

# Food box

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Quaker cylindrical metal oatmeal tin. The yellow, blue, red, black and white side features an oatmeal cookie recipe. Information in English and French.

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Materials metal

Measurements 20,5 x 13,5 cm

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## Historical context

Based on the packaging and logos, this box of Quaker oatmeal was probably produced between 1946 and 1957. The Quaker company was founded in the late 19th century by Quakers, a religious movement from England that settled in the United States, mainly in Pennsylvania. Among other things, the Quakers defined themselves by their values of

honesty, integrity, strength and purity. In fact, “pure” is written on the box, referring to the product’s purity.

Since Nicolas Appert invented the can in the 18th century, prepared food has come a long way. At the beginning of the 20th century, the food industry used advertising to inculcate the idea that cooking was time-consuming and complicated. Many new fast-food-type products were born. One of the best examples is probably instant coffee. Quaker’s quick-cooking oatmeal also appeared during this period, in 1922.

Advertising was booming, and the use of specific colors was a well-mastered concept. Yellow and red make people want to eat. These are precisely the colors found on this Quaker oatmeal package. The practical cylindrical format appeared in 1915. “Larry”, the character who is in fact the company’s logo, appears right from the start, in 1877. He is a fictional character dressed in Quaker garb. He underwent a number of transformations over time, and it was Jim Nash, in 1946, who created the black-and-white portrait of the smiling man seen on the lid of the oatmeal box.

Quebec was no exception in the wave of popularity for this type of quick-to-prepare product. In 1946’s *La Patrie*, Montreal Canadiens field hockey player “Toe” Blake, a role model for youth at the time, asserts that Quaker oatmeal is the breakfast food young people need to be strong and vigorous like him.