

Aunt Jemima Encyclopedia Article

Aunt Jemima

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Aunt Jemima

The advertising image of Aunt Jemima was born at the 1893 World Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, Illinois, with ex-slave Nancy Green's promotion of inventor Charles Rutt's pancake mix. More than an American corporate icon, Aunt Jemima not only advertises the great American breakfast, but also conveys a stereotype of blackness and embodies the haunting legacy of the racial past. As a white construction of black identity, Aunt Jemima represents an easygoing, nostalgic and non-threatening domesticated character highly reminiscent of Mammy in *Gone with the Wind*. Despite a corporate image makeover in the early 1980s, which involved slim-mer features and the loss of the servitude-signifying bandanna, the trademark "Aunt Jemima" continues to invoke memories of slavery and segregation and reminds us of the persistence of racial prejudice.

The advertising representation of "Aunt Jemima."

Further Reading:

Manring, M. M. *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima*. Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1998.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1992.