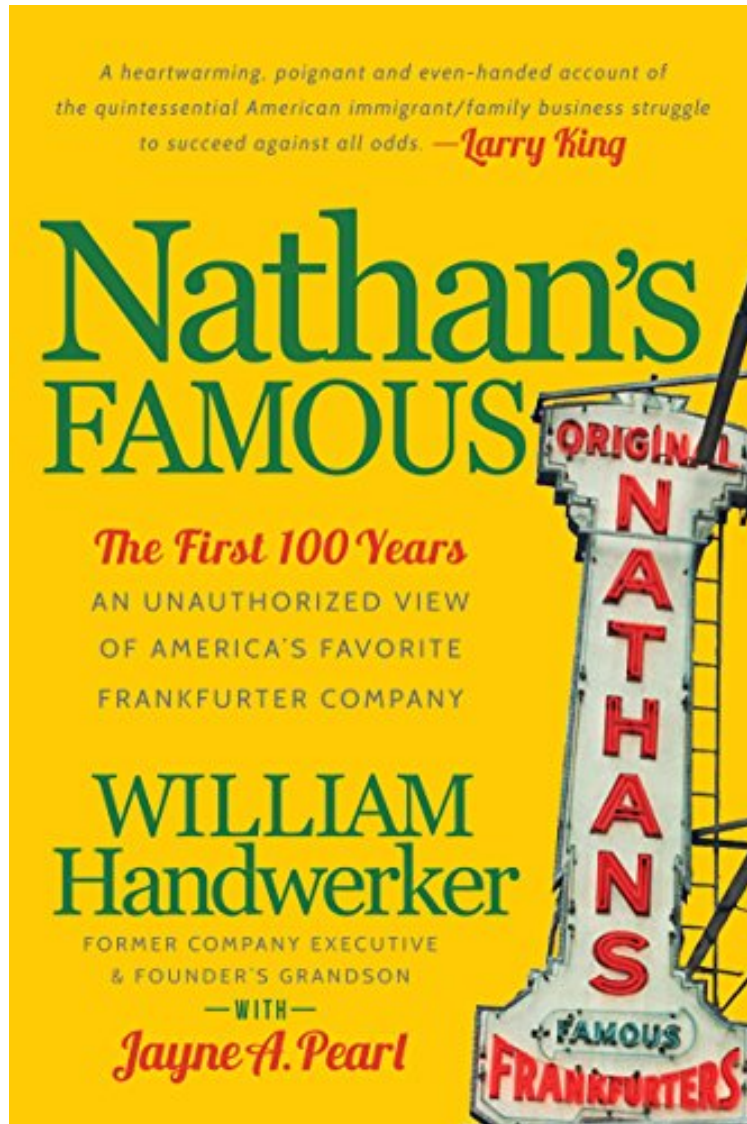


(Free pdf) Nathan's Famous: The First 100 Years of America's Favorite Frankfurter Company

# Nathan's Famous: The First 100 Years of America's Favorite Frankfurter Company

William Handwerker

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**William Handwerker : Nathan's Famous: The First 100 Years of America's Favorite Frankfurter Company** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nathan's Famous: The First 100 Years of America's Favorite Frankfurter Company:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is one of a pair of terrific books!By Howard B. LevyOne hundred years ago, in 1916, an enterprising, bright and savvy, but uneducated, young Polish immigrant, started a modest business that would eventually grow to become one of the most popular and beloved food service

establishments in the world —; and one of the most famous —; Nathan's Famous, that is. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of this iconic American family business, in the summer of 2016, two grandsons of its colorful founder Nathan Handwerker (whom I call "the Henry Ford of the American Hot Dog"), independently published books in loving tribute to Nathan and the company. For those from Brooklyn, Nathan's Famous is, perhaps, second in its nostalgic value only to Ebbets Field (except that Ebbets Field has been gone for almost 60 years, and Nathan's Famous is still there). These two books are titled, respectively, *Nathan's Famous: The First 100 Years of America's Favorite Frankfurter Company* and *Famous Nathan: A Family Saga of Coney Island, the American Dream, and the Search for the Perfect Hot Dog*. Each from their own separate point of view, both books palpably oozing with family pride, the authors, first cousins, William and Lloyd Handwerker, poignantly tell the classic rags-to-riches story in most readable, moving, and delightful ways, of their poor, immigrant, illiterate but remarkable grandfather, and how he overcame all the conflicts and other obstacles frequently associated with family businesses, as well as two world wars, the Great Depression and all the other economic upheavals that occurred over the first 55 years of Nathan's Famous —; until Nathan retired reluctantly in 1971, three years before he died at age 81. As I started reading the first available of the two books, Bill Handwerker's, on the day before the popular annual Nathan's Fourth of July Hot Dog Eating Contest in Coney Island, I instantly developed a craving for one of those fantastic hot dogs. We had them for dinner that night. Both accounts tell substantially the whole story and, accordingly, they overlap considerably, especially to the extent the text relies on a 1973 taped interview of Nathan made shortly before he died by another cousin of the authors, David Sternshein. However, they also complement each other well. Lloyd's book, based largely on recorded interviews of family members and other long-term employees of Nathan's Famous, delves deeper than Bill's into his grandfather's early life in poverty in Poland, his struggles as a young immigrant and a novice entrepreneur in New York City and the early history of the business. Bill's book is more of a personal memoir that focuses mainly on the history of the mature, business by the beach and beyond, most particularly the period when he worked there. They both emphasize and deeply explore the dynamics of running a family business when family members with strong personalities have divergent ideas about how to do it. For anyone who has an emotional, nostalgic attachment to Nathan's Famous, or an interest either in the challenges and triumphs of America's early twentieth century immigrants from Europe or a case study in managing a family business, I highly recommend reading both of these books. Never before has this story been told as intimately, passionately, completely and engagingly as in these two labors of love. And you just can't make this stuff up.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Terrific look at the making of an iconic American brand. By Customer. What a fun and interesting book. It's a mix of the history of one of America's iconic brand (their hot dogs and fries are pretty good, too) with information on business and developing a national/international company. Mr. Handwerker's writing is direct and accessible. His anecdotes and perspective of working with his grandfather and father make this a very readable and enjoyable book. It is a story of achieving the American Dream. The philosophy behind Nathan's Famous success is stated best in the very beginning of the book, "My father taught me--and I remain a strong believer--that you have to get up-front and personal with the nitty-gritty operations of your company to fully understand successful business strategies. You should work to obtain personal knowledge of the "true experience" of your employees and customers on a day-to-day basis to understand the nuts and bolts of your company." The photographs are an added bonus.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The "American" hot dog---yum! By judy li man. Nathan's Famous is a book that is so fun! I remember going to Nathan's as a child from Alabama and had a real frankfurter! My Brooklyn Grandma thought I should have an " American" hot dog. It was delicious, and famous. Everybody I knew, knew Nathan's Famous. I enjoyed this book so much! Thank you for writing it.

"Nathan's Famous: The First 100 Years of America's Favorite Frankfurter Company" chronicles the history and business strategies of company founder Nathan Handwerker that led to the success of an iconic international brand and two of America's most loved foods: The Nathan's Famous Frankfurter and Crinkle-cut French Fries. Brimming with photos of historic Coney Island, New York, Nathan's Famous restaurants, and intimate family memories of author, former company Senior Vice president and grandson William Handwerker; "Nathan's Famous" details entrepreneurial spirit, business lessons, dramatic corporate missteps and growth. William includes insights into three generations of the Handwerker family, beginning with the founder's early life, growing up in extreme poverty in Galicia, Poland, as well as his own sons and grandson who contributed to expanding geographic locations, menu and the overall brand. Nathan's may have started as a small hot dog stand in 1916, but by sticking to his philosophy to "give 'em and let 'em eat," he was able to beat his competition by providing top quality food at low prices. "Nathan's Famous" reveals the successes, trials and tribulations of growing Nathan's original vision into the international frankfurter corporation it is today. Author William Handwerker is the grandson of Nathan Handwerker, founder of America's favorite frankfurter company and the iconic Coney Island, New York institution. Working alongside his grandfather and father, Murray, for 30 years, William penned "Nathan's Famous" to commemorate the enormous entrepreneurial spirit of his

grandfather's legacy and the business history of one of America's most loved foods---the Nathan's Famous frankfurter. William has been interviewed by The Food Channel, the History Channel, and numerous national and New York media. He resides in Roslyn, New York and Delray Beach, Florida.

About the Author William Handwerker is the grandson of Nathan Handwerker, founder of America's favorite frankfurter company and the iconic Coney Island, New York institution. Working alongside his grandfather and father, Murray, for 30 years, William penned Nathan's Famous 100 Years to commemorate the enormous entrepreneurial spirit of his grandfather's legacy and the business history of one of America's most loved foods--the Nathan's Famous frankfurter. He worked as a teenager at the Coney Island and Oceanside restaurants during summers, weekends, and holidays. After graduating from Ithaca College, William joined his family's company fulltime in 1976. During his tenure, William spearheaded operational improvements, and promotional and marketing campaigns, including judging the early years of the Nathan's Famous Hotdog Eating Contests. William, who rose to Senior Vice President of Corporate Foodservice, departed the company in 1996. William has been interviewed by The Food Channel, the History Channel, and numerous national and New York media. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Over the course of almost thirty years, I observed the company from many vantage points, as I worked in different restaurant locations and management positions, from opening the Coney Island front counter as a young adult to marketing, purchasing, and finally to corporate food service for the company. My ringside seat provided me with insights into how and why the company experienced spurts of growth while simultaneously surviving shifting winds during inevitable setbacks. Working in the family business presents an entirely unique set of obstacles and challenges. Behind the scenes, I heard earfuls of beneficial strategic discussions and witnessed occasional disagreements among family members and management. But through a common desire to build a legacy, and our love for one another, we found ways to overcome the nonsense and set aside the family drama to move toward the common goal. Having grown up during a time when our family, its business, and Coney Island itself were in constant transformation, I am positioned to present my firsthand observations and perspectives of exactly what transpired. Throughout the forthcoming pages, I reflect on the company's rickety ride through intermittent tenuous success, its glorious heyday, and all the ups and downs in between, against a backdrop of ever-shifting economic, cultural, regulatory, and political issues thrown our way. My sources include personal memories and conversations I had with my grandparents and parents, who never tired of discussing the early years and different business situations or marketing campaigns, as well as how we might expand the Nathan's concept. More recently, I conducted interviews with longtime employees, friends, and acquaintances integral to the company's development. I dug up and sifted through countless documents, correspondences, personal pictures, and media accounts about various family and business milestones to ensure the information herein is accurate. Another crucial resource includes the hours of interviews my cousin David Sternshein conducted with our grandfather, Nathan, just months before his death in 1974 at age eighty-one---may his memory be a blessing. Those tapes reveal a spirited, tough businessman who was determined not to allow his family to suffer the kind of deprivation or degradation he experienced while growing up poor in "the old country." These lessons from a hardnosed immigrant taught me more than I could ever learn from textbooks or academic settings. I am a product of my years with Nathan's Famous. I am even more confident that the lessons I learned from my grandfather and father, and from working within the family business, could be extremely valuable and meaningful to anyone starting a new company or looking to expand an existing one. All of these experiences have enabled me to take a step back and contemplate the history and legacy of my family and our little frankfurter business. The story of Nathan's Famous (and our family) has many twists and turns. My account may sometimes feel like a Coney Island ride---often a wicked fast rollercoaster, sometimes the thrilling Steeplechase, or a revolving carousel with floating wooden steeds and music of the calliope playing. The ride will be worthwhile and provide many practical benefits, as well as a great account of Nathan's Famous. If you've never been to Coney Island, this book is bound to serve as a sensory smorgasbord, bringing you the scents, sounds, and most of all, the flavors surrounding Surf and Stillwell Avenues just off the Boardwalk through the unique lens of the Nathan's Famous story. Preserving this legacy of hard work, spirit of entrepreneurship, and perseverance comprises the first purpose of this book. I am proud to be part of the heritage that continues to give pleasure to those who stop by the original location and the many Nathan's restaurants around the world, as well as those who purchase Nathan's products to prepare them in their own homes. Second, this book culls the lessons from my grandfather, who built something out of nothing with the sheer force of grit, self-sacrifice, and determination; from my father, Murray, who had the passion and vision to expand the company's menu and its geographic reach around the world; and from various mentors who helped my father and me to achieve those goals. Our hard work should inspire readers who have the passion, grit, and willingness to roll up their sleeves and open their own proverbial hot dog stands. A word to the wise: when you order your first frankfurter, take a bite without slathering anything on it, to enjoy what the best frank in the world tastes like. To quote my father, "The best way to take your first bite of a Nathan's hot dog is to have it au natural. Then put on either mustard, ketchup,

or whatever toppings as you like. The memory should last with you forever!