

History of Sherwin-Williams Products

By W. R. SIEPLEIN

Note: The first two parts of this article appeared in the last two issues of The Chameleon. The article is concluded in this issue.

To handle the business in Canada to better advantage, a paint and varnish plant was erected in Montreal in 1875; this has since developed into The Sherwin-Williams Co. of Canada, Ltd.

To keep pace with the demand for enamels and paints with high gloss which were displacing the slower methods of applying color coats and subsequent varnishing, Buggy Paint and Enamel Paints were first made in 1894, Varnish Stains 1895 and Wagon Paint in 1896. Liquid Fillers was also added to the list in 1896, and 1897 brought the addition of Copper Paint and Oil Stains, Porch and Deck Paints were added in 1898, and Screen Enamels in 1899.

The manufacture of special paints for Railway and Marine uses had developed to such an extent that in 1894 a special price list was issued featuring these products, and in 1899 the first price list for Street Railway Products was issued.

All driers, japans and treated oils used in paints had been manufactured by the Company for many years, and during later years also some varnishes were made. In 1896 this branch of the manufacture was much extended by the erection of a new and much larger plant embodying all the most modern equipment. This resulted in putting a complete line of Varnishes and Japans on the market in 1899. The leader of these was Kopal.

Following shortly after Mr. Cottingham's appointment as General Manager in 1898, began a policy of very rapid expansion to make the business complete from the manufacture of raw materials to the finished products. Many new lines were added to provide products best adapted to a wide variety of special uses.

"Expansion" was the motto and the Company pursued the ambition to really "Cover the Earth," so well illustrated in the design adopted in 1895, the inspiration of Mr. Geo. W. Ford, then advertising manager.

In 1896 we began the manufacture of dry colors at Cleveland. A new plant was erected in 1899, and in 1903 the department was moved to Chicago to much larger quarters. Another dry color plant was established at Newark in 1911.

The business in the Atlantic Coast states had grown to such an extent that it could not be well handled from Cleve-

land, and a new paint and varnish plant was established at Newark, N. J., in 1901.

In 1902 a Linseed Oil Mill was erected in Cleveland to make the oils required in our own products.

The manufacture of leaded zinc pigment was commenced in 1904 through the purchase of a mine at Magdalena.



When not writing history or at his desk W. R. Sieplein enjoys the outdoors. These were taken this summer on his vacation in Canada.

New Mexico, and in 1906 the present smelter at Coffeyville was erected.

Continuing the general policy of producing our own raw materials, a White Lead plant using the Dutch process was erected in Chicago in 1910. This supplied all the white lead used in the manufacture of paints and put ODP White Lead in Oil on the market.

The Dry Color Plant was, of course, perfectly adapted to the production of Insecticides, so the Company's entry into the Insecticide business came about quite naturally. Paris Green was

the best known and most generally used insecticide at the time. Though first made over a hundred years ago, as an artist's color, it was not until 1870 that it was used as an insecticide. We began to manufacture it in 1903, and followed shortly after with Arsenate of Lead. This was first made by Scheele, a Swedish chemist, in 1775, but was not used as an insecticide until the Massachusetts Gypsy Moth Commission in 1892 found it was helpful in controlling the gypsy moth.

Lime-Sulfur Solution was added to the line in 1910. It is interesting to note that sulfur was used even by the early Greeks to control insects on plants and fruit trees. Pliny mentions that it was dusted on the foliage and on the ground and was burned in the orchards. Lime and sulfur combined as an insecticide was first used in 1845 in England. In 1913 Dry Lime-Sulfur was brought out and patented by The S-W Co., introducing an entirely new product in the insecticide field. In 1913 the Department of Agriculture found that the cotton boll weevil could be controlled by the use of Arsenate of Calcium, and in 1918 we also took up its manufacture. Discovery of this product also is credited to Scheele in 1775.

Up to this time many other products had been added to the S-W line, the chief items being Floorlac, Floorwax, Aluminum Paint, and Machine Paint and Filler, in 1901; Shellacine and Crack and Seam Filler, in 1902; Commonwealth Barn Red, Enameloid, Metalastic, Mar-not and Dry-o-night, in 1903; 1904 brought the addition of Sheep Marking Liquid, Snow White Enamel, Polish-ol and Taxite, Flax-tone was included in the list in 1906, during which year Handcraft Stains, Shingle Stain and Ebonol were also added.

The manufacture of linseed oil soap was first undertaken in 1908, when Flaxoap was put on the market, and in 1909 Concrete Finishes were added to the list. Old Dutch Enamel under the present name was first brought out in 1910, though the same product had been made under the name Enamelastic since 1906. Commonwealth Barn Gray, Carbolic-ol, Bras-Brite, Scar-not and Rexpar were added to the list in 1913 and 1914.

At the outbreak of the war in 1914, consideration was given to the manufacture of aniline dyes and intermed-

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Denver Store Has Real Outing



Above: Denver Retail Store staff and families, ready to leave for a picnic in the mountains.
Right: Two views of the Denver store party. Mr. W. P. Clark was there.



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ates which were imported from Germany. The Manufacturing Committee in session during the early days of the war decided that active research should be commenced at once. Accordingly in October, 1914, the first real work in making Beta Naphthol was undertaken. The first attempt was only partially successful. The work was carried on with great energy and speed, much of the strength of the Company being focused on this important development. New men were brought into the organization, a great deal of money was invested in plant and the manufacture of many products established. This department has been developed until the Company ranks as one of the strongest now in the field. Beta Naphthol, Para Nitraniline, Toluidine M and a considerable number of other intermediates and dyes are being made in large quantities and comprise a large share of the production in the United States.

In 1917 a plant for the production of Acetic Acid was started in Chicago to make the ever-increasing quantity required for dye, dry color and insecticide manufacture. The surplus was sold direct to other consumers. This business grew so rapidly that in 1921 another plant was erected at Bound Brook.

The distillation of coal-tar was commenced in Chicago late in 1914. This plant provided much more capacity for Ebonol, and added to the list during the next year or two. Phenolene and other disinfectants, Kildik, Roof Cement, etc.

The Advertising Department felt the need of greater uniformity in the appearance of the many lines of paints and varnishes offered to the trade, and as the result designed the present S-W Products label, which was adopted as the standard for all products in 1917.

A very complete plant for the production of Lithopone was erected in Chicago in 1917, thus completing facilities to manufacture the most important raw materials used in S-W products.

The Pacific Coast business demanded better service than was offered from the eastern plants, so another plant was established at San Francisco. This began operating on September 26, 1919.

In 1921 the manufacture of cans was discontinued at Cleveland and moved to Chicago to a new plant embodying all the latest features in automatic tin can machinery.

A new plant for the manufacture of White Lead by the Carter process was added in 1921, and shortly after included also a plant for the manufacture of Litharge and Red Lead.

In accordance with the general progressive policy of the Company, Ziko was introduced early in 1921, thus giving to the painter a lead in oil combined with zinc in such a manner as to permit him to use it in every way exactly the same as he does lead in oil.

For a number of years we had been making Pyroxylins Enamels and Lacquers in a small way, and during the fall of 1921 a new department was created at Chicago to produce it in commercial quantities, thus keeping abreast of the times with the new development in these artistic and quick drying finishes. This type of finish was first made in England by Alexander Parkes in 1855, but its use has been extended very largely during the last five years.

In addition to the items mentioned which were introduced for distribution to the trade through our agents, there have been innumerable products manufactured for industrial consumption and for railroads and steamships. These products have kept pace with changes in the processes of painting, and have

frequently led in new developments. This has required change from brushing material to that adapted for the many other methods introduced in modern factory practice, such as dipping, first largely used in the agricultural implement manufacture about fifty years ago, spraying, first attempted on a large scale in painting the World's Fair Buildings in Chicago, 1893, and the later methods of flooding or flowing introduced about 1906 to keep up to quantity production in modern automobile plants, and the coating process used for painting sheet metal, etc., about 1890.

The war brought to us many requests for materials of a wide variety of uses. Special camouflage colors were made for painting ships. A great many different finishes were produced for shells, varnish and other materials for airplanes. Enormous quantities were made for buildings. Finishes for motor transports were supplied to many manufacturers of trucks and automobiles.

During all this long period the Company has occupied a pre-eminent position in the industry, always making the best possible product for the purpose intended and selling it for a reasonable price. Everything possible has been done to utilize new developments in the science of paint, varnish and color making to bring new products before the trade. This sound policy, coupled with aggressive management, has caused the wonderful growth of the Grand Old Company's business from 83 products, total production of 450,000 pounds, to nearly 6000 separate products during the successful 1923 year just closed and the enormous total of over 190,000,000 pounds.

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