

The Poison Squad: One Chemist's Single-Minded Crusade for Food Safety at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

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Summary:

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From Pulitzer Prize winner and New York Times -bestselling author Deborah Blum, the dramatic true story of how food was made safe in the United States and the heroes, led by the inimitable Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, who fought for change

By the end of nineteenth century, food was dangerous. Lethal, even. "Milk" might contain formaldehyde, most often used to embalm corpses. Decaying meat was preserved with both salicylic acid, a pharmaceutical chemical, and borax, a compound first identified as a cleaning product. This was not by accident; food manufacturers had rushed to embrace the rise of industrial chemistry, and were knowingly selling harmful products. Unchecked by government regulation, basic safety, or even labelling requirements, they put profit before the health of their customers. By some estimates, in New York City alone, thousands of children were killed by "embalmed milk" every year. Citizens--activists, journalists, scientists, and women's groups--began agitating for change. But even as protective measures were enacted in Europe, American corporations blocked even modest regulations. Then, in 1883, Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, a chemistry professor from Purdue University, was named chief chemist of the agriculture department, and the agency began methodically investigating food and drink fraud, even conducting shocking human tests on groups of young men who came to be known as, "The Poison Squad."

Over the next thirty years, a titanic struggle took place, with the courageous and fascinating Dr. Wiley campaigning indefatigably for food safety and consumer protection. Together with a gallant cast, including the muckraking reporter Upton Sinclair, whose fiction revealed the horrific truth about the Chicago stockyards; Fannie Farmer, then the most famous cookbook author in the country; and Henry J. Heinz, one of the few food producers who actively advocated for pure food, Dr. Wiley changed history. When the landmark 1906 Food and Drug Act was finally passed, it was known across the land, as "Dr. Wiley's Law."

Blum brings to life this timeless and hugely satisfying "David and Goliath" tale with righteous verve and style, driving home the moral imperative of confronting corporate greed and government corruption with a bracing clarity, which speaks resoundingly to the enormous social and political challenges we face today.

The Poison Squad: An Incredible History - Esquire Borax defeated, the poison squad moved on to test other common additives, including sulfuric acid, saltpeter and formaldehyde. One of their targets, copper sulfate, was especially disturbing: used by food producers to turn canned peas a bright shade of green, it also caused a host of health woes, including nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, liver damage, kidney damage, brain damage, and jaundice. The 'poison squad' and the advent of food and drug ... Members of the "Poison Squad" dine at the "hygienic table" located in the former Bureau of Chemistry building in Washington, D.C. Experiments conducted there a century ago by Harvey W. Wiley, M.D., were designed to test the safety of food preservatives. Amazon.com: The Poison Squad: One Chemist's Single-Minded ... The Poison Squad of the title was a panel of volunteers who ingested known food additives such as borax and formaldehyde, in increasing amounts to determine how much could be safely consumed.

The Poison Squad by Deborah Blum - Penguin Random House [THE POISON SQUAD] shows the push and pull of competing economic, political and social interests. The journey our country has taken in establishing food, drink and drug regulation is an important one to understand because it is still going on. The Poison Squad Ate Questionable Foods To Keep People Safe Although "The Poison Squad" would make a great title for an action movie, it was actually the name of an important group from history. The poison squad was a group of undergraduate students established in 1902 who voluntarily ate foods with untested preservatives and chemicals to make some quick cash. Keeping it Fresh: Preservatives and The Poison Squad ... The Poison Squad assembled. Wiley is the third from the left in the back row. In theory, Harvey Washington Wiley's success should ensure that all preservatives added to our food today are safe.

The Poison Squad | Books, Et Al. - blogs.sciencemag.org The Poison Squad: One Chemist's Single-Minded Crusade for Food Safety at the Turn of the Twentieth Century. Deborah Blum Penguin Press 2018 352 pp. Purchase this item now. In 1844, when Harvey Washington Wiley was born, the federal agency at which he would eventually become chief chemist had not even been created.

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