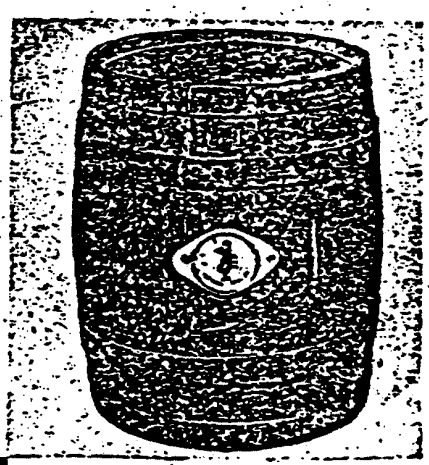
DUTCH BOY packaging has progressed through the years from the oak keg to the steel keg (pioneered by National Lead Co.) and finally to the colorful consumer line, of which the new Wonsover interior paint is a typical example. For 42 years the Dutch Boy has been the identifying feature of all of National Lead Co.'s paints.

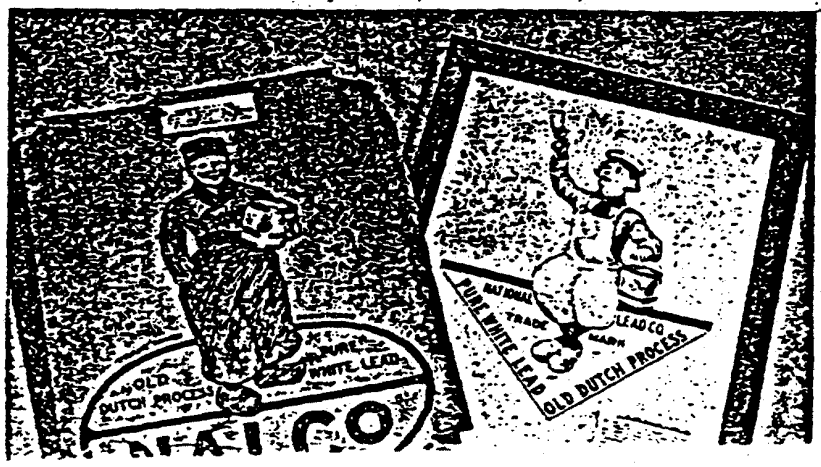
On the strength of the great fame and success of its trademark, the Dutch Boy package was a unanimous nominee for this Hall of Fame series. But beyond that, the principle of uniting diverse brands under a single powerful trademark is as good today as it was in 1907; the conditions which led to this solution are conditions still frequently encountered and the detailed story of Dutch Boy is full of valuable tips for today's packagers.

How it began

Incorporated in 1891, the National Lead Co. found itself by 1907 marketing 21 different brands of white lead—all substantially the same product. Each of



EARLIEST EXAMPLE of the Dutch Boy trademark is this 1907 oak keg, holding 100 lbs. of white lead. The masterful portrait by George Carmichael Earle (see cover illustration) was painted for the purpose in that year and the first label was a metal plate on the wood keg above.



CONCEPTION of the now-famous trademark is found in these rough sketches done in 1904 to 1906. Framed sketch at right was actually adopted as trademark and used in advertising in 1906; it served as the basis for the oil painting by Earle in 1907.

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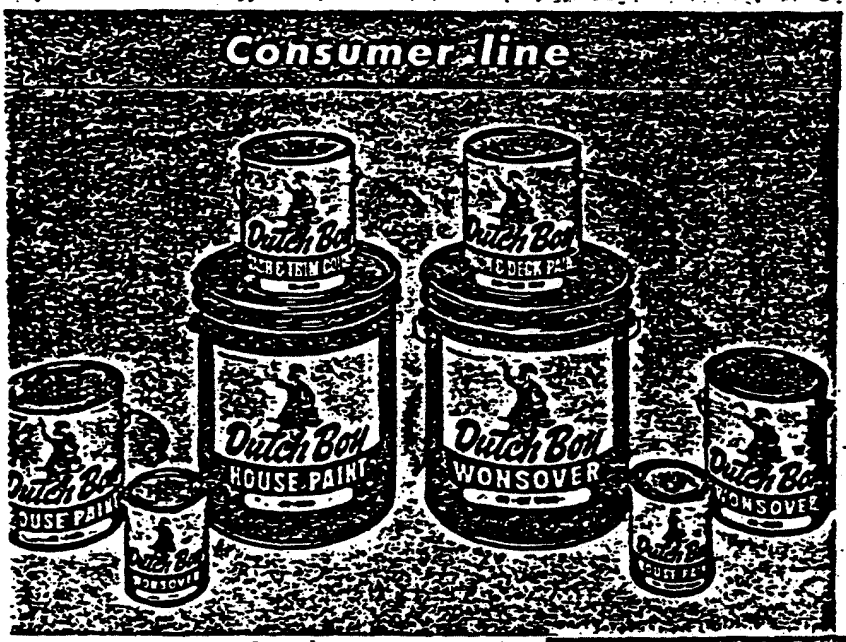
these brands was popular in some section of the country, but none was sold nationally.

The dawn of the twentieth century had marked a distinct trend to national marketing, backed by national advertising. The basic purpose of the National Lead Co.'s formation was to unify and extend the marketing of white lead. Lucius A. Cole, second president of the company (1896–1910), saw the possibilities of national advertising, but was handicapped by the profusion of brand names he had to promote. To advertise each separately in the locality where it was marketed was both costly and inefficient. To advertise all 21 brand names together, nationally, would be unwieldy and might only lead to confusion in consumers' minds. To drop the local brands precipitately, in favor of a single national brand, was unthinkable, because it would sacrifice the prestige built up individually by each brand—some going back over 100 years at that time.

President Cole and his long-time famous advertising manager, O. C. Harn, thereupon conceived the idea of a dominant trademark which would be common to all 21 brands without loss of their individual trade names and distinguishing features.

The Dutch Boy was adopted primarily because at the time of his conception as a trademark, most white lead was manufactured by a Dutch process which had been standard for centuries. The Dutch were famous for the quality of their paints and for the spic-and-span whiteness of their buildings. Holland was a quaint, romantic country and pictures of the wooden-shoed natives fascinated school children then as they do today. Putting the boy, with his wooden keg and brush, in the attitude of a house painter, gave animation to the subject, tied him up with the product and suggested that the quality of the paint was so good that even a child could use it. Finally—what may or may not have been foreseen at the time—a character in quaint, traditional dress could survive unchanged for generations, whereas a more topical figure would have to be changed frequently to keep in step with styles.



BLUE AND WHITE LABEL, with prominent full-color figure of the boy, distinguishes the new consumer line of exterior and interior paints, which were introduced late in 1941. Despite the familiarity of the trademark, Dutch Boy paints had not previously been merchandised direct to consumers. The quart, gallon and five-gallon cans with paper labels were a new departure and Designer Georges Wilmet was retained to do a thoroughly modern job for them.

ORANGE AND BLACK colors, lithographed in most cases directly on the metal containers, have since 1916 marked the master-painter products. Not as showy as the consumer packages, these containers nevertheless provide excellent brand identification. The steel keg for white lead, which National Lead Co. pioneered, was a notable packaging development of 1909.

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Mr. Harn gave specifications of his idea to a Dutch artist named Rudolph Yook, an employee of the George Batten Co., advertising agency, who drew some pencil sketches used at first only as ad illustrations several years prior to 1907. One of Mr. Yook's sketches was actually formulated into a trademark which, adopted by the board of directors in 1906, was never actually used on a package. This sketch (shown in an accompanying illustration) was comparatively crude, but it did show a Dutch boy in exactly the same pose and much the same costume as today. Mr. Cole suggested that this sketch be turned into really fine art as a permanent trademark for all National Lead products. He authorized Mr. Harn to commission the finest portrait painter available and the job was turned over to Lawrence Carmichael Earle.

Details of the painting's execution were disclosed by chance, long after Mr. Earle's death in 1921, when the "Dutch Boy" model—who turned out to be a New Jersey Irish lad named Michael Brady—was discovered working as a cartoonist for the *Brooklyn Eagle*. Mr. Brady told how, as a boy of 9, he was playing near his home in Montclair, N. J., when Mr. Earle passed by, studied him, talked with him and employed him as a model. Twenty-four years later, when a photograph of Mr. Brady in his 30s was reproduced in *The Dutch Boy Painter*, National Lead house organ, his resemblance to the painting was still striking—an expressive face suggesting a combination of mischievousness and seriousness of purpose, which, as that of the Dutch Boy, has endeared itself to millions.

Legend has it that Artist Earle paid off his model in ice cream sodas, but Mr. Brady (now dead), insisted that he was paid every day at the rate of $2 an hour, which he promptly spent on candy and soda—resulting, before the painting was finished—in a Gargantuan stomach ache. Mr. Earle worked in the studio of his friend, George Inness, not far from the Brady home in Montclair. Meticulous as to detail, Mr. Earle bought young Brady wooden shoes, blue overalls and cap, and had him wear them for several days at play so they would acquire a "lived in" look.

An amusing sidelight on the story came to light last year in a letter written from Los Gatos, Calif., by Lawrence H. Earle, son of the artist, requesting an enlargement of the original Dutch Boy and saying:

"My father painted the Dutch Boy in Montclair, N. J., when I was a kid and when the little local newsboy he used for a model quit the job I took over, donned the sabots, the wig and the costume and posed, at 50 cents a sitting, while my buddies were out playing sandlot baseball so that Dad could finish the commission. I therefore have a claim to being the original Dutch Boy . . . The wooden shoes I wore (sabots) were brought to me from Sweden by our old cook, Christine, on her return from a visit to her old home and I used to wear them to school, much to the delight of my schoolmates and the distress of my teachers.

"As I remember it, it was in mid-summer when I posed, hot as Hades, and I was most uncomfortable, but the 50 cents was a potent inducement and I stuck it out."

THREE CHOICES were offered by designer when consumer label was introduced in 1941. Center version was chosen as the most effective and workable arrangement of various elements.

The gay, lovable personality of the boy that Mr. Earle's talented brush reproduced on canvas—and that lithographers, engravers and printers subsequently reproduced in advertising and on labels—immediately caught the public's fancy. Although at first used on packages merely as an adjunct to the local brand name, popular fancy and the power of national advertising soon put the prestige of the Dutch Boy trademark in the ascendancy over the various local trademarks. As soon as this was obvious, steps were taken to subordinate the local brands to the Dutch Boy. Local trademarks were relegated to the lids of white lead kegs and the Dutch Boy name and illustration were used prominently on the sides of the kegs. Today the Dutch Boy has completely replaced all local paint brands and has made secure his place as one of America's most acceptable trademarks.

In fact, as National Lead Co. has grown and expanded into metals and many diverse products, the Dutch Boy has become a symbol for many products entirely unrelated to paint. His familiar figure and the company name are virtually inseparable.

It was soon discovered that the facial expression and quaint costume of the Dutch Boy so impressed themselves on the public that he could be readily recognized in postures other than the familiar trademark position, with paint brush at work. Unlike most trademarks, he has over the years been used in advertising and promotion in hundreds—perhaps thousands—of different poses. Whether painting a house, waving his cap, playing baseball or standing on his head, he is instantly identifiable as the National Lead Co. trademark and his warm, honest personality inspires confidence in his wares.

History of packaging

It is a tribute to National Lead Co.'s advertising and promotion that, although polls for years have shown the Dutch Boy to be among the trademarks best known to

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consumers in every walk of life, he had never appeared as a dominant figure on a consumer package until a few years ago, when the company introduced nationally the first in its line of ready-mixed paints in sizes designed for direct consumer purchase. Mixed paints have been marketed on the West Coast by National Lead Co.'s Pacific Coast branch for about 20 years.

In fact, until about 10 years ago, he had never appeared in full color on a paper label, on a nationally distributed product, for the larger sizes of bulk paints and paint products supplied to master painters—which previously comprised the company's entire paint line—do not lend themselves to that type of labeling.

Until 1941, the intensive consumer advertising and promotion of Dutch Boy painting materials had been aimed principally at building prestige for the name and influencing consumers to specify the brand when contracting for painting work. When National Lead decided to move into the house-paint market nationally, its trademark was ready-made and its acceptance assured.

Although white lead kegs are usually not thought of as a merchandising package, National Lead has repeatedly shown originality and a strong merchandising sense in their handling. Up until 1909 the paint package had been much the same as it was in the Middle Ages: a stout oaken keg, such as the Dutch Boy carries in the trademark illustration. In fact, the new trademark, shortly after its adoption in 1907, was first applied by National Lead branches to just such a wooden keg.

In 1909, however, coincident with early promotion of the new trademark, National Lead announced the solution of another packaging problem on which it had long been working: the first successful metal white lead keg. Metal packages had been attempted by rival companies for some time and painters were clamoring for the improvement, but the early versions were expensive and had a bad habit of splitting at the seams when filled with 50 or 100 lbs. of white lead.

National Lead Co. engineers worked out a process of drawing seamless containers from a single sheet of steel, and built and equipped their own factory to supply them—at no extra cost. The new steel kegs came in sizes to hold 12½, 25, 50 and 100 lbs. of lead. The smaller sizes had sloping sides and were fitted with bails. The 100-lb. size, designed to be moved by rolling, had parallel sides.

The steel containers (still referred to in the paint industry as "kegs") were finished in a dull, gunmetal black. On the side of the keg was found the new Dutch Boy trademark and under it an oblong label guaranteeing purity and full net weight of contents.

The steel kegs were a great improvement and an instant hit. They kept the white lead in perfect condition (with no soaking of oil into wood and consequent hardening of the lead paste around the edges), allowed every bit of the pigment to be removed, were smaller and lighter and made excellent paint pails.

These packages remained essentially the same until 1916, when the company realized that it needed better brand identification. If the small trademark happened to be turned away from the viewer, the package was not distinguishable from that of any other brand. Therefore, pioneering a thoroughly modern principle, National Lead applied orange stripes, top and bottom, all around the container and, in addition to the trademark on the face, put the words "Dutch Boy White Lead" in two lines of bold orange block letters on two sides. The April, 1916, issue of *The Dutch Boy Painter* demonstrated to painters how, in addition to having distinctive orange and black colors, this package could be recognized by its lettering when viewed from any angle.

No further basic change was required until 1943, when, like all paint manufacturers, National Lead was forced to find a wartime substitute for steel. The containing of heavy, penetrative white lead was one of the toughest assignments for wartime paper packaging. National Lead Co. worked it out—with a heavy, all-fibre drum holding up to 100 lbs. of lead. The product, however, has now been switched back to the all-metal container.

With the recent introduction of the consumer line of blended, ready-to-use paints, the Dutch Boy paint packages now comprise two distinct groups.

The master painters' products (white and red lead, linseed oil, driers, colors and other paint materials) still follow the simple orange and black color scheme adopted in 1916, although with modernization of details. Paper labels are not ordinarily used in this group; the labeling is generally lithographed directly on the metal containers which, in 25-, 50-, and 100-lb. sizes, are still produced in the company's own plant.

PROMOTION of the trademark has taken many forms over many years. Typical are the statuette counter display (center); the bronze paperweight souvenir (lower right); the children's paint book (upper right), a feature for many years; the 1919 Christmas card; the old "wet paint" sign.

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Introduction of the consumer line (1-qt. to 5-gal. sizes) required more complete and more colorful labeling and the company therefore turned to conventional paper-labeled cans and pails. The blue and white label which distinguishes this line was designed by Georges Wilmet. From three sketches presented by Mr. Wilmet, the present label (see cover) was chosen as giving the most straightforward presentation of the priceless trademark and name, the type of paint and white space for imprinting of number and color.

Success of the new label is attested to by the fact that it has been retained, with a mere change of wording, as the consumer line has expanded from straight house paint to include sash and trim, porch and deck and primer types. It is used also for the new "Wonsover," a single-coat, oil wall paint which marks Dutch Boy's entry into the interior-paint field on a national basis.

Advertising and promotion

Behind every successful product and package lies an advertising and promotion story. The lesson is particularly clear in the case of Dutch Boy products which, without intensive and continuous efforts to popularize the trademark figure among the general public, could scarcely have attained anything like the volume they represent today.

Yet, judging from available figures, the direct advertising expenditure on Dutch Boy has not been exceptional. Tables compiled from American Newspaper Publishers Assn. figures show that from 1939 to 1947, inclusive, national advertising of this brand in magazines, newspapers and radio totaled only $1,694,944—an average of $166,105 a year. The bulk of this was spent in magazines.

Naturally with products largely adapted to master painter's use, an important part of Dutch Boy advertising was also directed to trade papers. Even now, despite a line of paint products which appeal to consumers as well as painters, a large portion of National Lead Co.'s advertising goes to trade publications. However, as far back as 1909, top-notch consumer magazines appeared on the advertising schedule. A 1909 issue of *The Dutch Boy Painter* reproduces a double-truck from the *Saturday Evening Post*, which, it says, "has received much favorable comment."

In addition to national advertising, the company has consistently supported dealers' local advertising. But the really unusual and effective media of Dutch Boy promotion have been:

1. Supplying of samples, souvenirs, costumes, statuettes, signs, calendars, window displays and every other conceivable means of popularizing the Dutch Boy.
2. Continuous publication for 41 years of *The Dutch Boy Painter* (one of industry's oldest house organs), constantly exhorting the trade to the most effective use of this promotion of the trademark.

Nobody knows how many millions of lithographed reproductions of the Earle painting have been passed out; at one time the framed picture was as familiar in the parlor as "God Bless Our Home." Thousands of homes and offices still have souvenir figures in the form of paperweights, statuettes, etc.

The appeal was particularly strong to children and the company has never overlooked the opportunity to plant the trademark image in young and receptive minds. One of the most successful promotions for many years was a children's paint book containing paper chips of paint from which the pictures (including, of course, several Dutch Boys) could be colored. A coupon in the book invited parents to write in for a booklet on house painting.

The company still will loan a Dutch Boy costume—cap, wig, shirt, overalls and wooden shoes—to any person who writes in and asks for it for any reasonable purpose, and the little painter has graced thousands of parades and masquerades.

National Lead Co. has given the world a lesson in trademark development and prestige building, and the wisdom of its conception is a contributing factor to the continuous growth of net sales—from $80,000,000 in 1939 to more than $320,000,000 in 1948.

Caption - page 2.
Dutch Boy - Ann Rpt '77
N. Isaacson

In 1907, Theodore Roosevelt was President and some of the most popular U.S. advertising trademarks were the Gold Dust Twins, Phoebe Snow, the Zuzu Clown and Walter Baker's Chocolate Girl. That same year the "Dutch Boy" trademark and picture mark were born. The historic illustrations above—from infancy (upper left) to the present (lower right)—attest to the durability, popularity and ultimate success of the "Dutch Boy" marks.

The wholesome, lovable "Dutch Boy" picture mark was adopted in 1907 from a well-known oil portrait by famed Lawrence Carmichael Earl. As can be seen, the "Dutch Boy" picture mark, with its special appeal to children, has appeared in literally thousands of promotional poses over the years. The picture at the lower right shows the "Dutch Boy" picture mark on a new line of coveralls and jeans, as well as on the T-shirts worn by the outstanding University of Southern California swim team during a 1977 goodwill trip to Japan sponsored by Dutch Boy, Inc.