the rest we chose to include a little of each, because they too are a part of us. And while we take no credit for the success they enjoy today, we are proud to have shared the same path for at least part of our shared history.

The theme for our celebration? That came easily – because it really has been 75 years of innovation, invention, food and fun.

With a bow to brevity, with apologies for excluding far too many items well-worthy of mention, and with acknowledgment and thanks to the many friends and sources who have helped us prepare these pages, we invite you to join us as we pause to celebrate some of the highlights of our rich and colorful past.

— Tom Forsythe



75 *years*

innovation invention food & fun

*f*rom flour to submarines, from toys to restaurants, General Mills has been making a difference in people's lives for 75 years.

We fully trace our roots to 1866, and to a pair of flour mills on opposite banks of the Mississippi River that would build a city, anchor a region and change the milling industry forever.

Ours is a rich history. Even before our incorporation as General Mills in 1928, our predecessor companies demonstrated a knack for understanding consumers and providing them with innovative and inventive new products.

Our story goes beyond the grocery aisles to the "preppy craze" of alligator shirts and the invention of the "black box." We created advertising icons and secret spy decoder rings. At one point, we were the largest toy maker in the world.

Today, with brands like Cheerios, Pillsbury, Yoplait, Green Giant, Betty Crocker, Old El Paso, Totino's and Progresso, General Mills is still making a difference in consumers' lives.

It's been 75 years of innovation, invention, food and fun – inside and outside the kitchen both in America and around the world.

As we celebrate, let's look at 75 highlights.

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A blast from the past



The puffing gun, developed in the late 1930s by General Mills engineer and chemist Thomas R. James, allowed the company to expand or “puff” pellets into different cereal shapes. It was the crucial technology component in the development of Kix cereal in 1937, and would be used to create 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 from 10 percent of production to less than 3 percent.



In 1956, the Strato-Lab balloon, developed by General Mills’ Aeronautical Research Labs, reached a record height of 76,000 feet. Two General Mills engineers still hold the record for vertical ascent in an unpressurized balloon gondola.



In 1957, General Mills began producing recipes on records for people who couldn't use a traditional cookbook. Made of light and unbreakable material, the records provided instructions relevant to a person without sight. Adelaide Hawley, who portrayed Betty Crocker on television, provided the voice.



Jack Armstrong, *The All-American Boy* aired for the first time in 1933. Sponsored by Wheaties, it was the first juvenile adventure radio serial. Highly popular, Jack Armstrong ran on radio until 1951.



In 1924, the *Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air* debuted. It was first broadcast on the Washburn Crosby Company's own radio station, WCCO.



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.

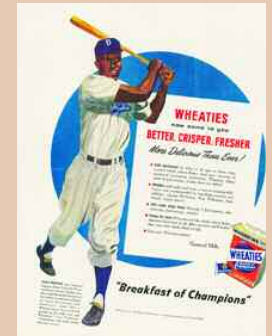


Green Giant created a new category of prepared meal dinner solutions when Create a Meal! was launched in 1993. With frozen vegetables and sauce in one bag, the meals brought a new level of convenience to busy kitchens everywhere.

Marketing innovations that sing and swing



For six years, the Wheaties Quartet harmonized about the benefits of Wheaties with its song "Have You Tried Wheaties?" Believed to be the first singing radio commercial, the song was first aired on Christmas Eve 1926. Local Wheaties sales improved dramatically, and the commercial was aired nationally in 1929.



Many athletes have endorsed Wheaties through the years, including Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, Jackie Robinson, Bob Feller, Hank Greenberg, Stan Musial, Ted Williams, Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle, Johnny Bench and Babe Ruth, the sultan of swat.



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.



The debut of Go-GURT in 1999 was revolutionary. The yogurt-in-a-tube packaging concept was an immediate hit with kids and parents across the United States.



Green Giant launched "boil-in-bag" vegetables in 1961. This innovation created a convenient new way to prepare vegetables.



General Mills developed the package tear strip in 1956, making it easier for consumers to open a variety of everyday food products.



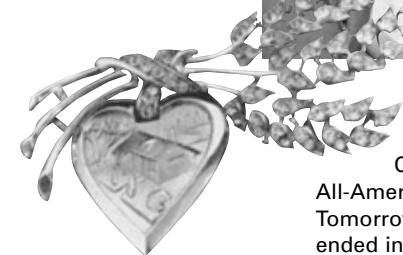
After years of holding regional shareholder meetings, General Mills decided to try something new. On October 29, 1959, the company connected stockholders across the country in one meeting via closed-circuit television. General Mills executives presided at each location, and two-way communication was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



The "Breakfast of Champions" slogan was first used in 1933 on a signboard on the left-field wall of old Nicollet Park in Minneapolis, the home of the minor-league Minneapolis Millers. It would become one of the most venerable slogans in advertising history.



In 1983, Eddie Bauer formed an innovative cross-branding partnership with Ford. The first "Eddie Bauer Bronco" appeared on America's roads in 1984 as a limited edition. General Mills owned Eddie Bauer from 1971 to 1988.



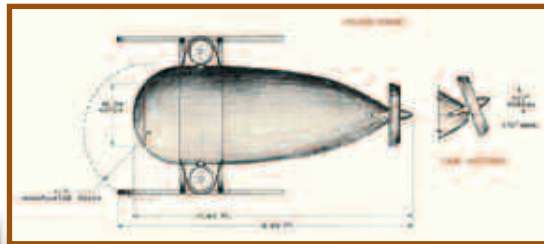
In 1955, General Mills began the Betty Crocker Search for the All-American Homemaker of Tomorrow. When the program ended in 1977, more than 9.5 million high school seniors had taken part, and General Mills had awarded more than \$2.1 million in student scholarships.

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.



Fish, fries and apple pies



Pillsbury began testing the Poppin Fresh Pie Shop restaurant concept in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1970. The idea was a success, and within years, all of America could enjoy all-American apple pie.



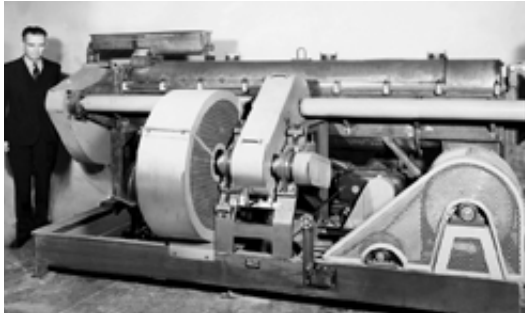
General Mills developed a new restaurant concept in 1982. One of the first national Italian chains, The Olive Garden opened 50 new restaurants each year at its peak, bringing a bit of Tuscany and “Hospitaliano” to family dining.



Red Lobster expanded quickly after being purchased by General Mills in 1970, bringing fresh seafood from the coasts to the heartland. From a three-restaurant chain, General Mills added 350 restaurants in under 10 years.

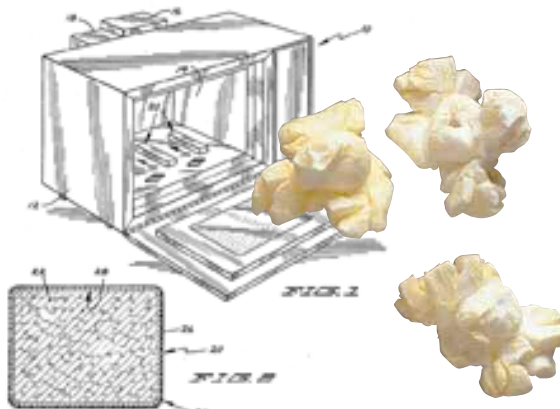


Burger King, acquired by Pillsbury in 1967, launched its “Have It Your Way” advertising campaign in 1974. For the first time, fast-food consumers could have burgers made to order, providing a major area of distinction for Burger King.



Thomas R. James, a chemist and engineer, designed the first version of 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.

U.S. Patent Oct. 26, 1960 Sheet 1 of 2 4,230,924



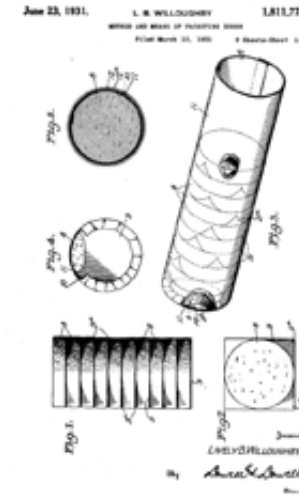
General Mills scientist William Brastad helped discover a new application for metallized polyester in the late 1970s. The technology was later used to develop the packaging for microwave popcorn.



Howard Bauman, a Pillsbury food safety expert, developed the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) process in 1971 to ensure food safety. HACCP is now a food industry standard and is used by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.



The Bellera "Air Spun" process for milling flour was developed by General Mills in 1960. The new process was less costly and faster than older methods because it drastically reduced the amount of handling and the number of steps necessary to turn wheat into flour.



The patent of the Willoughby can in 1931 gave the Ballard & Ballard Company sole rights to a unique new method of packaging unbaked dough. Named after its inventor, Lively B. Willoughby, the important technology was acquired by Pillsbury as part of its acquisition of Ballard & Ballard in 1951.



In 1925, the Minnesota Valley Canning Company developed the seeds for a larger, more tender pea. The new larger size peas were dubbed "Green Giant" – a name that would eventually become known around the world.



In 1934, the Minnesota Valley Canning Company (later renamed the Green Giant Company) developed the "heat unit theory" to determine crop maturity and ensure that vegetables are delivered to canneries at the peak of flavor.

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.

Usually located in the tail of the airplane, the “black box” captures an exact record of the airplane’s air speed, altitude, vertical acceleration, elapsed time, flight duration and weather effects. James Ryan, the University of Minnesota professor for whom it is named, designed the box to continue functioning for at least five minutes after the

plane’s loss of power and to protect the stored information for more than 30 minutes after being exposed to flames of 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

“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.”

Milling milestones



To make grayish spring wheat flour more appealingly white, Cadwallader Washburn installed the revolutionary middlings purifier in his mill in the 1870s.



In 1879, Cadwallader Washburn installed a new steel roller milling system in his C mill on an experimental basis to demonstrate the value of rollers compared to millstones. It was the first complete automatic roller mill in the world.



In 1939, General Mills engineer Helmer Anderson created the Anderson sealer. By allowing flour packages to be closed with glue instead of tied with a string, the machine revolutionized packaging and sealing.

Ho ho ho!

Originally created to describe a new, larger pea developed by the Minnesota Valley Canning Company in 1925, Green Giant would come to define the company. The Green Giant character first appeared in advertising in 1928, and through the years the Giant became so popular that the company formally changed its name to the Green Giant Company in 1950.



Cheerioats debuted as the company's third cereal in 1941. It was the country's first ready-to-eat oat cereal. Four years later, to settle a trademark dispute with a competitor, Cheerioats changed its name to Cheerios, proving quite fortuitous. Today, Cheerios is the No. 1 selling cereal brand in America.



General Mills created Total cereal in 1961. Total was the first cereal to contain 100 percent of the minimum daily adult requirement for eight vitamins, as recommended by the U.S. government, representing a major advance in cereal vitamin fortification.



Hamburger Helper dinner mix launched nationally in 1971 in an era of rising meat prices. The five varieties were marketed as convenient and economical meal "helpers" for the cook of the family, creating an entirely new grocery category. The Helper line grew quickly and, in 1972, Tuna Helper was introduced.



Kix cereal was introduced in 1937. It was General Mills' second breakfast cereal and the first ready-to-eat puffed corn cereal.



In 1966, Ella Rita Hefrich was named a winner at the Pillsbury Bake-Off Contest for her Tunnel of Fudge cake recipe. The cake was prepared in a special bundt pan, and the recipe became so popular that Pillsbury introduced Bundt cake mix in 1972.



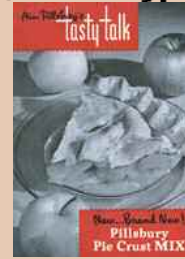
Old El Paso introduced Mexican food to consumers from Scandinavia to Australia. Pillsbury acquired the Old El Paso brand in 1995 with the acquisition of Pet, Inc.



Bugles, the first cone-shaped corn snack, was launched nationally in 1966, and every Bugle-eating kid since has done this at least once. Daisy*s, Buttons, Bows and Whistles would follow, not to toot any horns.

First ladies of flour

Ann Pillsbury



Ann Pillsbury's signature was a sign of quality for Pillsbury baking products. She had her own test kitchen and recipes. Created in 1944, Ann Pillsbury's signature is all we have of her today – there was never a portrait of her that we know of.



Martha Meade

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



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., founder of the Royal Flour Mill in Nashville, Tennessee. The name of the company changed to Martha White, the mill's most popular brand, in 1941. General Mills divested the Martha White brand in 2001.

Betty Crocker

Betty Crocker was created in 1921 as a pen name to personalize responses to the company's consumer inquiries about Gold Medal flour. She was so popular that in 1945 Betty Crocker was the second most recognizable female in the country after Eleanor Roosevelt.



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Fruit you can roll up and put in your pocket was popular from the start. Four Fruit Roll-Ups fruit snack flavors were introduced in 1979, combining consumers' desire to snack with the nutritious value of fruit. They were rolled out nationally in 1983. New Fruit Roll-Ups flavors and varieties were added soon after.



The first Betty Crocker packaged cake mix came in 1947. Ginger Cake, the first flavor, was followed by Party Cake and Devil's Food Cake mixes two years later.



Out of this world

When NASA astronaut Scott Carpenter launched into space on Aurora 7 in 1962, he was carrying with him the first solid space food – small food cubes developed by Pillsbury's research and development department.

Taking Pillsbury scientists more than a year to develop, space food cubes were followed by other space-friendly foods, such as non-crumbly cake, relish that could be served in slices and meat that needed no refrigeration. From the efforts to feed our astronauts came the popular land-based Space Food Sticks.

Space Food Sticks were an instant hit when they landed in the grocery aisle in 1969. They had the same nutritional value as the food developed for NASA, but for the astronauts of the future they came in appealing flavors: chocolate, caramel and peanut butter.





Colombo was America's first yogurt company, introducing yogurt to the United States. In 1929, Rose Colombosian began making yogurt in her kitchen based on a family recipe brought from Armenia. At that time, most consumers in the United States were unfamiliar with yogurt. General Mills bought Colombo in 1993.



OvenReady biscuits were only a regional product when Pillsbury acquired Ballard & Ballard in 1951. But the patented process held great promise. Today, over two billion refrigerated biscuits, rolls and breads are sold each year – now that's a lot of lovin' from the oven!



World War II was the impetus for flour enrichment. When the government mandated flour enrichment to improve the health of Americans, General Mills was already on the forefront of research and began adding vitamins and iron to Gold Medal and its other flours.



General Mills used fluorescent lighting technology to quickly grow Bibb lettuce and other salad greens indoors after buying the Phytofarm patent and hiring its inventor Noel Davis in 1974. The greens were sold commercially, but discontinued in 1982 because of high production costs.



Pillsbury launched Toaster Strudel in 1985. Although it took six years of development and testing, the new frozen breakfast pastry was a big success.

Rolling along



After nearly a decade of development incorporating specialized dough formulation and innovative technology, Pillsbury refrigerated pie crusts were released nationally in 1983.



Pillsbury introduced its Shape cookies in 1992. The first cookies featured teddy bears and dinosaurs, although their popularity quickly led to holiday-themed cookies.



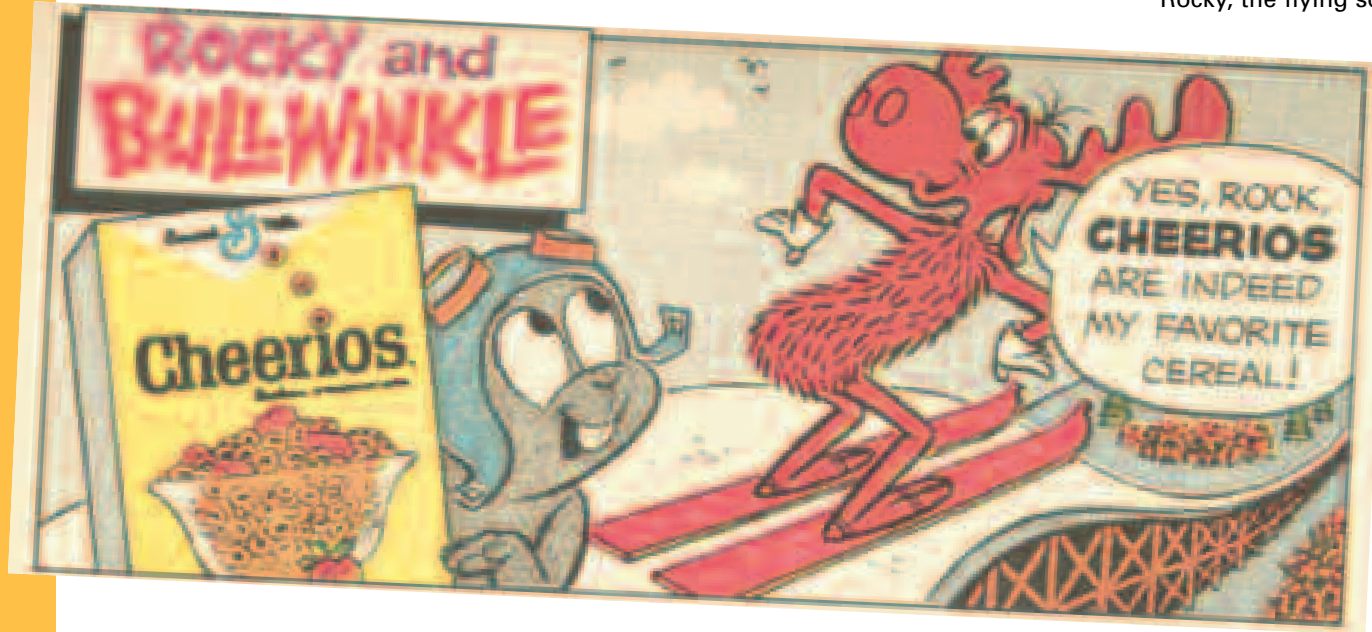
Slice 'n Bake cookie dough was introduced by Pillsbury in 1957. It was a convenient new way to bake fresh hot cookies.

Of moose and men

Bullwinkle, the lovable cartoon moose, and his loyal sidekick Rocky, the flying squirrel, are just two of the famous cartoon characters associated with General Mills and its products. The company sponsored the television show *Rocky and His Friends* beginning in 1959. *The Bullwinkle Show* began in 1961.

Produced by Jay Ward, the creator of Rocky and Bullwinkle, the shows also gave rise to a daily comic strip featuring the moose and squirrel and their cohorts in 1962.

The famous pair were featured in numerous television and print advertisements and on cereal packages for General Mills until 1968.



In 1977, Kenner Products, a General Mills subsidiary, purchased the “galaxy-wide” toy rights to the name and images for the *Star Wars* movies. Demand for *Star Wars* toys quickly outstripped supply, and Kenner actually sold certificates of ownership until more toys could be produced. In their first year, the *Star Wars* toys generated approximately \$100 million in revenue.



“Baby Alive” – the doll from Kenner that “eats and drinks and feels soft like a real baby” – was launched for the 1973 holiday season.

"Monster Cereals" were introduced by General Mills in the 1970s, including Count Chocula, Franken Berry and Boo Berry. Two other Monster Cereals, Fruit Brute and Yummy Mummy, were discontinued in the late 1980s.



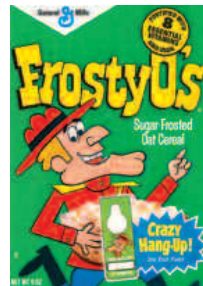
Foot-Joy, then part of General Mills' Fashion division, introduced the Sta-Sof cabretta leather golf glove in 1980. It quickly became the No. 1 selling golf glove, one almost every golfer has owned at one time.



A new "super hero," Stretch Armstrong was introduced to the world by Kenner in 1976. Stretch's amazing ability to "stretch and stretch" then snap back to his original shape made him a phenomenon. Finding exactly how Stretch was able to stretch and snap back was irresistible to many – often leading to Stretch's demise.



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 four million Nerf balls sold the first year.



Dudley Do-Right, the Canadian Mountie, always got his man. Persistently pursuing Snidely Whiplash and regularly rescuing his girlfriend Nell, Dudley appeared on *The Bullwinkle Show*, and on General Mills' Frosty O's cereal.



The giggle that launched a thousand chips

One of the world's best-loved advertising icons, Poppin' Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy, made his first television appearance in 1965. The venerable Doughboy was created with the help of the Leo Burnett advertising agency, and within three years was recognized by 87 percent of American consumers.

The Doughboy remains fresh and wholesome, speaking nearly a dozen languages and still blushing easily.

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*Best Wishes
The Lone Ranger
& Tonto*



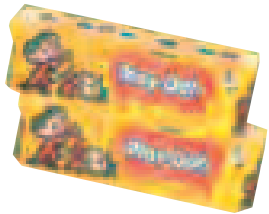
Who was that masked man?

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, his horse Silver, and his faithful companion Tonto appeared on scores of cereal packages.

General Mills created countless Lone Ranger-related premiums that appeared on Wheaties, Kix and Cheerios boxes, some of which were announced only during the radio show. The largest and most popular may have been the Lone Ranger frontier town.

The frontier town premium came in four sections and, when assembled, depicted an entire western town on a 4.5-square-foot sheet. Each section cost 10 cents and one Cheerios box top. Once together, children could add extra buildings found on the back of Cheerios boxes. For an entire year, radio listeners could follow the adventures of the Lone Ranger and his horse 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.



General Mills' first toy company acquisition was the 1965 purchase of Cincinnati-based Rainbow Crafts, maker of Play-Doh modeling compound. General Mills tinkered with the product's formula, reduced production costs and tripled the subsidiary's revenue in about three years.



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.



Totino's founders, Rose Totino and her husband Jim, began their business with a \$50,000 loan and the family pizza recipe. Pillsbury purchased Totino's in 1975. Totino's reached a milestone in 1994, producing one million pizzas a day on average.



The Betty Crocker Kitchens have their roots in the test kitchens of the Washburn Crosby Company. The kitchens were formally named the Betty Crocker Kitchens in 1946, and they moved to their current location at the General Mills headquarters in Golden Valley, Minnesota, in 1958. Nearly two million people visited the Betty Crocker Kitchens on tours offered from 1958 to 1985, making them one of the state's top tourist attractions.

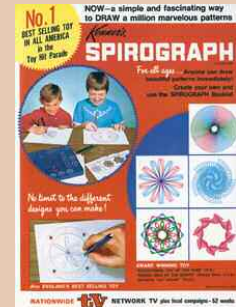
Toying around



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 acquired the rights to what is perhaps America's greatest board game – Monopoly – when it purchased Parker Brothers in 1968. Created by Charles Darrow (above), the game was introduced during the Great Depression. Monopoly is still one of America's top-selling games.



The Spirograph toy, introduced by Kenner in 1966, was an immediate success and spawned spinoffs such as Spirotot, Cyclograph and Spiroman.



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.



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.