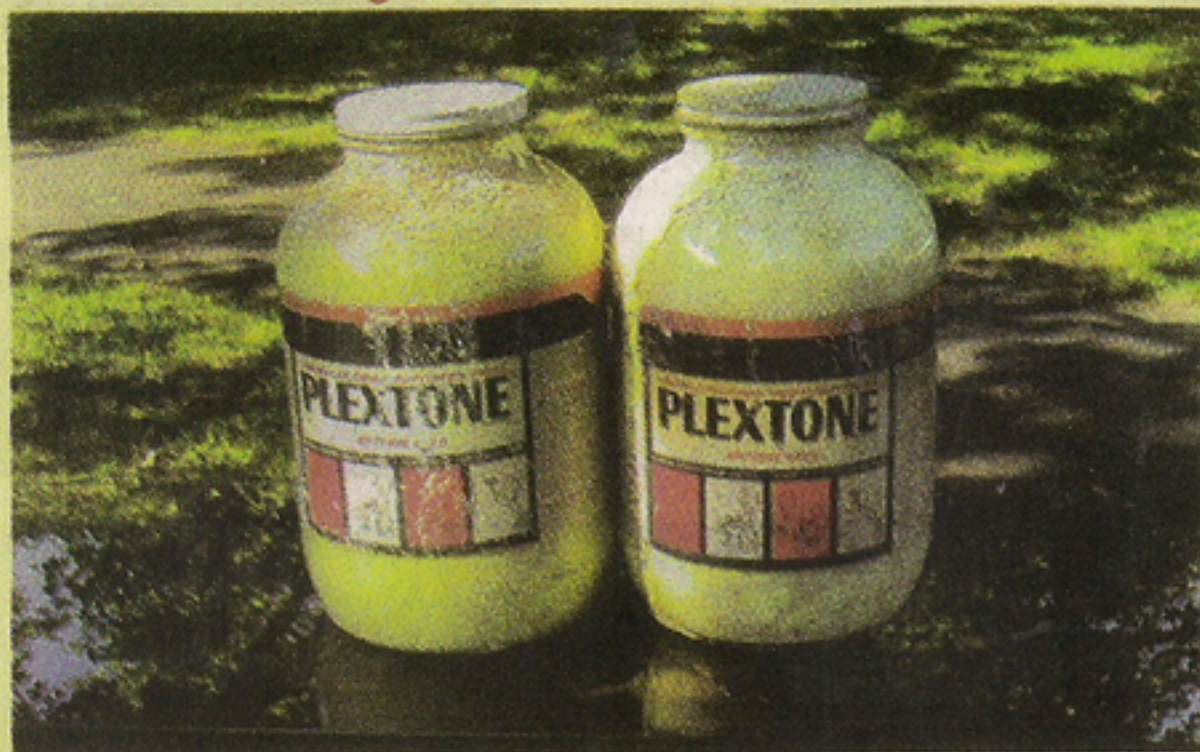




Hometown Page

The Scent of a Levittown Memory



What is in an odor or smell? Sometimes a remembrance. For me it came one recent day when I opened a preserved jar of Plextone paint, circa 1950s. When the smell of the old paint wafted out, I immediately recalled the first months in my family's 1952 Wisteria Lane house in the Willowood Section.

I could picture the walls, ceiling, doors and trim. They were all painted with that textured Plextone paint, which had a unique Levittown

That textured paint wore like iron.

smell. As a boy, I had the weekly chore of washing the walls with Mr. Clean. For this I was paid an allowance of \$1.50, which I quickly spent on Saturday mornings buying baseball cards from Mr. Snowcone in his VW bus.

I can well remember one weekend when I was home alone, and I snuck my precious bike into the house to clean it. I began to polish each spoke and fender; I wanted the chrome to sparkle in the sun.

Suddenly I heard a car door shut. It was so loud that I thought my parents had returned from their excursion to the Levittown Shopping Center. I immediately rushed my bike out of the house. But the bike hit the wall and front door on my way out, and made black marks on everything. I had to scrub them off in a Levittown minute!

I found a Brillo pad and scrubbed the wall and door clean. In seconds, there were no marks left! I was amazed at how the paint looked untouched after all that.

My Mom and dad eventually came home and never noticed a thing. (The car door I heard slamming was my neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Flinger coming home.)

As I look back, that paint wore like iron. It was, as my Grandfather would say, "Tough as nails." And its aroma had a peculiar and charming smell—memories of the beginning of Levittown.

If you would like a Levittown sniff, be sure to visit my exhibit of Levittown memorabilia in 2012, for the Celebration of Levittown's 60th Anniversary! ■

—by David Marable

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