Kentucky Fried Chicken Encyclopedia Article

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When Corbin, Kentucky, restauranteur Harland Sanders began to establish a chicken franchise business in the mid-1950s, the pressure-cooking process he had developed twenty years earlier ensured his position at the forefront of the American fast food revolution. In 1964, Sanders sold the flourishing Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation for $2 million. However, by retaining the "Kentucky Colonel" as a roving ambassador, and instituting his image as the corporate icon, the company was able to continue promoting its product as "finger lickin' good" chicken in the best tradition of Southern-fried home cooking. The "down home" identity was somewhat compromised by Pepsi Co's $840 million buyout in 1986. The company was rebranded "KFC"—the word "fried" deemed inappropriate in an era of consumer health-consciousness—and integrated with other PepsiCo-owned fast food chains, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut. Nevertheless, the Southern patrician visage of the Colonel continues to decorate thousands of KFC's worldwide.

Further Reading:

Cawelti, John G. "'That's What I Like about the South': Changing Images of the South in the 1970s." *The Lost Decade: America in the Seventies.* Edited by Elsebeth Hurup. Aarhus, Denmark, Aarhus University Press, 1996.