

## **Michigan Every Day** **By Patrick Sullivan and Carole Eberly**

*Oct. 26, 1854*  
*Birth of Charles W. Post*

Charles W. Post was born in Illinois on Oct. 26, 1854. Although he would go on to become a wealthy man, it took Post a while to find his way in life. At the age of 38, Post sought treatment for poor health at the Seventh Day Adventists' Battle Creek Sanitarium, a place that promoted good diet, rest and exercise as a cure. It also scared people of stimulating beverages such as coffee. Post was almost penniless and his wife sold suspenders door-to-door to pay for his treatment. At the sanitarium, he took a liking to the cereal and cereal beverages that had been developed by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg. After his treatment, Post spent \$69 to start a company that produced a cereal drink, Postum, a beverage similar to one developed by Kellogg called Caramel-Cereal. An early advertisement for Postum featured a face that somewhat resembled Santa Claus and read, "No! I don't drink coffee. I does not agree with my health. The crank is the man who persists in drink that slowly ruins his stomach and nerves. I drink Postum Food Coffee."

Post is believed to be the first to offer coupons for products in print advertizing. He went on to produce another product, Grape-Nuts, a cereal also similar to food Kellogg served at his sanitarium. Post mimicked several other Kellogg products and eventually amassed a vast fortune. Post's health remained a problem and he moved to California seeking a better climate. He died in California in 1914. His company went on to become General Foods Corporation.

Forty-two companies sprang up in Battle Creek in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to cash in on the cereal frenzy. John Kellogg's brother, W. K. Kellogg, hoping to get on the success in 1906, formed Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flakes Company, which went on to become Kellogg Company.