

Kellogg, Ella Eaton (1853–1920)

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Ella Eaton Kellogg made a significant impact on home economics, dietetics, and children's rights. She was the wife of John Harvey Kellogg, a Seventh-day Adventist physician, health promoter, nutritionist, inventor, author, eugenicist, and entrepreneur.

Early Life, Education and Marriage

Ella Eaton Kellogg was born on April 7, 1853, in Alfred, New York. Her father was Joseph Clarke Eaton and her mother was Anna Sophia Eaton.¹

Ella Eaton Kellogg graduated from Alfred University with a degree in nutrition. At 16 years old, she was the youngest person to ever receive a bachelor's degree at Alfred University.²

In the summer of 1876, Ella and her sister went to visit an aunt in Battle Creek. Ella's sister was stricken by typhoid soon after and received care from staff at Kellogg's sanitarium.³ When Ella took over nursing duties, she caught John Harvey Kellogg's eye, though it does not sound like love at first sight; he said he was struck by her "absolute reliability and responsibility" and "unswerving devotion to duty." He convinced her to stay in Battle Creek to help deal with the typhoid outbreak and work at the sanitarium.

Ella and John Kellogg married on February 22, 1879. The wedding was officiated by Elder Lycurgus McCoy. She never gave birth to any children of her own. Instead, the Kelloggs fostered more than forty children and officially



Ella Eaton Kellogg

From *In Memoriam: Ella Eaton Kellogg* by John Harvey Kellogg. Photo courtesy of Adventist Digital Library.

adopted seven of them.⁴ All of the children were home-schooled by Ella and another teacher, Mary Lamson.

Career

Ella Kellogg wrote several books including *Talks with Girls*,⁵ *Science in the Kitchen*,⁶ and *Studies in Character Building*.⁷ Arguably, her most famous book is *Science in the Kitchen*. Her recipes promoted vegetarianism and swore off refined sugar. She also articulated the idea that perfecting food is the key to perfecting human civilization.⁸

Ella also founded the School of Home Economics that later became part of Battle Creek College.⁹ She was a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement and was appointed national superintendent of their Department of Hygiene in 1882. She also belonged to the Young Women's Christian Association.¹⁰ Also interested in sanitary and hygienic subjects, Ella entered the Sanitarium School of Hygiene, where she obtained a knowledge of anatomy, physiology, hygiene, and the practical care of the sick. She was constantly experimenting in the kitchen to make a better diet.¹¹ Ella made twenty-six basic diets, each of which could be adjusted to meet a patient's individual needs. She also broke down recipes into their nutritional content, in tables listing proteins, fats, carbohydrates. Ella and John developed Granola; they "borrowed" the concept from an associate who had developed a product called Granula, altered the recipe, and changed the name to sidestep any legal problems. They also invented peanut butter.

Later Life

As she aged, Ella lost her hearing, but she taught herself to lip-read and acquired the ability to modulate her voice and carry out a conversation. She would place her hand on top of her family piano so she could feel the music, but it pained her that she could not actually hear the music. Ella eventually became a patient at the Battle Creek Sanitarium where she received expert-level care. It came to the point where only a surgical operation could save her life. The operation relieved her suffering, but it was not able to cure the disease.¹² She stayed in the Sanitarium for another year, receiving the best care until she had no strength left. She died in Battle Creek Michigan on June 14, 1920.

Legacy

Ella Kellogg wrote many articles for the magazine *Good Health*. She helped with building the Battle Creek Sanitarium. One of her greatest accomplishments was establishing the diet at Battle Creek Sanitarium.¹³ Ella had a heart for philanthropy and founded the Haskell Home for Orphan Children in Battle Creek and was its managing chairman for many years. "Because of her well-honed writing and editing skills, Kellogg became a charter member and honorary president of the Michigan Women's Press Association. Her other accomplishments include: charter member of the American Dietetic Association, member of the National

Congress for Mothers, American Home Economics Association member, member of the Women's League, and member of the YWCA."¹⁴ For her significant impact on home economics, dietetics, and children's rights, in 1999 Ella Kellogg was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.¹⁵

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