

Highlights of Paint Progress

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1860 - The Dawn of Ready-Mixed Paints

The Civil War Era witnessed the birth of a nation industrially as well as politically. Men of enterprise risked their scarce dollars to develop this young country's natural resources, to establish new industries and to start new mills and factories.

In 1852 the infant New Jersey Zinc Company conceived and developed a unique method for producing zinc oxide direct from ore - one of the all-time most important contributions to zinc metallurgy. Produced for the first time in this country, this zinc oxide was whiter, brighter and had more hiding power than the one white pigment - white lead - then used. Zinc pastes were developed and marketed - zinc oxide in linseed oil for general use, in white and colors; and zinc oxide in Damar varnish for porcelain-like enamels.

This set the stage for a revolution in paints - the development of ready-mixed paints - for paint makers found that incorporation of zinc oxide into their white lead pastes permitted the latter to be packaged in thinned, ready-to-use form.

In this period many new companies sprang up to meet the growing demand for these ready-to-use paints. Customers preferred these first ready-mixed paints for their time-saving convenience, superior beauty and durability. These same features, greatly improved, are inherent in modern ready-mixed paints.

1848-1948 - Partners in Paint Progress. Based on zinc oxide, or with zinc oxide as a principal ingredient, the earliest American patents on ready-mixed paints were issued during the Civil War Era. Today, Zinc Oxide is still the back-bone of outside house paints.

The New Jersey Zinc Co. - Advertisement
Established 1848
160 Front Street, New York 7, N.Y.

Prepared paint was first offered for sale by a house painter named Quarterman in New York in 1842.

About 1827 Quarterman began business in New York as a house painter and conceived the idea of supplying paint mixed ready for use. In 1842 he established himself in lower New York, confining his efforts solely to the making and sale of ready-mixed paint. The chief ingredients were lead, linseed oil, and turpentine, which, of course settled in the package and was rather difficult to stir up.

In 1867 Dr. Averill of Newburg, Ohio, received a patent, number 66773, for new and useful paint compound which was supposed to not settle in the package and the formula was claimed to produce "white, glossy, cheap, and durable paint". The emphasis should have been placed on the CHEAP as the paint contained a minimum of pigment and linseed oil and combined with a large amount of water and benzine. It was practically an emulsion which had very little paint wearing quality.

This feature soon gave patent paint or ready-mixed paint a bad reputation from which it has never fully recovered. The better manufacturers would have nothing to do with the stuff but it was soon found that there was a definite growing demand for paint in ready-mixed form.

In 1880 the Sherwin-Williams Co. decided to put on the market a paint in prepared form under the name of Sherwin-Williams Paint. We developed one which was the very best it was possible to make at that time. Other manufacturers also entered the field and there soon developed prepared paint of high quality which has been constantly improved until the modern high-grade paint is offered in prepared form for every purpose. It is accepted by the Bureau of Standards, War, Navy and all Government Departments, railroads, shipbuilders, etc., as being the best form in which paint can be made.