

Kraft Heinz

by Lynne Bellusico

I've been on the phone with the folks at Jell-O to see if there will be any changes with the Jell-O trademark since Kraft Foods was purchased by H.J. Heinz last year. From what I have learned, the Jell-O trademark is still governed by Kraft, so there will be no changes at this time. The new company, Kraft Heinz Co will be the third largest food and beverage company in North American and the fifth largest worldwide. It will generate about \$28 billion of annual revenue from such brands as Oscar Mayer, Philadelphia, Velveeta, Maxwell House, Ore-Ida and Jell-O as well as Kraft cheese and Heinz ketchup. Berkshire Hathaway Inc, and a Brazilian investment firm, known as 3G Capital, bought Heinz in 2013, and they own 51 % of Kraft Heinz and control six of the 11 board seats, which includes Berkshire chairman, Warren Buffett. What all of this means is still a mystery. There have been a lot of changes in the past year. The marketing firm, Hunter Associates in New York, that we used to work with are no longer affiliated with

Jell-O and we are working with a couple of folks at Jell-O. We are also supposed to be working with Ketchum, an advertising company in Chicago, but have not heard from them yet. I have learned that the Kraft archives in Morton Grove, outside of Chicago, is no longer staffed, and the doors are literally closed. I had visited the archives on two occasions and had become well acquainted with their archivist, but she is no longer with the company. So things are changing. This past weekend, the Historical Society took a bus trip to Pittsburgh and visited the Heinz History Center and had a great time. Talking with one of our guides, he mentioned that everyone in Pittsburgh wonders if the Heinz offices will be moved to Chicago, where the Kraft offices are located. And I have wondered if the Kraft offices in Chicago will be moved to Pittsburgh. Only time will tell.

The story of Heinz -- ketchup, pickles, soup and all the other foods with the Heinz label is very interesting. Twelve year-old Henry John Heinz began selling



vegetables at his house in Sharpsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1869, by the time he was twenty-five he had started his bottling business, first with horseradish and later with many other products. At a time when many food processing companies were adulterating their products with chemicals and fillers, Heinz was committed to pure food. It was so pure, that he began putting up his sauces and pickles in glass bottles so the purity of the product could be seen. The iconic label, was based on the shape of the Pennsylvania "keystone" state shape and was the first trademark of the company. The idea of the Heinz "57 varieties, came about when Heinz was on a trip in New York City, and he admired a shoe sign that advertised 21 different styles of shoes. It made Heinz count all the products he had under the Heinz label, and he said that he had well over 57, and he liked the sound of 57 - -in fact it is told that he believed that 57 was a lucky number, so the "57 Varieties" remained part of their advertising.

Particularly interesting, was a story that Brenda Beal, who was on our bus told. She grew up in the Lockport – Medina area, and many of the farmers in that area were growing tomatoes for Heinz. The Heinz Company regulated the quality of the tomatoes, by restricting the farmers to only buy and grow tomatoes from "Heinz tomato seeds." And sure enough, on exhibit in the Heinz History Center was a brown paper seed bag, printed "Heinz Tomato Seeds."

Few people remember that Starkist Tuna was also a Heinz product but Charlie the Tuna as well as Morris the Cat were part of Heinz production in Pittsburgh. Although 9-Lives cat food and Starkist were sold off, Charlie the Tuna is still a part of the Pittsburgh story.

Now that Heinz , the largest tomato food processing company and Kraft, the owner of Jell-O are part of the same team, I can't help but wonder if they will bring back the 1960s Jell-O flavor - - - "seasoned tomato."

