

The Beginning and Growth of Kraft Foods

THE SOUND of Paddy's hoofbeats along old South Water Street in Chicago marked the beginning of one of the greatest and most successful sales teams in the nation. The year was 1903, the horse and wagon were hired, the load of cheese had been purchased—and the entire enterprise was started on \$65 capital!

The driver was James L. Kraft, and J.L. and his horse Paddy are the historic "co-founders" of Kraft Foods, now a division of National Dairy Products Corporation. In the beginning, J.L. drove to the market early each morning and selected the best cheeses available, which he then peddled to the grocers of Chicago. At first they were somewhat suspicious and sales were few, but by August of 1904, J.L. was able to write to a friend, offering him a job:

"If you want to get into something that you can grow up with, I have that something right here. . . To give you an idea of what you would have to do should things work out all right: It is simply a grocery route on a large scale. You take a horse and wagon (and my wagons are fancy ones), and get customers you can call on once or twice a week and supply them regularly. I am driving one wagon myself, and I am taking care of the horses myself, but if all goes well, I think I will have four horses by Christmas. . . ."

Sales prospered, four of his brothers joined him in the business, and through the years Kraft has introduced a series of cheese products that virtually pioneered the eye-catching variety which appears in our modern dairy cases. Cheese in tins was developed in vast quantities for America's armed forces in World War I; Kraft's Five Pound Loaf, the world's first successful packaged blended cheese appeared in 1921; Velveeta, a processed cheese food with added mild

nutrients made its debut in 1928; the first reusable, decorated glasses packaged Kraft cheese spreads in the early thirties; and in 1950 the company came into the market with Kraft Deluxe slices of pasteurized process cheese—the first pre-packaged sliced process cheese to be seen in a dairy case.

From 1928 on, Kraft made news in other and diversified fields such as salad dressings and margarines. With its distribution system specially designed to service perishable cheese products, it was a logical step to utilize the trucks and service for the then equally perishable salad products and margarines. First came Kraft mayonnaise and Kraft french dressing. Then in 1933, Miracle Whip salad dressing was introduced and promoted through the debut of the Kraft Music Hall on radio. It was successful and quickly climbed to a leading position among salad dressings where it has remained.

Salad dressings manufactured by Kraft now number eleven liquid, plus Miracle Whip, mayonnaise, and blue cheese dressing. In the margarine field Kraft has three brand name products: Parkay margarine, Kraft DeLuxe margarine, and the new Miracle margarine, a whipped margarine in stick form. These, with the company's line of

mustards, Kraft all-purpose oil and Miracle sandwich spread, make Kraft Foods one of the largest users of vegetable oils in the country.

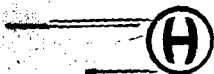
Product diversification continued and today Kraft manufactures a full line of jellies and preserves, confections, dessert toppings, and packaged dinners. In the institution field, the company currently manufactures and sells nearly seven hundred items.

Kraft has become a household word in the United States and Canada and has spread to the four corners of the earth. The company's overseas division manufactures and sells a full line of products in England, Denmark, Germany, Mexico, Venezuela, and Australia, and operates sales offices in Switzerland and Sweden. Many of the products bearing the Kraft label are identical to their American counterparts; others, such as tinned meats and chutney, are unfamiliar to us in the United States.

Thus have fifty-eight years proved the value of the idea held by the man who drove along old South Water Street in the early dawn of a day in 1903. James Lewis Kraft died in 1953, but he lived to see his company celebrate its fiftieth anniversary.

PHYLLIS DOANE, Kraft Foods, Chicago, Ill.





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