



Mount Clemens Public Library

Local History Sketches

Mount Clemens Health Food Company

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At the turn of the twentieth century, Mount Clemens was reveling in its title of "Bath City of America." Having exploited the health-giving mineral waters to their maximum economic benefit, some local entrepreneurs turned their eyes toward the health food industry as a natural adjunct to Mount Clemens' established reputation as a health mecca. Seeking to give Battle Creek stiff competition in the health cereal business, a group of local men formed the **Mount Clemens Health Food Company** on May 20, 1902. Included in the list of stockholders were the names of such local leaders as **Edward G. Folsom, Franz Kuhn, Theophilus Van Damme, John H. Westendorf, William F. Nank, Joseph Croman** and **Harry Lichtig**.

The *Daily Leader* of July 17, 1902 reported that the first batch of **Mount Clemens Flakes** had been turned out and the company was "jubilant" over its product:

The flakes are crisp and have a brown color which the Battle Creek people have been trying to get for years without success. The reason for the rich color of the Mt. Clemens produce is unknown. The machinery is slightly different from that of other companies and the process also slightly different and the first batch of food which was turned out Tuesday was better than ever manufactured by any other company. Some of the other large companies would give a thousand dollars to get the same results.

Mt. Clemens Flakes

NOW READY.

"WHOLE WHEAT" READY TO EAT.

At All Grocers

-:- Large Packages, 15 Cents. -:-

MT CLEMENS FLAKES are solvent: Easily prepared by our Special Process and contain unimpaired the Natural Ingredients of the whole wheat. Thoroughly Cooked and Ready To Eat. These flakes are easily digested by the most delicate system, suitable alike to the young or old, sick or well, morning, noon or night. They Strengthen the Man Of Muscle; Restore Vitality to the Tired Brain; Nourish the Weary Mother and Purify the Bone and Tissue for the Drowning Child.

ALWAYS FRESH
PREPARED BY

MT. CLEMENS HEALTH FOOD CO.,

MT. CLEMENS, MICHIGAN

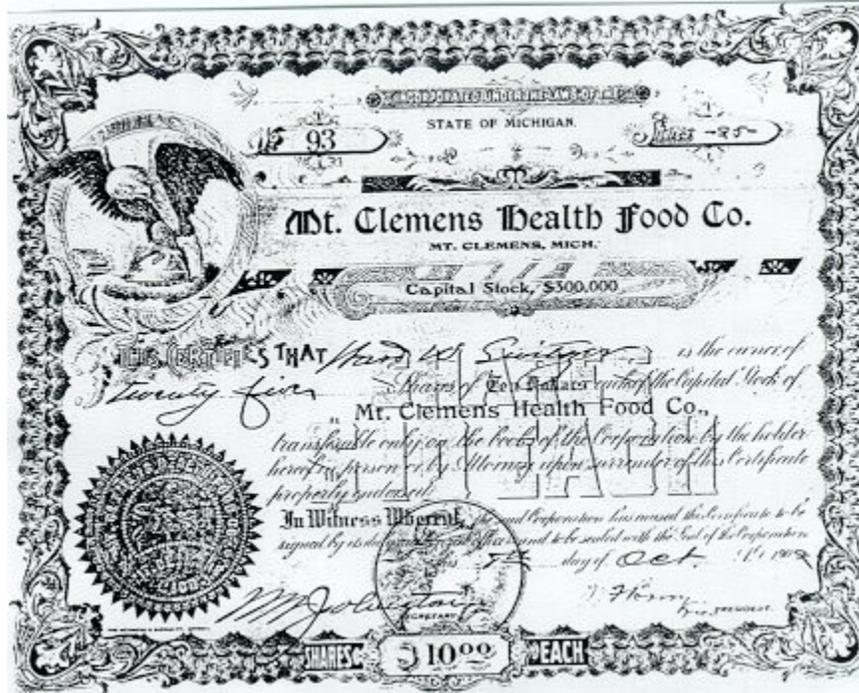
TRI-BROTHERS, INC.

The paper went on to note that Mount Clemens Flakes would be on the market the following week. Another product, a granulated cereal food named **Ala-Manna**, was being prepared for manufacture. An advertisement for Ala-Manna in the 1902 *Cutter's Guide to Mount Clemens* touted it as "a cereal food for medical purposes," namely for "overcoming indigestion, dyspepsia, and constipation," and claimed that use of the cereal could "decrease the liability to attacks of appendicitis by over 50 per cent."

A week after the first product was shipped, the *Leader* noted that the company was falling behind in its orders because of overwhelming demand. An enlargement of the plant was rumored and the company planned to propose a marketing scheme to the city council whereby a brochure advertising the city's hotels and baths, printed at city expense, would be wrapped with each package of Mount Clemens Health Food products.

In October, 1902, a seemingly prosperous enterprise with endless possibilities on the horizon held its annual meeting to elect a permanent board of directors. The

stockholders elected **Arthur J. Warren**, of Detroit, as president; **Dr. William F. Berry**, vice-president; **W.W. Johnston**, secretary; **Milo W. Davis**, treasurer; **A.T. Donaldson**, of Mount Clemens, and **Joseph Mayworm** and **Edward W. Eerde**, of Detroit, directors. The newspaper account of the annual meeting reported that Mount Clemens Flakes were being shipped to Canada, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois, and that the company planned to ship car load lots of 12,000 packages every twenty-four hours.



A certificate for 25 shares of stock in the Mount Clemens Health Food Company, dated 1902

The following year, in July 1903, the *Mount Clemens Monitor* announced that a Detroit concern named **Mt. Clemens Hygienic Food Company** had acquired control of the Mount Clemens Health Food Company, and was in the process of purchasing the Holly flouring mills as a companion business. The *Monitor* lamented, a few months later, that the new venture had fizzled, the Holly mills were being advertised in a mortgage sale, and the Mount Clemens men were left with their idle plant. A few years later, in 1911, the newspaper announced that **Anson E. Wolcott** and associates had purchased the late Health Food Company's building and formed a new concern. Apparently that was the end of the Mount Clemens Health Food Company and its dreams of glory.

For further information about the Mount Clemens Health Food Company, we recommend:

- "The Mt. Clemens Health Food Co. is jubilant over the success of their food..." *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, July 17, 1902, p.2, col.3.
- "Good news comes up this morning from the office of the Health Food Co...." *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, July 25, 1902, p.1, col.5.
- "Mt. Clemens Health Food Company Prosperous," *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, October 6, 1902, p.2, col.3.
- "The Mt. Clemens Hygienic Food Co...." *Mount Clemens Monitor*, July 24, 1903, supplement.
- "The infusion of new blood into the affairs of the Mt. Clemens pure food venture...." *Mount Clemens Monitor*, December 4, 1903, p.1, col.4.
- "Anson E. Wolcott Milling Co. : Name of the New Incorporation," *Mount Clemens Monitor*, March 10, 1911, p.8, col.4.