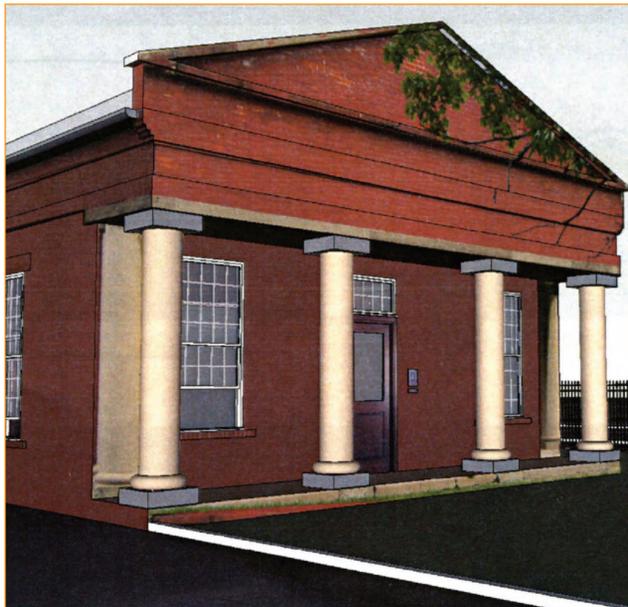


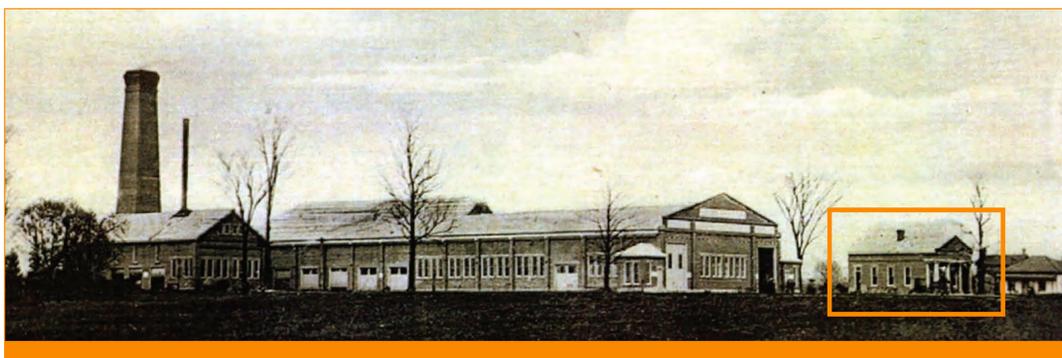
FROM CERTO TO KRAFT

ALMOST A CENTURY OF FOOD MANUFACTURING IN COBOURG

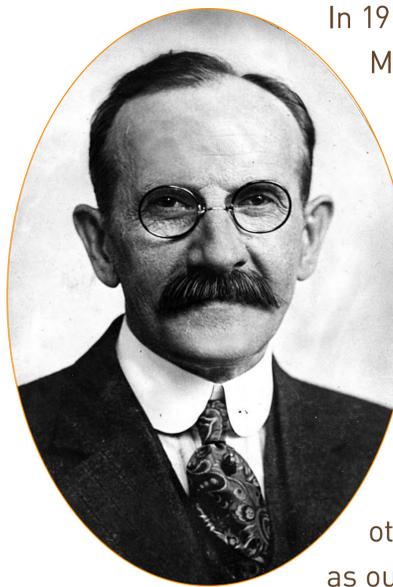


Scattered throughout the Town of Cobourg there remain today a number of sites that hide the stories of major industries no longer with us. Among these are the now vacant site of the Crossen Car Works (later a tannery) and the abandoned remains of the woolen mills on Tremaine Street. **The large food facility still known as Kraft looms between William and Ontario Streets.**

Provincial Steel was the first industry to occupy the site on William St., just north of the railroad tracks, known in modern times as General Foods then Kraft. In 1909 the steel company erected the small red brick Classical Revival building and a large plant. But their tenure was short-lived - in 1914 the plant was acquired by the Imperial Munitions Board and became a warehouse for the storage of nitrate of soda, used in ammunition shells for the First World War.



THE FIRST FOOD ARRIVAL

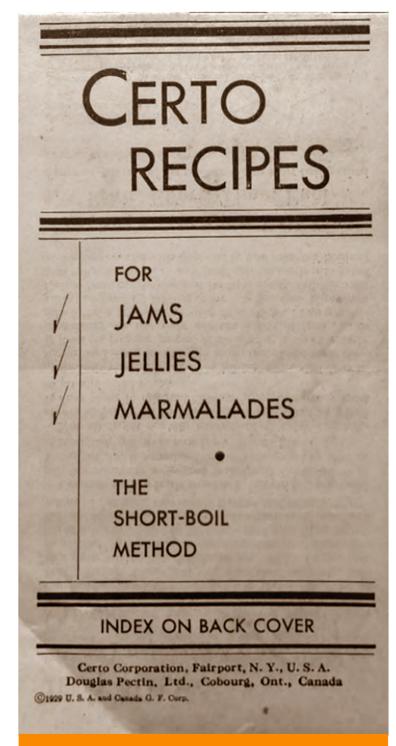


In 1919, with the war over and the building empty, the Munitions Board sold the property to Robert Douglas of Rochester, New York, who owned the York State Fruit Company. This area was the heart of apple-growing country, with orchards stretching from Bowmanville to Trenton. **The bounty of apples and preferential business rates attracted Douglas to Cobourg.** From here he had more favourable access to Canadian and British markets.

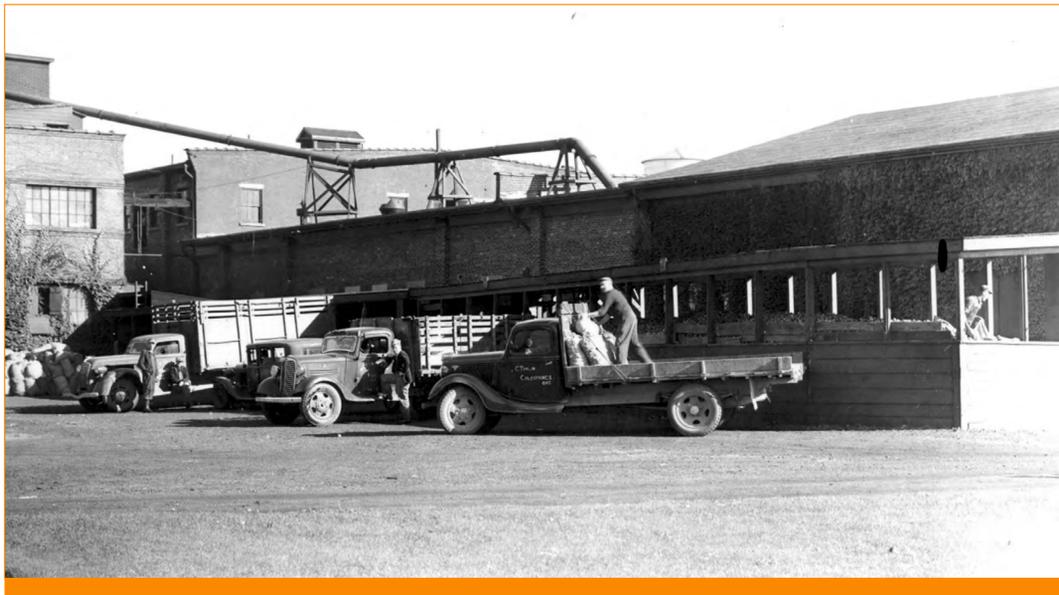
His Cobourg Company, Douglas Packing, began as a manufacturer of vinegar, but Douglas looked ahead to other products he could manufacture here. His theory, as outlined in a patent application filed in 1913, was that

commercial jams could be made to gel both more reliably and more quickly with the addition of a single, somewhat elusive ingredient called pectin. He knew that apples were high in pectin and he developed a means of extracting it.

Soon **Cobourg had the first pectin plant in the British Empire.** At first pectin was only marketed to the canning trade, but by 1923 Douglas was bottling pectin for the retail market - the home canners. He called it "Certo". Douglas Packing became Douglas Pectin. There were 40 employees at the time.



Since Certo was a revolutionary product, it had to be promoted. To assist the homemakers who might be having trouble with their jams and jellies, the company invented **Jane Taylor Allen. Think of her as the Dear Abby of jam-making.** Although the target market was undoubtedly “the little housewife”, Jane was really a man, one of the staff chemists. His job was to convince the women to buy Certo, then to follow the exact directions on the bottle for best results.



THE PROCESS

Early on, local farmers lined up along Ontario St. to deliver their wagon loads and truckloads of apples to the plant. The apples were shovelled into vats to be washed, passed along conveyors to grinders, then dropped into a press where the juice was extracted to be converted to apple cider vinegar. The remaining apple pulp went to cookers, and after a second pressing the pectin was extracted.



DOUGLAS PECTIN → POSTUM → GENERAL FOODS

After Robert Douglas died in 1929 the thriving Douglas Pectin Co. was sold to the Postum Cereal Company. Over the years Postum had acquired many other companies and their products, including Jell-O, Swans Down Flour, Minute Tapioca, Baker’s Chocolate, Sanka, Maxwell House, LaFrance Bluing and Birdseye. Pectin was just one more addition to the Postum line of products.

That same year the Postum Company’s growth led to the **formation of a new company, General Foods.** So Douglas Pectin became General Foods. As the corporation continued to expand in the U.S., additional products besides pectin were manufactured at the Cobourg plant: Kool-Aid, Sun Up, Tang, Post cereals, Minute Rice, Cool Whip, Shake & Bake and Gaines dog food. Tang was created here in Cobourg in the General Foods laboratories.

Products came and went. Some, like LaFrance Bluing, Sun Up Instant Breakfast Drink, Tuffy, Quench, Awake, and D-Zerta, that were not successful, have disappeared from grocery shelves



For weight watchers... low-calorie
D-ZERTA PUDDING



Every time new products were added for manufacture, there was another expansion to the Cobourg plant. General Foods grew bigger and bigger. From the original red brick buildings on Ontario St., the company eventually spanned many acres, from Ontario to William St. By the late 60s, the 600 employees of General Foods manufactured a greater variety of packaged products than any other General Foods plant in North America.

GENERAL FOODS → PHILIP MORRIS → KRAFT

General Foods was a significant presence in Cobourg for nearly 70 years. One in ten Cobourg residents worked at General Foods, making them the town's largest employer. In its heyday in the 70s, General Foods employed 1,000 – 1,200 people. The town of Cobourg thrived as General Foods grew.

In the 80s the huge Philip Morris Company bought both General Foods (1985) and Kraft Inc. (1988), merging the two to form Kraft General Foods Inc, the largest U.S. food company. Some former General Foods employees wonder, when the dangers of cigarette smoking became very public, did Philip Morris decide that it was time to diversify to improve its public image, and so bought a food corporation? In any case, Philip Morris wisely retained the popular Kraft brand name on the many products it now owned.

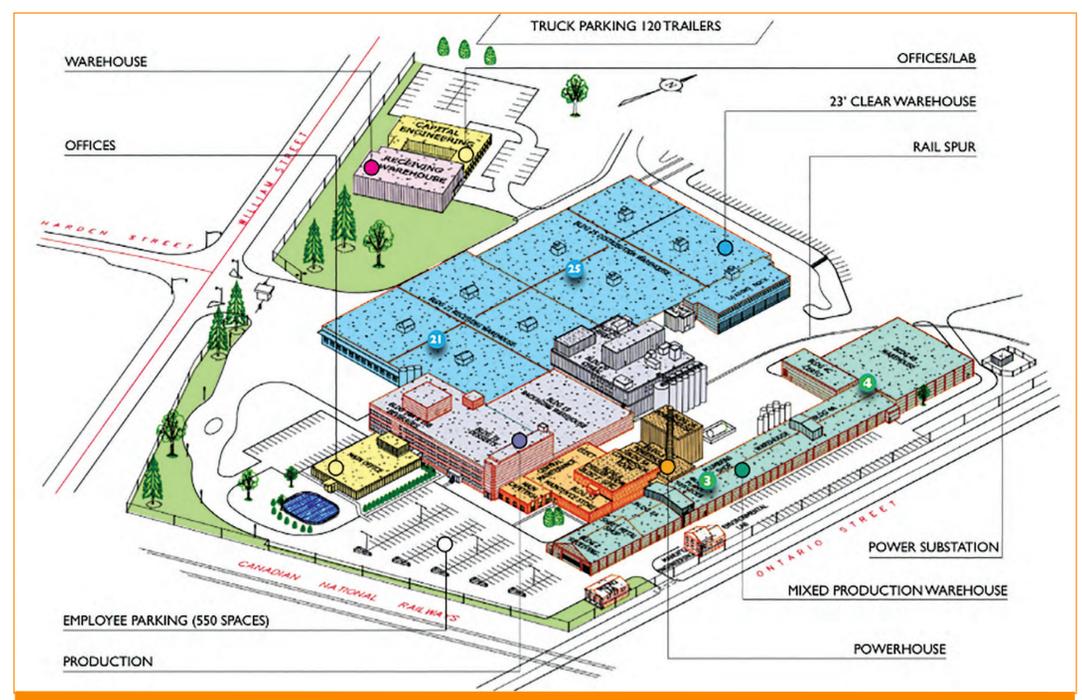


SIGNIFICANCE OF KRAFT CLOSURE TO COBOURG

Beginning with the departure of the plant's research facilities for points south in 1992, the company gradually shrank in Cobourg. In 2008, the Kraft plant here closed and a food industry that had lasted close to a century is no more.

When Kraft ceased operations in Cobourg, 380 people lost their jobs. A huge manufacturing facility was empty. The entire 69 acre facility was sold to private enterprise for \$2.6 million. Some of the buildings are rented out. Northumberland United Way, Food 4 All Warehouse and Emergency Medical Services are there, but the facility is by no means fully rented. Reduced employment and reduced taxes continue to put a drain on the local economy.

After close to a century of food production in Cobourg, Certo, General Foods and Kraft that were so much a part of Cobourg's heritage are gone, but the story continues. Will a medical marijuana factory be a part of it?



FROM CERTO TO KRAFT ~ SOME ANECDOTES

THE GENERAL FOODS "FAMILY CULTURE"

Many former employees of General Foods continue to speak of "The Foods family". This family culture was prevalent not only in Cobourg but was pervasive throughout the company's plants. Management treated employees well, **so it was a good, happy place to work.** This family atmosphere resulted in contented employees who took pride in their work.

The General Foods Personnel Booklet of 1937 states:

We want this business to be conducted in an efficient manner and in a spirit of friendliness, to the mutual advantage of employees, management, stockholders and consumers.

Plant managers at The Foods played an exemplary role in community service in Cobourg, as church leaders, school and hospital board members, in Scouting, United Way, Rotary and Chamber of Commerce.

While the "family spirit" which had been so much a part of the General Foods ethos gradually disappeared, Kraft was still regarded as a good corporate citizen of Cobourg. Around 2006, Kraft approached United Way of Northumberland County and **together they established the Food 4 All Warehouse** that provides food for people in need. Kraft donated huge quantities of food to this food bank as well as to 45 school breakfast programs around Northumberland County.



50TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1969 General Foods celebrated its 50th anniversary in Cobourg. They counted the history of the Cobourg plant from 1919 when Robert Douglas began manufacturing here. The huge community celebration featured a Birthday in the Park event in Victoria Park with singing and dancing, a parade along King St. led by **singer Bobby Gimby (A Place to Stand)** and plant tours.

The Company also sponsored a jam-making contest using Certo. Management may have expected some little old lady with a family recipe handed down for generations to be the winner. They should have remembered that in the 1920s, the little women jam makers took advice from a man posing as a woman. Then they would not have been surprised some 40 years later when Beverley Archer, **the first place prize winner, turned out to be a young male university student who made really good jam!**



Beverly Archer, top prize winner in the strawberry jam making contest shakes hand with H.C. Gibson, GF Plant Manager.

BIG SURPRISE AS MAN WINS OUT IN STRAWBERRY JAM CONTEST

Judging of the Strawberry Jam-Making Contest, sponsored by General Foods, Limited, has now been completed. The judges were Miss Elaine Collett - Food Editor of Chatelaine Magazine and Director of Chatelaine Institute, Mrs. Dorothy Turpin - a Cobourg dietitian and home economics graduate, and General Foods' own jam expert, Mr. Ross Henry.

The Grand Prize Winner who received an automatic dishwasher was Mr. Beverly Archer, a third year University student, who lives at Ontario Street, Cobourg.

The Consolation Prize Winners

who received a Hamper of General Foods products and a set of Corning Cookware, were: Mary A. Beyette, 493 Harden St., Cobourg; Mrs. Wm.J.Blezard, RR1, Gores Landing; Mrs. Gladys Brown, RR1, Port Hope; Mrs.J.Cunningham, RR6, Cobourg; Miss M.F. Halle, RR6, Cobourg; Mrs. Laverne Meadows, 26 Ellen St., Port Hope; Mrs. Ken Munroe, Harwood; Mrs. Julia M. Parker, RR1, Cobourg; Mrs. Helen Patch, Harwood; and Marie Symonds, RR5, Cobourg.

PHEASANTS

One time Douglas Pectin Company decided to give away excess cider from the pulp extraction process. This was so popular with the locals that the plant was overrun with cars and carriages and people on foot carrying containers. Good intentions --- but too popular and too unwieldy. So this practice was stopped. After that, excess cider was poured down the drain and apple residue was spread in the company's woods behind the red brick buildings on Ontario St. However, this new food source attracted pheasants that became very tame. Poachers arrived after dark because the pheasants were easy targets. The company had to hire guards to keep the poachers away!



BLIND TASTE TESTERS

An interesting chapter in the history of The Foods in Cobourg involved their blind taste tester program that began in 1975. We think of blind taste testers as being blindfolded, but at The Foods members of the taste panel were literally blind! Six blind people were hired in 1975 as part of the quality control team. The blind taste testers were featured in a television commercial where they demonstrated how they did their job. It showed that blind people could function in the workplace just as well as sighted people.

CANINE TASTE TESTERS

The Foods also had another group of taste testers...dogs!!! General Foods maintained the Gaines Dog Kennel in Centreton where 100 dogs were kept. They were fed a variety of Gaines products. Their reactions to the food were carefully observed to see which products they preferred. After this facility closed in the 1980s, the canine food testers were adopted by local dog lovers.

