Rolled Oats Process Invented in Bushnell

The Nagel Brothers of Bushnell were the first to invent a process of making rolled oats without having to steam the oats. Up until this time, the oats were first steamed to separate the groat from the hull. The patent for this new process was later sold to the Quaker Company.

What are rolled oats?
According to the Quaker Oats web site, rolled oats are whole oat groats that are rolled to flatten them into an oat flake. The oat is called a groat after the hull has been removed. Old Fashioned Quaker Oats, Quick Quaker Oats and Instant Quaker Oats are all rolled oats. The oat flakes that are made to cook faster are rolled thinner and cut into smaller pieces.

Just for fun we are including this rolled oats recipe, taken from Health-For-Victory Club: Meal Planning Guide, Home Economics Institute, Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Co., Mansfield, OH, June 1943.

Fried Rolled Oats and Bacon

Place leftover rolled oats in a greased mold. When cold, slice 1/2-inch thick. Dredge in flour and dip in beaten egg which has been thinned with 1 tablespoon water. Fry 6 slices of bacon until crisp, remove from fat and drain. Fry oatmeal slices in all the bacon fat until brown on both sides. Serve with bacon slices.

The Nagel Roller Mills was founded in the early 1900s by John and Henry Nagel, who were born in Germany. The new rolled oats were first manufactured in this Nagel Roller Mills building (located where the FS Feed Mill and warehouse is now).

The first mill burned in 1910. It was rebuilt but struck by lighting and burned again in 1914. It was rebuilt in 1915.

This picture was the rebuilding of Nagel Mills after the second fire. The people identified are, “Mr. Ervin, one of the first boys to come to Bushnell, third from left; John Paul, fifth from left; Carl Nagel, Harry Nagel, John Nagel, Sr., Mrs. McGinney, and Henry Nagel.”