

# 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.