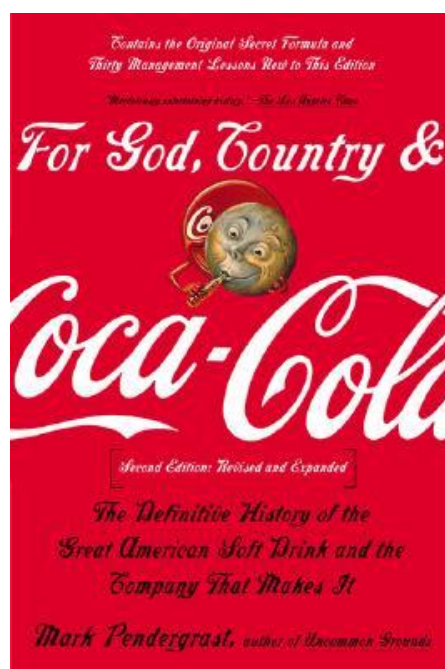




For God, Country & Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company That Makes It

Mark Pendergrast

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For God, Country and Coca-Cola is the definitive history of the great American soft drink and the company that makes it. From its origins as a patent medicine in Reconstruction Atlanta through its rise as the dominant consumer beverage of the 21st century, the story of Coke is as unique, tasty, and effervescent as the drink itself. With vivid portraits of the entrepreneurs who founded the company—and of the colorful cast of hustlers, swindlers, ad men, and con men who have made Coca-Cola the most recognized trademark in the world—this is business history at its best: in fact, ?The Real Thing. It even contains the original Coca-Cola formula

For God, Country & Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company That Makes It Details

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Heather says

I enjoyed this- as someone who has drunk a lot of Coca Cola in the past, that is. The book was heavy going (literally) and very long- longer than I think it needed to be.

ikleelmuhammed says

in a sense, politics means corporate rule in action. wonderful descriptions on one of the most powerful corporate in the world

Joe Hempel says

This review has videos and images and can be seen at topoftheheapreviews.com

When you think of Coca-Cola today you probably think about how it's said a 6-pack can take the rust of a carburetor, or how soda in general is the cause of most of the overweight issues in people today. Once upon a time though, Coca-Cola was an American icon. Still, I look back at the history of Coca-Cola and see scenes of days gone by when times were simpler and the smooth refreshing taste could change your day. For God, Country, and Coca-Cola is a comprehensive, no holds-barred history about the beginnings, the rise, and the trials and tribulations of one organization trying to keep its place in Americana history.

Coca-Cola is an icon of a business, and it's an icon of American culture. Mark Pendergrast has taken almost two decades and created the authoritative history of this company. From it's humble beginnings (albeit incredibly shady) through its rise in international markets, the Pepsi war, the dreaded formula change, and everything in between. You will learn everything you wanted to know and much more.

The book is a completely unbiased look at the company. Mark Pendergrast has carefully given you the facts from the research that he's done only providing a bit of fiction at the beginning of each section. These are pieces that are small stories of how things probably went in order to open each chapter. While fictitious in nature, they are well crafted and probably pretty close to how things went down.

Another big component of the book is how the world looked at Coca-Cola. In Soviet Russia one leader would only drink Coke and had the can changed so that those that were even higher didn't know they were drinking a banned American product. It was also said that in Nazi Germany it was one of the only drinks Hitler would drink. With Coca-Cola going around the world advertising executives surmised that foreign

nations would have difficulty differentiating America from the company of Coca-Cola, and that it might not be that big of problem.

People are going to read this book differently, and it's divided into parts, chapters, and a sort of sub-chapter to easily find things that are of interest to you. For me, it was the WWII advertising and on through the 70's and 80's. The evolution in the way they were advertising moving from the Rockwellian and Sundbloom type of oil paintings depicting Jolly St. Nick and wholesome families to a more inner peace and world peace.

Remember these lyrics? "I'd like to teach the world to sing, in perfect harmony. I'd like to buy the world a coke, and keep it company; It's the real thing!" Now that you have the song going through your head, I'll wait for you to finish singing before moving on. If not, then here you go. First appearing in 1971.

Done? Try getting that out of your head for the rest of the day! You're welcome.

One thing I found interesting in the book is how he talked about how radio stations didn't like that they were essentially giving New Seekers (the group that did the song) and Coke free advertising when it was released as a 45lp. They changed the lyrics to remove any mention of Coca-Cola, but every time you heard the song, that's what you thought. The perfect subliminal message.

Who could forget the "Mean Joe" Greene commercial? It was so good, that it was pushed up an entire year for air! It reached such critical acclaim that one former Pepsi ad-maker stated that it was "the perfect commercial."

The above instances are only just a couple pieces of information that I found neat. Another instance goes all the way back to the beginning when it was originally derived by Pemberton Chemical Company to be a tonic to cure headaches and other ailments to capitalize on that booming tonic business, as well as be a refreshing drink. Who would have thought that the beginnings of Coca-Cola had intentions of being a drink for health?

The book is very dense, but it's well thought out, it's written in an interesting way. The appendix and sources are listed out in detail and you really can't ask for a better compendium of all things coke.

You probably aren't going to find every bit of history interesting or enthralling, but you'll find enough backstabbing and underhanded practices that it'll make some recent thrillers look like child's play, because this actually happened. You'll also find at least something that you will enjoy, be it the advertising and marketing like myself, the Pepsi war, or how Coca-Cola was presented internationally through the war, and how other countries seem to think Coca-Cola and America were the same.

What I personally took away from this book, and what I found the most interesting were the marketing and advertising. The images in the book bring back to me what I always found endearing to the Coke product, and it was really great to hear about the stories behind those ads and how they effected the population, good or bad.

Mark doesn't just go over the good points of the company. He fully details the failures, as well as the attacks on Coke for being unhealthy, and a killer, and responsible for the obesity in America. You will read how they have tried, and are still trying to overcome that stigma. From bottling water and the problems from there, and trying to make their product taste good, and become more healthy. This year (2013) they've even launched an ad campaign to promote healthy portions, citing that even Coca-cola is part of the obesity epidemic. All of the advertising that they have done, from beginning to end goes towards family, togetherness, and a better life style.

No matter the stigma you have of Coca-Cola, they have always been on the front lines to provide clean water, and as much help as they can when disaster strikes, and it doesn't matter the country.

In this book you get to see exactly why Coca-cola is just as American as apple pie.

For God Country & Coca-Cola, you will never look at a Coca-Cola on the shelf of a store, the same way again, that is for certain.

The Bottom Line: This will be a difficult book to get through for a lot of people if they aren't very interested in Coke. It's definitely a niche audience piece. If you are one that is inclined to buy this book, you will be richly rewarded with well detailed, well written, and well thought out information. From the start of the company to today's standing, Mark leaves nothing behind. It's twenty years in the making, and it was worth the wait. I've only scratched the tip of the iceberg with this review. I could probably write a book in of itself in just reviewing this tome. I hope you go and check it out, this book goes well and beyond what any book should do, and it's very obvious that Mark Pendergrast has a great love for Coca-Cola.

Austin says

This is not a literary book, but rather a long, detailed chronicle of Coca-Cola's corporate history. It's fascinating enough, though I found myself reading very quickly over substantial portions of the book that interested me less than others. I will say Pendergrast's powers of journalism are profound; I believe he worked on this history for decades before publishing the first edition.

This is not just a story of Coca-cola, though. Like Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs, the subject merely provides the foreground to a much larger, and more significant background: World history in the making. Both Jobs and Coke straddled huge technical and historical developments that are worth understanding for anyone interested in understanding the modern world. And Coke is a particularly fascinating lens through which to view world history. As Pendergrast asserts below, the brand has reached quasi-religious status, and the story of how that occurred is a gripping, and--to me--a slightly disturbing one. Coke--like America--is riven with contradictions; it's both saintly and devilish, greedy and philanthropic, nutritious and unhealthy, substantial and superficial. But so far it's maintained its continued sense of hope, and has even transcended its mother country to become, protean-like, a global behemoth peddling over 3,500 beverage brands in every country of the world, with the exception of North Korea. Perhaps if North Korea falls, Coke will be behind it.

Some of my favorite passages:

--"The world owes all its onward impulses to men ill at ease." pg. 90 (from Hawthorne)

--"The 'pause that refreshes' surfaced just when organized religion was suffering from the writings of Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and other scientists. Coke has achieved the status of a substitute modern religion that promotes a particular, satisfying, all-inclusive worldview espousing perennial values such as love, peace, happiness, and universal brotherhood." pg. 472

--"Neville Isdell coined the phrase 'Connected Capitalism' to describe 'a true marriage between governments, nonprofits, and global corporations to fight disease and poverty, heal the planet, improve education, and, ultimately, boost private-sector profits.'" pg. 482

Caleb Wilson says

The only comparison to this that I can make is Citizen Coke, which, even then isn't really a fair comparison. If, for whatever reason, you find yourself wanting to learn about the history of Coca Cola, in all its infamy, this is a great book.

Lindsey.parks says

I now love Coke more than I thought possible. I also now heavily analyze Coke ads.

Mike says

I read the coffee book ("Uncommon Grounds") by the same author a couple of years prior and "saved up" this book for a later treat. Clearly, I liked the first book and it fit in thematically with other books I was reading at the time on different drinks and liquids.

In this book, Pendergrast attempts to answer the questions of what's in the classic formula, does it have cocaine, or did it ever, and how in the world did they get it so wrong with "New Coke". But overall, this is a fascinating tale of how Coke was created (not at all by accident) and how it has come to dominate the globe. There's probably no person alive within the US that has never tasted it.

If you don't mind longish books, pick this one up and read! Also get "Uncommon Grounds" even if you are not a coffee person. It too, was fascinating.

Ramiro Ramos says

¿Nos tomamos una Coca? Así decíamos de jóvenes para platicar algún tema de interés el grupo de amigos, melancolía de aquel tiempo me impulsa a saber la historia de ran afamada bebida, un recorrido por la historia y el crecimiento de una oportunidad... Las ironías de la vida mientras lo leí no tome más que café.

Hardy says

When you talk to young people in the US, many have a negative image of Coca-Cola (in contrast to a brand like Starbucks). This is unfortunate, because Coca-Cola is a tasty product, with a rich history. You don't have to drink one every day.

The miracle of Coca-Cola is that there always one close at hand. Anyone that has visited small towns in the least developed or remotest countries in the world, can appreciate the fact that there is almost always a vendor of this beverage, and quite often it is available chilled. You can thank globalization and American soft power.

It started as a mix of alcohol and cocaine and advertised to children, but the formula evolved over time. It established itself as a drink sold served corner stores, for women or children while they were shopping in the early 1900s. The drink held over 90% of the marketshare for many years. The drink served as a morale booster in WW2. In the 1980s, the company briefly changed the formula, but reverted back to the old one after consumer outrage. This was done in response to aggressive tactics from Pepsi.

The company sells syrup to local bottlers in countries like Thailand, Turkey or Tanzania. These bottlers then combine the syrup with water, and distribute it to local merchants. There have been complaints against Coca-Cola bottlers, but it is important to realize that Coca-Cola does not control them directly.

Mikey B. says

Coca-Cola has to be the world's most ubiquitous icon – the most advertised commodity on the planet.

Page 124 (my book)

If the dividends from that one original 1919 share had been re-invested in Coco-Cola stock, which had split eleven times thus far, the \$40 investment would be worth approximately \$9.8 million by 2012. Using the same scale, if a forebear had purchased one of Asa's [first CEO] \$100 shares in 1892, it would bring approximately \$8.6 billion.

There are many interesting facts and tidbits in this long, but well written book. It is well sectionalized into many different subjects. The author provides good portraits of the various leaders and CEO's of Coca-Cola since its' founding by Dr. John Pemberton in the 1880's. Most of them were not particularly likeable, but I suppose that explains a part of what constitutes success.

I learnt a lot about the soft drink and it really is fascinating. Here are some of the highlights:

- Dr. John Pemberton was a chemist and in that era (1880's) it was common for drinks to have a purported medical value, to be an elixir that soothed many bodily problems. With the start of the 20th Century these "magic" potion drinks started to disappear or were simply exposed as frauds. Coca-Cola altered its image and changed its' advertising to emphasize enjoyment – an instant gratification drink.
- There was a small amount of cocaine in the drink which explains the buzz that it created! At the turn of the century the cocaine was removed, but coca leaves from Peru are still a part of the magic and secret formula. The coca leaves are now decocainized. This is not mentioned at the Coca-Cola Museum in Atlanta, Georgia.
- From the get-go Coca Cola always had aggressive advertising. Their logo started to appear everywhere – first in Atlanta, the Southern States...

- Originally Coca-Cola was a soda drink – available only at soda fountains. The owner, Asa Candler, had to

be convinced to bottle the drink (with bottle caps). This further propelled consumption. But over the years there have been conflicts between the Coca-Cola bottlers and Coca-Cola.

- Coca-Cola is so cheap to produce which explains the enormous amounts of money that can be spent on advertising and marketing.

- Coca-Cola through a team of lawyers has very aggressively protected its name – and anyone who uses a part of its name would be brought to court. Pepsi-Cola was one of the few who were successful in this area.

- Which brings me to the point that Coca-Cola operates with religious zealotry! The aim of Coca-Cola is to acquire as many customers as possible, everywhere. They are out to proselytize the entire globe! . It has set up delocalized branches in all countries but North Korea and Cuba (but that will change very soon). The formula is more than just a trade secret – its' like a religious potion. The competition with Pepsi is such that it is anathema in the hallowed halls of Coca-Cola to mention the competitor. Is Coca-Cola more popular than Jesus?

Page 368

Within two years of the fall of the Berlin Wall, sales [in East Germany] soared from zero to 1.7 billion drinks.

- Fanta was started by the Coca-Cola Company branch in Nazi Germany when they no longer , due to the war, got the syrup to make the traditional Coca-Cola. The author provides us with a history of Coca-Cola in Germany during the Nazi regime. The company has never shied away from remaining and functioning in repressive regimes – whether they are Nazi Germany or Latin American dictatorships.

Page 297

Sister Dorothy Gartland, a diminutive but strong willed nun representing the two hundred shares owned by the Sisters of Providence, subjected a resolution [at the annual Coca-Cola meeting in Delaware] calling for the development of minimal labor-relations standards in its worldwide franchises. ..But the nun was most urgently concerned over the Guatemalan Coca-Cola union... she introduced Israel Marquez...The uneasy Coke executives listened to a translator as [Mr. Marquez described the intimidation and violence faced by union organizers at the Coca-Cola plant].

Page 279

Ralph Nader asked [Coca-Cola executive J. Paul Austin], “What’s a sensitive man like you, with a degree from Harvard Law School, doing pumping syrupy brown drinks into people’s stomachs?” ...Austin answered, “I don’t think there’s anything wrong with selling a refreshing drink.”

- During the 1980’s Coca-Cola was able to place its vending machines (along with glowing advertising) in schools and universities in the U.S. – with some of the profits going to the school boards. However, with the obesity and health crisis starting to escalate in the 1990’s many schools removed the vending machines and contracts were cancelled.

- Coca-Cola is master of advertising – think of all those jingles and blurbs over the decades –
“The real thing”

- “The pause that refreshes”

- The hilltop singers “I’d like to teach the world to sing...”

- They have used Bill Cosby and Ray Charles (who switched to Pepsi) – and Santa Claus too

- Norman Rockwell did paintings for Coca-Cola

- They’re advertising is worldwide (the Olympics, The World Cup), but often locally adapted.

Also Coca-Cola knows how to overcome obstacles and mistakes – think of the fiasco of the “New” Coca-

Cola in 1985. The company rebounds from miscues, recessions and health scares.

Perhaps the author can be a little too effusive in his praise – after all what is the nutritional value of this drink? And these aspects are brought up from time to time in the book. Yet one cannot help but admire the resounding world-wide success of this soft drink.

As a small note I drank two Coca-Cola's while reading this book. I found it very sugary, carbonated and effervescent – BURP. I'll stick with wine.

Ben Babcock says

So one day I was looking for some advertisements I could use with my English classes to discuss graphic texts and advertising strategies. I stumbled across Vintage Ad Browser's repository of Coca-Cola advertisements, and I was just captivated. It had never occurred to me before that Coca-Cola provides a perfect opportunity to chart the evolution of advertising over the course of more than a century. I pulled many ads through the decades to use with my class, and as we discussed the popularity of Coca-Cola, I started wanting to know more and more about this globally dominant brand. Although I am a millennial, I'm enough of a bookworm that my second reaction (the first being "I'm going to look on Wikipedia") was, "Someone must have written a book about this."

Indeed, Mark Pendergrast has. And even updated it twice over! *For God, Country & Coca-Cola* deserves its subtitle (*The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company That Makes It*). Pendergrast is beyond thorough in his quest to chronicle the origins, expansion, and ongoing influence of The Coca-Cola Company. From Dr. John Pemberton's initial attempts to create a mildly profitable medicinal nostrum to the beginnings of the Company under Asa Candler all the way through the hegemonies of Robert Woodruff and his successors, Pendergrast discusses every intimate detail of Coca-Cola production. Basically, if there was ever any question you had about the history of Coca-Cola, it is probably here somewhere in this book.

Now, finding it might be a different matter entirely.... This book is intense. My edition is ~500 pages of fairly small type, and this is a large-format paperback. Pendergrast is not playing here. So I totally understand why some reviewers have panned the book for its length and detail. Not everyone is looking for that; some people just want the broad strokes, and I think that's legitimate criticism of the book. One of the reasons I'm not giving this book a full five stars is simply that, yes, it's exhaustingly exhaustive. Nevertheless, I don't know what I would say should be removed. It's *all* germane and interesting stuff.

The genesis of Coca-Cola, of course, is probably one of the most fascinating parts of the story. So much has been mythologized (mostly by the Company itself), so Pendergrast strips that away with a blow-by-blow account of who owned (or thought they owned, or claimed they owned) what pertaining to the Coca-Cola beverage and brand. His descriptions of these internecine interactions among Pemberton et al soberly reminds us that, had any one tiny thing been different, then perhaps we wouldn't have Coca-Cola as we know it today. In its beginnings, there was nothing *that* special about Coca-Cola. It took the hard work of a lot of individuals over decades to build it into the behemoth soft drink it has now become.

I also really enjoyed learning about Coke's involvement in World War II. Particularly, the way in which "Coca-Cola men" received privileged status and shipping priority because American troops were so

enamoured of drinking Coke. Moreover, I wasn't aware of Fanta's origins as a substitute conceived by the head of Coke in Germany after the United States entered the war and the Company wouldn't be able to ship syrup to Germany any more. The interplay between world events and Coca-Cola's growth around the world is complex, so I just loved reading about it as Pendergrast lays it out, complete with footnotes.

As the book approaches the present day, the details become less interesting. Pendergrast focuses overly (in my opinion) on Coke's stock price and similar, highly technical measures of "success." Indeed, throughout the book, Pendergrast assumes a certain level of corporate knowledge (stock splits, holding companies, etc.) that the average reader might have to stretch to comprehend. There's nothing wrong with that (I like learning new things from a book!), but I wouldn't describe this as a "popular history." Pendergrast really likes to get technical in the way he comments on or explains certain decisions that Coke makes. I did, however, enjoy the whole chronicle of the New Coke debacle, since that was just before my time.

The common theme throughout this book, as the title and subtitle both imply, is that Coca-Cola is inextricably linked to American identity. Yet perhaps paradoxically, Pendergrast also notes that Coca-Cola has worked hard to become "of the people" in whatever country it's in. He chronicles the Coca-Colonization of the world, yes, and is appropriately harsh in certain moments when the Company did not act in the most upstanding of ways. Yet he also observes how Coke has always tried to fit in with the cultures it's marketing towards, whether we're talking the Philippines or Japan. Consequently, Coca-Cola is "the American soft drink" in the United States, but it also aims to have this oddly non-specific, localized feel the world over.

The final lesson? The Coca-Cola Company is a very unique story. Even Pepsi, which features heavily in the back half of this book, just cannot compete when it comes to Coke's legacy and popularity as a beverage. No other brand has spread around the world in quite the same way as Coca-Cola. (A few have certainly come close—but seldom do they do it with profit margins so richly generous as a carbonated water product will get you.)

This is not a book for the faint of heart. Nor would I suggest trying to read it all in one go. If you *really* want to learn about the history of Coca-Cola, however, this is the book for you. Just take it slow. And, yes, I did consume a single Coca-Cola at one point while reading. (I do nominally prefer Coke to Pepsi, but these days I try not to drink much pop at all.)

David says

The book is WAY too long, gives WAY too much information, offers WAY too much detail and it is easy to get bored and lose interest, especially in the last third section of the book. The book would have been a lot more fun to read if it was 25-30% shorter and didn't include a lot of details no one cares about.

Sachin Bhatia says

Do you want to understand how brands are created? What does it mean to work for a "corporate"? These days everything is a start up guide...

Eric_W says

In the late nineteenth century, cocaine was considered a wonder drug. Heralded by medical journals, pharmacists, Freud and even several Popes - Pope Leo XIII was a regular imbiber of Vin Mariani, a wine created in 1863 that contained 2.16 grains of cocaine, in the recommended dose of six glasses per day. No doubt he felt very holy indeed, and his long life and "all-radiant" eyes were probably less due to his piety than his daily dose of this "healthful" and "life-sustaining" drug that had been so valued by the Incas.

Dr. John Pemberton, an Atlanta druggist and doctor - he held two degrees and had created a master reference work containing over 12,000 tests - was anxious to create a drink that would be healthful and profitable. He was not immune to the vast literature hailing cocaine as a wonder drug. "The use of the coca plant not only preserves the health of all who use it, but prolongs life to a very great old age and enables the coca eaters to perform prodigies of mental and physical labor," he wrote in 1885. It was a time when patent medicines and elixirs were all the rage. Soda fountains would often offer as many as 300 different combinations of drinks. Advertisers tried to influence consumers to purchase one in favor of others, and huge signs were erected along railroads and roads to get the traveler's attention. It was not unusual for a patent medicine "advertiser of the era to clear-cut an entire mountainside so that he could erect a mammoth sign for Helmholdt's Buchu." A contemporary traveler described, "enormous signs are erected in the fields, not a rock is left without disfigurement, and gigantic words glare at as great a distance as the eye is able to read them."

Pemberton's first product was French Wine Coca. It was loaded with cocaine, an extract of the kola nut (very high in caffeine) and damiana, the leaf of a plant with supposed aphrodisiacal powers. The concoction was advertised as a cure for virtually everything from nerve trouble and dyspepsia to impotence and morphine addiction.

Opiate addiction was a huge problem after the Civil War. Known as the "Army Disease" because so many veterans were addicted. Pemberton himself was an addict trying to break the habit. He was convinced that cocaine was the best treatment for morphine addiction.

In the meantime, by 1886, temperance was becoming a movement in the Atlanta area, so Pemberton began experimenting with a new beverage that excluded the wine. By adding citric acid, he eliminated some of the sugary sweet taste and eliminated the damiana but kept the coca and kola, hence the alliterative choice that his colleague Robinson came up with: Coca-Cola. They advertised it both for its medicinal benefits and as a new soda fountain drink. One ad read, "The new and popular soda fountain drink containing the properties of the wonderful coca plant and the famous kola nut." As it gained in popularity, the business convolutions kept pace, with Pemberton selling his rights to the business several times over. It was soon a mess.

Asa Candler finally wound up with ownership of the trademark. He remained committed to quality and insisted that his distributors (a rather unique arrangement for the time) not tinker with the syrup recipe, although some of them did, one adding saccharine in an attempt to preserve the drink -- it was also an ironic attempt to make the drink as sweet as possible. Candler never thought bottling the drink would amount to much, so he virtually gave away the bottling rights, a prognosticatory failure that was to cost the company millions in later years to purchase them back. He and Frank Robinson (the real marketing genius, who invented the script logo for the drink) soon were collecting huge amounts of money as Coke took off.

By 1900, Coca-Cola had become so popular it became a target for those who were terribly afraid someone might be out there enjoying themselves, i.e., the self-righteous, and soon pulpits all over attacked the nefarious qualities of the drink that was addicting children, of all people. It had also become a popular drink among the black population, and soon the KKK was suggesting that the black population was drinking Coca-Cola, becoming "drug fiends" and roaming the countryside in search of white women to ravish. Some white

farm owners had indeed paid their sharecroppers, mostly black, with cocaine, since it was cheaper than alcohol, and cocaine addiction had become a serious problem. Ironically, Candler had already removed the minute traces of cocaine that had been in the formula. (The purity of the formula was somewhat of a joke, as several of the bottlers had added saccharin to make it sweeter, but also as a preservative.) The company by 1902 was promoting Coca-Cola as a healthful drink and the official Coke line is that the drink never contained cocaine, a typical PR prevarication, and not a particularly astute one since earlier company brochures had bragged about the healthful benefits of cocaine. In any case, the do-gooders, who wanted Coke declared an adulterated product because it contained caffeine managed to enlist the mighty forces of the FDA. Many expensive years later the suit finally died although Coke did reduce the amount of caffeine in the formula. They spent massive amounts of money on advertising, plastering the Coke logos on the sides of barns and giving out millions of items with the Coke logo. It was widely successful and soon Coke was the most popular drink around.

Pendergrast's section on the infamous New Coke marketing disaster - or was it really an enormous accidental success - is fascinating. The outrage was enormous, but the publicity that resulted showed tremendous loyalty to a drink. Odd hype occurred almost everywhere. A study at Harvard Medical School compared the douche properties of the old Coke to those of the new, and found that the old Coke killed five times as many sperm as the new Coke. That's weird. The company completely failed to recognize that Coca-Cola had become an American institution, an icon. "They talk as if Coca-Cola had just killed God," moaned one executive. Coca-Cola had come to symbolize America; it was "associated with almost every aspect of their lives - first dates, moments of victory and defeat, joyous group celebrations, pensive solitude."

Barry Simiana says

Good book. BIG book. A long read, at times a little stuffy but inside you get to know the names behind Coca Cola and the people who drove it from a medicine to the most popular(?) soft drink in the world. Oh yeah, you also get the "secret" recipe, but at least one of the ingredients may as well be named "Unobtainium". As an aside, yes, there used to be cocaine in the mix but it was phased out 50 years ago, but there is still coca (big difference).

Some great anecdotes from people inside the organisation.

I still drink Pepsi Max and always will.
