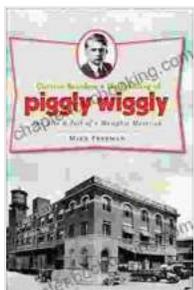


# Clarence Saunders: The Founding of Piggly Wiggly - The Revolutionary Grocery Store

In the early 20th century, the grocery shopping experience was a far cry from the convenience we enjoy today. Customers had to navigate crowded aisles, wait for assistance from overworked clerks, and endure tedious checkout processes. But all that changed with the advent of Piggly Wiggly, the brainchild of Clarence Saunders, a visionary entrepreneur who revolutionized the industry with his innovative self-service concept.

Born in 1881 in Alabama, Clarence Saunders was a man with an unyielding determination and a knack for spotting opportunities. From a young age, he worked various jobs in the grocery business, honing his skills and developing a deep understanding of the industry's inefficiencies.

In 1914, Saunders had a eureka moment that would forever alter the course of grocery shopping. He realized that by eliminating clerks and allowing customers to select their own items from open shelves, he could streamline the process, reduce costs, and create a more efficient and pleasant shopping experience.



## Clarence Saunders & the Founding of Piggly Wiggly: The Rise & Fall of a Memphis Maverick (Landmarks)

by Mike Freeman

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 8565 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 163 pages  
Lending : Enabled



With unwavering belief in his concept, Saunders opened the first Piggly Wiggly store in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1916. The name, a playful combination of the words "piggly" (eager) and "wiggly" (squealing), aptly captured the store's lively atmosphere and the excitement surrounding its unique approach.

The Piggly Wiggly store was a revelation. Customers were amazed at the freedom to browse and select their own groceries at their own pace. The absence of clerks meant shorter wait times and lower prices. The store quickly gained popularity, and within a few years, Piggly Wiggly had become a household name across the United States.

Saunders' self-service model was a radical departure from the traditional grocery store format. By eliminating the need for clerks to retrieve and bag items, he significantly reduced labor costs. The open shelves provided customers with a clear view of the products, allowing them to compare brands, prices, and features more easily.

The self-service concept not only enhanced efficiency but also created a more enjoyable shopping experience. Customers felt empowered and liberated, free to explore the store at their leisure and make their own choices. The absence of intrusive clerks reduced pressure and made shopping a less daunting task.

Despite its groundbreaking concept, Piggly Wiggly faced challenges along the way. Traditional grocers initially resisted the new model, fearing that it would cannibalize their own businesses. Saunders faced legal battles and accusations of unfair competition, but he remained steadfast in his belief in the self-service approach.

Through perseverance and strategic marketing, Piggly Wiggly overcame these obstacles and expanded rapidly. By 1923, the company had over 1,000 stores across the country. Saunders' success inspired numerous imitators, and soon, self-service grocery stores became the industry standard.

Clarence Saunders' legacy as the father of the self-service grocery store is undeniable. His revolutionary concept has had a profound impact on the way we shop for food. The convenience, efficiency, and choice offered by self-service have become indispensable aspects of modern grocery shopping.

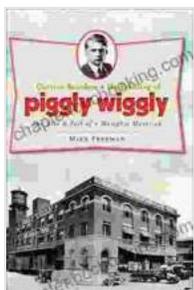
Beyond his impact on the industry, Saunders' entrepreneurial spirit and innovative thinking continue to inspire aspiring entrepreneurs and business leaders. His story is a testament to the power of vision, perseverance, and the ability to challenge the status quo.

The story of Clarence Saunders and the founding of Piggly Wiggly is a captivating tale of innovation, entrepreneurship, and the transformation of an industry. Saunders' self-service concept revolutionized the grocery shopping experience, making it more convenient, efficient, and enjoyable for customers. His legacy continues to shape the way we shop today, and

his contributions to the industry will continue to be celebrated for years to come.

### Image Alt Attributes:

- Clarence Saunders: A portrait of Clarence Saunders, the founder of Piggly Wiggly.
- Piggly Wiggly Store Exterior: A photograph of the exterior of a Piggly Wiggly store.
- Self-Service Grocery Shelves: A photograph of open shelves stocked with grocery items in a Piggly Wiggly store.
- Customers Shopping: A photograph of customers shopping in a Piggly Wiggly store, selecting items from the shelves.



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