

THE HISTORY OF MATCHES

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A match is a tool for starting a fire. Typically, modern matches are made of small wooden sticks or stiff paper. They had made a long way before they became what they are today.

The human desire to learn how to start a fire to warm themselves and cook food, forced invent different types of "matches".

Caveman strike sparks from flint and hoped that it will ignite dry leaves. Modern matches were invented with the discovery of phosphorus - a substance that ignites at a very low temperature.

It was not until 1680 that an Englishman named Robert Boyle discovered that phosphorus and sulfur would burst into flame instantly if rubbed together.

John Walker, an English chemist and druggist, sold his first "Friction Light" on the 12th April 1827 from his pharmacy in Stockton on Tees. Walker's first friction matches were made of cardboard but he soon began to use wooden splints cut by hand. Walker did not patent his invention. The danger problem was not resolved until the invention of amorphous (red) phosphorus in 1845. Carl Lundstrom of Sweden introduced the first red phosphorus "safety" matches in 1855.

During the Second World War, some troops were sent to the tropics, on the Pacific coast, where very frequent rains do simple match ineffective. This problem was successfully solved by a man named Raymond Cady who invented cover for matches, which kept them in working condition even after 8 hours under water.

In 1876, this country built 38 plants producing matches and a total of 121 plants worked. However, by the beginning of the XX century, almost all of them either went bankrupt or merged into larger corporations. Currently matches, produced in most European countries do not contain sulfur and chlorine – instead, waxes and chlorine-free oxidants are used.

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