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PRESS RELEASE

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Nuremberg pioneers: How Friedrich and Johann Sebastian Staedtler wrote stationery history

From a vision to a matter of course: As creative craftsmen, entrepreneurs and developers, Friedrich and Johann Sebastian Staedtler brought wood-cased graphite pencils and coloured pencils into our everyday lives. The work of the two representatives of the Staedtler family also had a fortunate influence on Nuremberg's craft and economic history.

"English dark red", "sea green" or "azure blue" - magnificent colours that until 1850 could only be dreamed of, let alone captured on paper. By the middle of the century, however, pencils of the "Creta Polycolor" product brand in these three and 97 other shades were not only popular in the territory of the German Customs Union, but also in Austria-Hungary and England. This was made possible by Johann Sebastian Staedtler (1800-1872), an entrepreneur and innovator in his own right. He had already achieved something ground-breaking in 1834: He invented a process for producing wood-cased pencils in different colours. With this development in his luggage, he founded the company "J.S. Staedtler" in Nuremberg in October 1835, which is known as STAEDTLER. But he was not the only representative of the Staedtler family to help shape Nuremberg's development into a flourishing trading and production centre for writing, painting, drawing and modelling materials.

A creative grocer

Friedrich Staedtler (1636-1698) revolutionized pencil production on the so-called "ABC" bridge, where today the upper Charles Bridge in Nuremberg gracefully spans the Pegnitz. As the first "documented German pencil maker the great-great-grandfather of Johann Sebastian Staedtler claimed the right to manufacture both the lead and its wooden casing. From 1662, Friedrich Staedtler not only disregarded the requirements of the Nuremberg council, but also took on the carpentry trade. His aim of establishing an independent pencil-making trade in Nuremberg met with resistance. Staedtler was born in Nuremberg. However, because his father had moved to the northern city from Eisfeld in Thuringia, the family did not have citizenship. Friedrich Staedtler applied for this in July 1661, and in January 1662, the Nuremberg Council also dealt with a petition to allow Staedtler to manufacture pencils without hindrance.

An independent craft

On 28 February 1662, the council rejected Staedtler's request and decreed that both lead cutters and carpenters were still responsible for the production of pencils. The council also prohibited Friedrich Staedtler from trading in pencils. But he spared neither the production ban nor the trade regulations: On 14 July 1662, when his first child was christened he had himself entered in the church registers of St. Lawrence as a "lead cutter". From cutting the lead and wood to size, gluing in the lead and planing the wooden stick to the finished pencil, he produced the entire pencil himself and sold it in his shop. He also discovered a new production method for the pencil lead: Friedrich Staedtler developed a process with which he created new leads from the waste of expensive English graphite and presumably also the cheaper, less pure Central European graphite. He sieved these and combined them with liquid sulphur. Thanks to the sulphur binder, Staedtler's leads had good abrasion properties and were just as suitable for writing as pure English graphite. His creativity, perseverance and assertiveness paid off: In 1675, Friedrich Staedtler received the requested citizenship for the sake of his "good testimony." From 1686, he openly described himself as a "white lead smelter and wooden peg maker". Friedrich



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Staedtler followed his conviction and established himself as the first independent pencil maker in Nuremberg. More than 150 years later, another member of the Staedtler family built on this achievement.

The first wood-cased coloured pencil

As the son of the lead, pastel and red chalk pencil manufacturer Paulus Staedtler (1779-1852), in whose factory he worked from the age of 17, Johann Sebastian Staedtler was very familiar with the manufacture of lead and red chalk pencils. He worked on improving the coloured wood-cased pastel and red chalk pencils. These were unsuitable for writing due to the brittleness of their leads. After many attempts, Johann Sebastian Staedtler finally succeeded in 1834 in producing a wood-cased red coloured pencil that could be "sharpened to the finest point like graphite pencils", that had a bright and consistent colour and whose stroke adhered to paper. His technology became established in the production of coloured pencils and the range of colours became more diverse. In 1844, Staedtler took part in the General German Trade Exhibition in Berlin, where he was awarded a medal for his innovative coloured pencils. In the meantime, Johann Sebastian Staedtler made the transition from manual to industrial production - using water power to drive the grinders and a lead press to press the colour pigment mass.

"Scarlet red", "light olive" and "pale blue" - just three shades from STAEDTLER's current range and only a fraction of the innovative and colourful spirit with which the company continues to help shape Nuremberg as an industrial location. Developed from the craft fought for by Friedrich Staedtler in the imperial city, the lead and coloured pencil industry, with around 10,000 employees, had already become one of the most important branches of industry in Nuremberg by 1900. Johann Sebastian Staedtler retired in 1855. His three eldest sons took over their parents' business in 1856, which they continued to develop into a factory. The company was already selling its products internationally in the 1860s. The rest is history.

About STAEDTLER

STAEDTLER is one of the world's leading manufacturers and suppliers of writing, colouring, drawing and modelling products and is one of Germany's oldest industrial companies. With its products, the company inspires the creativity of its customers throughout their lives: from the first crayon in early childhood to products for creative design, STAEDTLER offers a wide range of products for all age groups and requirements, rethinking the tried and tested against the backdrop of digitalization. The company is headquartered in Nuremberg, currently employs around 2,000 people worldwide and is represented by subsidiaries in 25 countries. www.staedtler.com

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