



Heartland Science

Ohio's Legacy of Discovery & Innovation

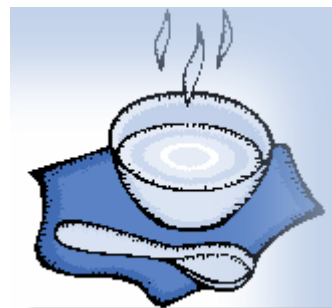


Agriculture & Food

From Aquaculture to Hot Dogs

Father of Snap, Crackle & Pop: Ferdinand Schumacher

Ferdinand Schumacher, of Akron, helped found the American breakfast food industry in 1856 when he opened the German Mills American Oatmeal Company. It was one of three companies that combined in 1901 to form the Quaker Oats Company, a diversified global corporation that sells about \$2 billion worth of products each year. Schumacher's oatmeal is still the favorite of 6 out of every 10 people who eat hot breakfast food. They buy more than \$500 million worth of Quaker Oats every year. Modern science has proven Schumacher correct in regarding oatmeal as healthy food.



Healthy Food

Quaker Oats blazed a new health trail in 1996. It became the first company with the U. S. Food and Drug Administration's permission to claim that its product could reduce the risk of heart disease. Oatmeal packages soon began displaying the notice: "Diets high in oatmeal or oat bran and low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease."



Eating oats and oat bran reduces the amount of cholesterol in the blood. Millions of people in the United States have high blood cholesterol levels that increase the risk of heart attacks, the nation's No.1 killer. For some people, a bowlful of oatmeal each day lowers blood cholesterol levels almost as much as anti-cholesterol drugs.

Popularizing a New Food

Oats? People don't eat oats. Horses eat oats. That's what most Americans thought before Ferdinand Schumacher immigrated to Akron in 1851 from Hanover, Germany, and introduced the country to a new people-food. Schumacher opened a grocery on Howard Street, and expected ground oats to sell like hotcakes. They did back home in Germany, and in Ireland, Scotland, and other countries. People knew that oat "porridge" was so nutritious that you could practically live on it. Oats were inexpensive enough for almost everyone to afford a good meal. And they tasted good, too.

Americans, however, wondered why Schumacher was selling horse food. In 1854, Schumacher invented a machine to chop oats into small cubes, which he packed into glass jars and sold. The cubed oats were so popular that, in 1856, he bought an old factory along the canal and installed machinery that processed 20 big wooden barrels of oats a day. That was the start of Schumacher's German Mills American Oatmeal Company. Schumacher discovered a way to make oats cook faster. He pre-cooked whole oat berries, which have a hard outer shell, and then ran them between rollers to produce flakes, or "rolled oats."

Demand for oats in the U.S. increased when the Civil War started, and the Union Army bought tons to feed hungry soldiers. It enabled Schumacher in 1863 to move production to a bigger factory on Mill Street in Akron, which now is the site of Quaker Square, a hotel and entertainment complex. As oats' popularity grew, so did Schumacher's reputation. People called him "The Oatmeal King." His kingdom, however, was only part of the realm that became the Quaker Oats Company.

The [Quaker Oats Company](#) was born in 1901, when several American oat processing pioneers merged:

- The Quaker Mill Company, which Henry Parsons Crowell had established in Ravenna, Ohio. He registered the now-famous "Quaker" trademark, and sold Quaker Oats in two-pound paper packages with directions printed on the back.
- A huge cereal mill operated in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, by John Stuart, his son Robert, and their partner, George Douglas.
- Schumacher's German Mills American Oatmeal Company.

Robert Stuart became the chief executive officer. Generation after generation of the Stuart family ran Quaker Oats until William Smithburg took over in 1979. Quaker operated as an independent company for 100 years. And it diversified, selling many other products in addition to oatmeal. They include ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, snacks, pancake syrups, flavored rice and pasta products, pet foods, and Gatorade sports drink and thirst quencher products. In 1970, Quaker Oats stopped production in Akron and moved its headquarters to Chicago.

In 2001, Quaker merged with PepsiCo, Inc., the Purchase, New York-based food and beverage company, and became a PepsiCo division. The merger produced the world's fourth-largest consumer-goods company.

Schumacher also invented the process for making Quaker Puffed Rice and Puffed Wheat, breakfast cereals introduced in 1913 with the advertising slogan, "Shot from guns." They boosted Quaker sales by 30-fold. He called the process "pneumatic levitation" because it blew "puffed" cereal through kilometers of pipes from one mill to another, giving rise to the expression "shot from guns." The puffing process involves processing wheat or rice in a hot pressure chamber and then suddenly releasing the pressure, so that the grain expands to many times its original size.