



The Argument That Saved A Million Eggs

How one small town editor in Canada ended a century of broken eggs

An argument over broken eggs

In 1911 in Aldermere, British Columbia, a farmer delivered a basket of eggs to a hotel and found many cracked. Neither man would pay for the damage, and editor Joseph Coyle overheard the whole argument.

Source: [Bulkley Valley Museum](#)

A cardboard slot for each egg

Coyle designed a flat box with a springy V shaped cradle for every egg, holding each one apart from its neighbours so one jolt could not crack the whole batch.

Source: [Bulkley Valley Museum](#)

Patented in Canada, 1918

Coyle had advertised his boxes in his own newspaper for 35 cents a dozen since 1915, then patented the design on January 15, 1918, as Canadian Patent number 181662, with agricultural inspector Frederick Dundas Todd listed as co-inventor.

Source: [Bulkley Valley Museum](#)

One small idea goes global

Production spread from Vancouver to Los Angeles, then to new factories in Chicago, Pittsburgh, Indiana and New York, where the New York plant alone turned out up to 200 million cartons in a year.

Source: [Bulkley Valley Museum](#)

He never got rich from it

His daughter said the Coyle carton made several other people millionaires, but her father was never one of them.

Source: [British Columbia Magazine](#)

IN SHORT

A century on, a good carton still carries a good egg whole to a Multan breakfast table.

References

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