

A Brief History of The Ozark Smelting & Mining Company's
Activities from 1909 to 1944, inclusive

At the time of Mr. Padgett's writings on Ozark Smelting & Mining Company's history, R. V. Brown was the local superintendent, the plant, as an auxiliary was still young, having at the time only two blocks of oxide furnaces, and, during his incumbency the only expansion in manufacture being the installation of the Lime-Sulfur plant, technical guidance for which came from Mr. Holton at Cleveland.

In 1911 Mr. Brown was called to Chicago and the responsibility of management became the duty of Mr. W. E. Corts. For the next few years there followed a period of profitable expansion, both in materials production and technical refinement in the leaded-zinc oxide department. Throughout the years and up to the present time the handling of the plant personnel, selection and allocations of men and labor problems in all departments of this auxiliary has been under the able guidance of one general foreman, Mr. R. F. Fitzpatrick.

Technical guidance has varied through these years and for the most part, been a responsibility of the superintendent in charge. Time and experience in the paint manufacturer's field had established the necessity for low and controlled zinc sulfate content of our product, and, to make this possible, a washing and drying unit was built to maintain this control, operation beginning in 1912. This new unit was engineered by Mr. Macklind and fabricated through the supervision of Mr. Deck. The leaded-zinc oxide, washed and dried, continued to be an active department unit for several years, an additional dryer having been added in 1925, and, it was not until 1930 that other refinements in the pigment manufacture made it unnecessary to further operate.

The demand in the pigment trade for more and more of our excellent product, made it imperative that the factory be enlarged to satisfy the demand. Accordingly, Block "C" was built in 1915, and, to supply the necessary roasted ore for these additions, Cappeau kiln No. 1 was built and put into operation the following year. The multiple hearth McDougall kilns, inadequate in tonnage, costly to operate and quite old and expensively maintained, were dismantled and Cappeau No. 2 kiln built, operation beginning in 1918.

In 1916, a fire, unknown in origin, destroyed the Lime-Sulphur department. Subsequent production of this insecticide was established elsewhere in the East.

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Throughout the years, the trend of the paint formulator was toward leaded-zinc oxide having appreciable amounts of basic lead sulfate, and, to satisfy these demands and to simultaneously reduce the formation of zinc sulfate in our product, a gradual evaluation of furnace design ensued.

Even before the erection of block "C", in 1915, the long, massive brick trails leading from the original furnace installations were dismantled, this to lessen the zinc sulfate produced, to more quickly dissipate the heat, to favor the formation of basic lead sulfate and to extend the operative period of the furnaces, which, heretofore had been shortened by the erosive action of lead compounds on the brick work of the furnaces.

In 1915, when Block "C" was built, the combustion chamber was modified to a steel tower instead of the former massive brick work, and later when Block "D" was built, further refinements were instituted on Block "C", all for the final result to increase the basicity of the finished product, technically and to reduce operative and replacement costs, materially. With the ever increasing demand for our product, Block "D" was built in 1926, new in design and with individual furnace control. So well did it meet the needs in pigment quality, that the following year Block "C" was remodelled upon its lines; basicity was sure and controllable and the life of the furnaces extended indefinitely. Cappeau kilns No. 3 and No. 4 were also built in this year to meet the demands for more roasted ore for the extended output of finished oxide.

1926 ushered in a new period of Company development in heavy chemicals. Zinc sulfate is needed in the manufacture of Lithopone and it was in this year that operations began to supply the Chicago lithopone factory and to be direct manufacturers to the insecticide and textile trades. This new addition to Coffeyville activities was supervised by Mr. Deeds, who in 1927 became the local superintendent, Mr. Corts having been called to the Chicago auxiliaries.

During Mr. Deeds guidance much was done in technical observation of leaded-zinc oxide manufacture and installation of scientific instruments for its control. Early in 1936, Mr. Deeds was transferred to Chicago, to be succeeded by Mr. Thomas who has held the superintendency to date.

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In 1930 the Company found fit to transfer the manufacturing of lithopone to Coffeyville, thereby knitting closer the coordination of control of its raw materials to the finished pigment, under the direction of Mr. Saunders as a consultant and Mr. Pascal as superintendent of operative procedures. This management was uninterrupted until September of 1943 at which time Mr. Pascal was called to Cleveland and the Linseed Oil auxiliary, and Mr. Downs became superintendent of the lithopone plant. The lithopone plant here presented itself as a composite of all that could be had in modern design and economy. During its existence here, all the latest in pigment needs have been produced as well as supplementary products such as double strength lithopone and, in a small way, zinc sulfide. Many of the problems attending the exploration of these products were studied and procedures adopted through the use of the pilot plant. The pilot plant still continues to be the forerunner of expanding interests of the Company into new fields; today, the production of indium is under surveillance, tests and adaptations for a lucrative yield of this precious metal.

The production of cadmium metal, also, became a profitable by-product of the zinc sulfate department with the advent of lithopone manufacture here. It was also in 1930 that Block "A" was permanently discontinued as a manufacturing unit having become completely absolescent and unfit for rebuilding.

Expansion in all departments necessitated the installation of more roasting capacity of ores and to meet the needs, two Herreshoff furnaces were installed in 1937, equipped in the most modern manner with Cottrell separators for dust, minimizing nuisance to the country side and saving of metal values, otherwise lost.

In the early years of this auxiliary's activities, power was obtained through our own power plant but with ever increasing demands on power for the Company's expansion in products made, it became expedient in 1925 to buy electrical power from outside agencies, a set-up which exists to this day.