

THEN *and* NOW!

An American Icon: Celebrating 70 Years

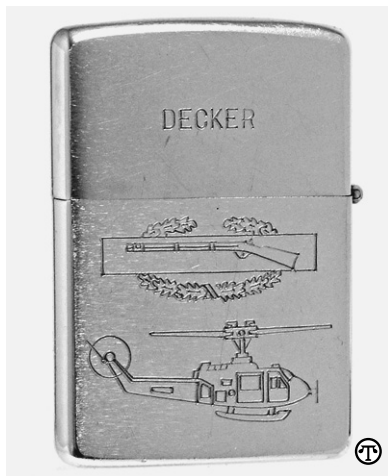
(NAPSA)—From the humblest beginnings in a small northwestern Pennsylvania town 70 years ago, an everyday item has achieved status as an international icon of American ingenuity and culture.

Then: In the summer of 1932, while George G. Blaisdell was standing on the terrace of the Bradford Country Club in Bradford, Pa., he watched another gentleman try to light a cigarette with a two-piece Austrian lighter. Blaisdell considered the two-piece design to be somewhat cumbersome, but he was impressed by the lighter's windproof property, so he acquired the rights to the lighter and modified it.

Blaisdell made the case rectangular and attached the lid to the bottom with a welded hinge to make the lighter easier to use with one hand. He began mass-production in 1933, under the brand name Zippo—which reflected Blaisdell's fascination with another recent development: the zipper.

The windproof lighter was successful as both a retail and specialty-advertising product, though it didn't become a phenomenon until World War II. Not only did the company give away lighters to all Bradford-area military personnel, but it ceased production for consumer markets—dedicating all its manufacturing for shipment to military base PX stores and ship stores.

Now: With the exception of improvements to the flint wheel and modifications in case finishes, the Zippo lighter remains virtually unchanged from Blaisdell's original



A certain lighter has grown from ingenious development to American icon.

prototype. In addition, the company's lifetime guarantee—"It works, or we fix it free"—is just as applicable as it was in 1932.

More than 375 million lighters have been produced at the manufacturing center in Bradford, Pa., with thousands of different designs and logos gracing the lighter case. The company's latest development is a multi-purpose ("wand") lighter fueled by butane.

Currently, there are an estimated four million Zippo collectors in the United States and millions more around the world. There's a biennial swap meet and even a museum in Bradford, Pa. dedicated to the company's products.

To learn more about the company, its products and its role in American cultural history, visit www.zippo.com.