

Tracing the Origins of Adult Coloring Books

Adult coloring books are booming! But how did the coloring industry get to where it is today? This timeline shows how coloring has grown in popularity since the 18th century.

18th Century

1790s

Lithography is invented and becomes mainstream allowing for easier printing as well as the ability to reproduce thousands of images quickly.

19th Century

1830s

Staedtler, a German company owned by Johann Sebastian Staedtler, invents the colored oil pastel pencil.

1840s

Friedrich Fröbel, a German educator and inventor of kindergarten, along with other educators encourage children to be creative through art education, which includes coloring.

1850s

Examples of coloring books emerge during this time and are called "painting books".

1880s

McLoughlin Brothers publishing company creates "The Little Folks Coloring Book" and becomes a pioneer attributing to the rise of coloring books.

Joseph Binney, Edwin and C. Harold Smith form a partnership and call their company Binney & Smith. Their early products include red oxide pigment used in barn paint and carbon black used for car tires.

20th Century

1900s

Richard F. Outcault invents the character Buster Brown and authors "Buster's Paint Book". This launches a trend to use coloring books to advertise products.

Binney & Smith notice a need for safe, quality, affordable wax crayons and produce the first box of eight Crayola crayons that sells for a nickel.

1920s

Newspapers publish drawings designed for coloring.

Art color pencils are invented and produced by Faber-Castell and Caran d'Ache.

1930s

Coloring with wax crayons takes off. The manufacture of crayons and pencils is a \$20 million industry.

1960s

Three admen in Chicago create the "Executive Coloring Book" for adults.

Cartoonist Mort Drucker teams with humorist Paul Laikin to create the "John F. Kennedy Coloring Book".

1970s

Dover's "Antique Automobiles" is published and is often called the first "adult coloring book".

1980s

Several publishers produce educational coloring books intended for studying graduate-level topics such as anatomy and physiology, where color-coding of many detailed diagrams are used as a learning aid.

21st Century

2000s

Crayola celebrates 100 years of making the world a more colorful place.

2010s

US sales of adult coloring books jumps from 1 million units in 2014 to 12 million units in 2015.

Faber-Castell, a worldwide color pencil supplier, reports trouble keeping up with demand for their products due to the adult coloring boom.

Are you interested in producing an adult coloring book but need some assistance with a unique idea? Check out our blog post, ["Are Adult Coloring Books Leaving You Ticked Pink, or Green with Envy?"](#).

SOURCES :

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