

# Historic Paint Colours of Newfoundland & Labrador

## A PALETTE INSPIRED BY OUR PAST

The Paint Shop and Heritage NL are pleased to present this collection of historic paint colours—the result of extensive research on over 200 years of paint use in Newfoundland & Labrador. Old newspaper ads, vintage colour samples, and personal recollections mapped the evolution of palettes and techniques. Benjamin Moore paint mixologists then used colour matching technology to match colours from the Matchless Historic Collection.

In the past, paints were mixed by hand and ranged in hues, depending on the person mixing and the materials used. Colours were often identified in generic terms, making it tricky to specify exact “historic colours.” This collection is meant to inspire you, in the spirit of the colourful places, buildings, and people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

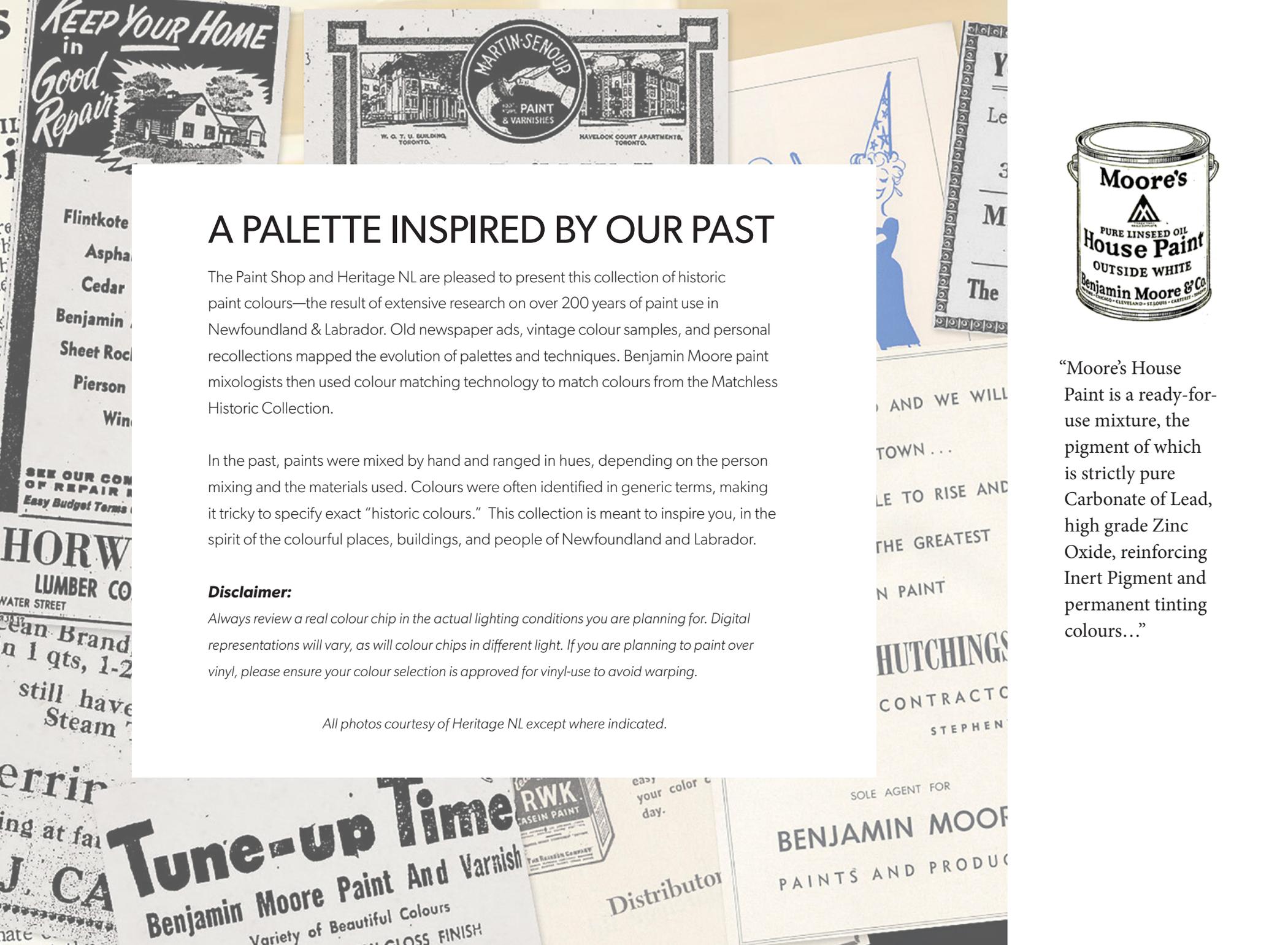
### **Disclaimer:**

*Always review a real colour chip in the actual lighting conditions you are planning for. Digital representations will vary, as will colour chips in different light. If you are planning to paint over vinyl, please ensure your colour selection is approved for vinyl-use to avoid warping.*

*All photos courtesy of Heritage NL except where indicated.*



“Moore’s House Paint is a ready-for-use mixture, the pigment of which is strictly pure Carbonate of Lead, high grade Zinc Oxide, reinforcing Inert Pigment and permanent tinting colours...”



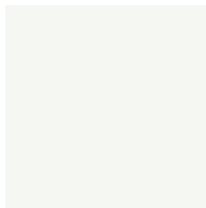
# IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS...

## WHITE

In the early days of European settlement wooden buildings were mostly unpainted. By the first half of the 19th century, whitewash was being used to protect wood from the effects of wind, rain, and sun. Lime mixed with water was the most popular method of coating a building. Whitewashing tended to turn grey and had to be reapplied every few years. White oil paint derived from lead or zinc later became a more durable choice.



Above: Liming fences in Cape Broyle. Used with permission of Ronald J. O'Brien's family.  
Right: Drogheda, Clarke's Beach; Moravian Mission, Hopedale; Joseph and Caroline Tilley Property, Summerville.



Chantilly Lace  
2121-70



Simply White  
OC-117



Stonington Gray  
HC-170

## ... and RED

In 1610, a container of red paint was spilled in Cupids Cove. Four centuries later, archaeologists discovered the spill—the earliest evidence of red ochre paint on a building in Newfoundland and Labrador. Indigenous use of red ochre stretches back much further, as the Beothuk used it to colour their tools, clothes, and bodies, a practice which is believed to have had spiritual significance.

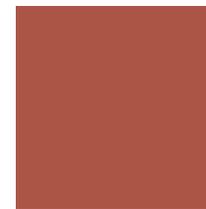
Generations of fishermen used red ochre to coat their stages and stores. It produced varied hues when mixed with natural oils. Seal oil produced a truer red, while fish oil resulted in a ruddy brown. Ochre paints were often thinned with turpentine or kerosene. By the early 20th century, red paint was being sold under many names, including oxblood, carmine, vermilion, and rose pink.



Left to right: FPU Factory/Advocate Building, Port Union; Salvage Stages and Stores; Grant's Stage, Trinity.



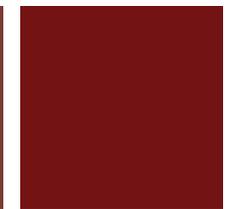
Red Oxide  
2088-10



Iron Ore Red  
2089-10



Brick Red  
2084-10



Caliente  
AF-290



*The Harbour Quarters Inn*

J.T. SWYERS CO., LTD



R'S  
ENT



## ...and YELLOW

“Ochre” comes from the Greek word ochros, meaning yellow—which is the element’s raw colour. Yellow ochre was a key ingredient in iconic “buff” colours, which ranged from soft gold to chrome yellow. Dories are customarily painted buff yellow, but the colour also made its way to the exterior walls of mercantile buildings and railway depots.

In the mid to late 20th century Matchless Paints introduced Dory Buff as an official colour. With the Matchless line of historic paint colours discontinued, the debate continues whether the original colour was a lighter buff or brighter yellow. Custom recipes of modern mixologists still abound.



Dorset Gold  
HC-8



Roasted Sesame  
Seed 2160-40



Yellow Marigold  
2155-30



Pumpkin Blush  
2156-20

Left: Philip Templeman Building/Swyers General Store, Bonavista.  
Right: Jenkins House, Durrell; Railway Station, Avondale; Benjamin Barbour House,  
Newtown; O'Reilly House, Placentia; R.J. O'Brien's General Store, Cape Broyle.



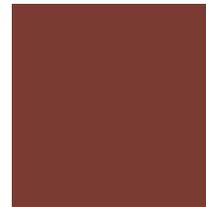


## CAPITAL COLOURS

Downtown St. John's wasn't always as bright and colourful as it is today. The coal soot that blanketed St. John's in much of the 19th and 20th centuries made light exterior paint colours impractical. Houses along downtown streets and lanes were mostly dark shades of green, red, brown, and grey. On working class houses, clapboard and trim were generally painted a single colour. Trim accent colours were typically found on more substantial homes. In the outports, white was still the most common house colour, often with a secondary trim colour.



Chrome Green  
HC-189



Brick Red  
2084-10



Taupe  
2110-10



Stormy  
AF-700

Left to right: Pilot's Hill, photo by Philip Hiscock; Barter's Hill, used with permission of City of St. John's Archives; Brazil Square & Casey Street, photo by Karen F. Munn.



**Corn Silk**  
CC-218



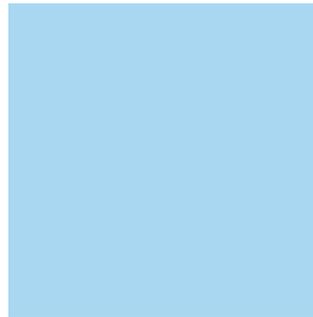
**Spring Violet**  
2117-50



**Malibu Peach**  
2169-50



**Soft Mint**  
2041-60



**Bluebelle**  
2064-50

## LIGHTENING UP

By the mid 20th century advances in technology allowed virtually any paint colour to be produced. Pale pastel shades of yellow, blue, green, and pink became popular, particularly in outport communities. Some home owners were quite creative, applying one colour on the top half of a house and another on the bottom. Lighter shades were also being used in the growing suburbs of St. John's—where coal soot wasn't a problem. Meanwhile, in the capital's old historic core, coal continued to be used up until the 1970s, which meant darker colours continued to prevail.



Left to right: William and Olive Green's House, Little Heart's Ease; Albert Drover, Hodge's Cove. Used with permission of Southwest Arm Historical Society.

Far right: Bar Haven, used with permission of Gary Wadman; LaManche, used with permission of Philip Melvin.





60

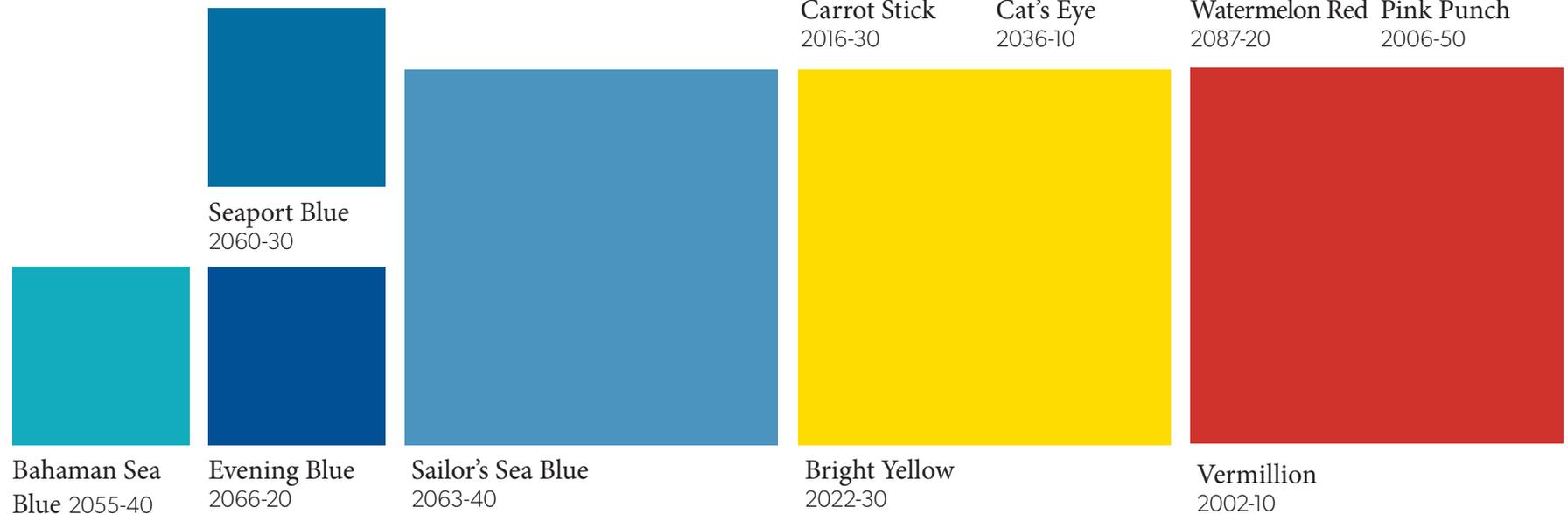
56

GREENWOOD ST

# THE LEGEND OF JELLY BEAN ROW

In the 1970s and 80s downtown St. John's began to burst with bright colours. A report commissioned by the St. John's Downtown Development Corporation in 1969 recommended a brighter set of colours. But the restoration of a row of houses on Gower Street in the 1970s (a project managed by the St. John's Heritage Foundation) just might have been the starting point for this colour revolution. The project used brighter colours and accents on several houses. Bold blues, reds, yellows, greens, and purples started popping up on every downtown street. Someone used the phrase "Jelly Bean Row" to describe the mix of colours and the phrase stuck. Bold colours are now synonymous with downtown homes and the palette has spread to communities across the province.

Left: King's Road, St. John's.

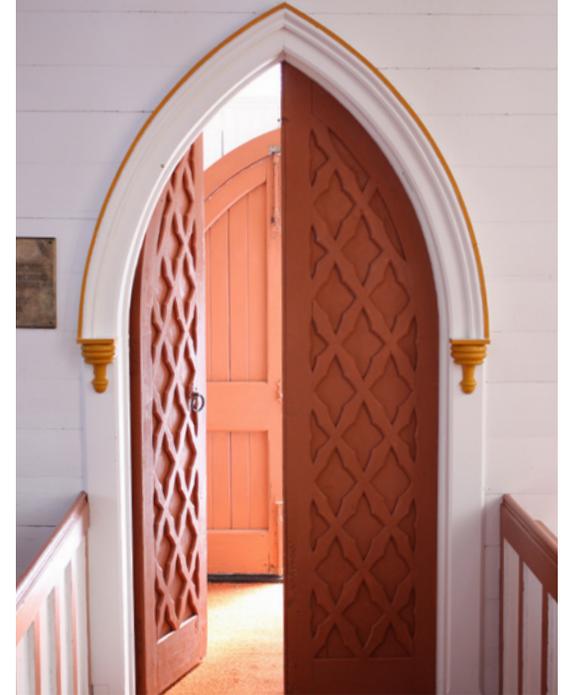


# A PEEK INSIDE

In the first half of the 19th century, deep interior hues were used to evoke the rich tapestries that hung on the walls of wealthy English homeowners. In prominent structures like churches, convents, merchant homes, and government buildings like the Colonial Building, paints and glazes were used to create complex marble, granite, or wood grain finishes.

In the early 1900s, some outport homes had cherry red parlour floors, marine green stair banisters, and yellow kitchen floors. Furniture was often painted in brown, grey, and creamy yellow tones.

Around the mid 20th century, pastels became the interior trend, with colours ranging from pink to green. Colours such as white, cream, and brown were popular for trims and furniture.



Left to right: Railway Station, Harbour Grace; Alexander Mortuary Chapel, Bonavista, used with permission of Bonavista Living; St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Brooklyn; Mosquito School House, Bristol's Hope.



## Traditional 19th Century Interiors



Stuart Gold  
HC-10



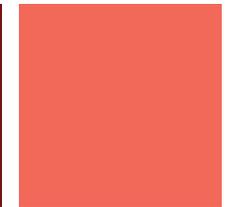
Philipsburg  
Blue HC-159



Prussian Blue  
CW-625



Caliente  
AF-290



Dark Salmon  
BM2009-30

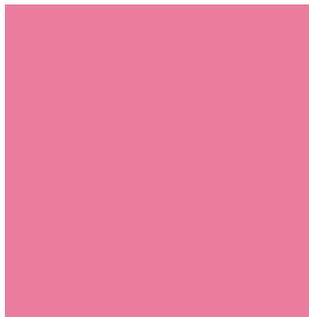


Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Nn Oo Pp Ss Tt Uu  
Girl Boy  
Cat Dog  
Tree Hat

Oh, do do  
Oh, no  
Oh, see Jack  
Pussy, pussy, puss  
**Baby**

# CHOOSING YOUR COLOURS

When choosing colours for your home there are number of different approaches that you may decide to take. If you have a restored period home, you may choose to employ colours that were historically used during a particular time. Or you may decide to express your personal colour preferences with bright, bold hues that highlight your building's architectural features: one shade for clapboard, another for trim, a third for ornamental brackets and window caps, and a fourth to accent your front door. Either way, we encourage you to select colours from this special Benjamin Moore Historic Paint Colours of Newfoundland & Labrador collection.



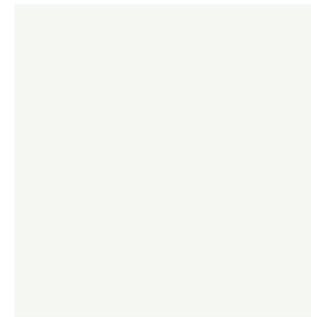
**Deep Carnation**  
2086-40



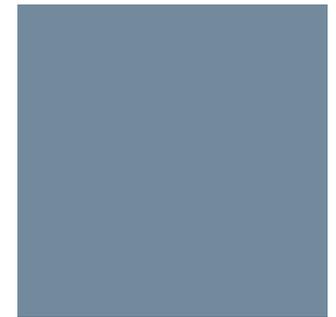
**Pink Punch**  
2006-50



**Pink Harmony**  
2013-60



**Chantilly Lace**  
2121-70



**Labrador Blue**  
CC-740



**Harvest Brown**  
2104-30



**Dark Salmon**  
BM2009-30



**Chippendale Rosetone**  
HC-58



**Antique Rose**  
2173-40

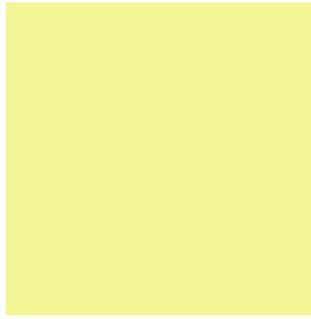


**Black Satin**  
2131-10

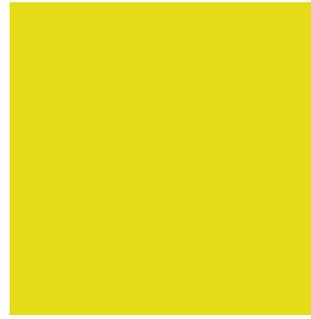




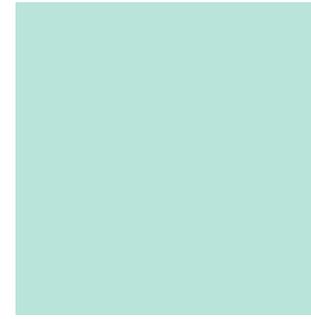
Hawthorne Yellow  
HC-04



Lemon Meringue  
2023-50



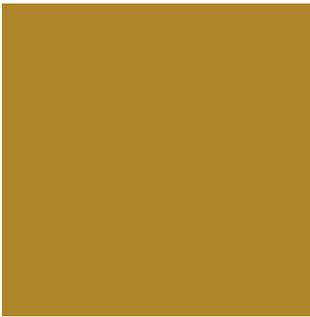
Sun Porch  
2023-30



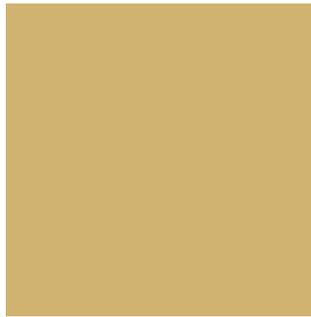
Soft Mint  
2041-60



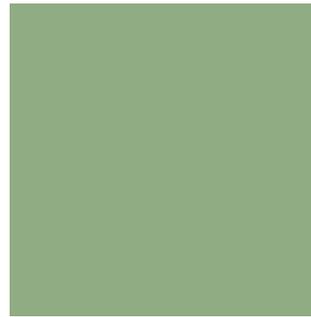
Bird's Egg  
2051-60



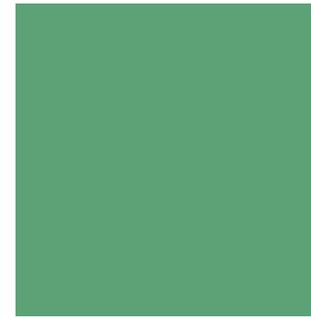
Yellow Oxide  
2154-10



Roasted Sesame Seed  
2160-40



Seedling  
AF-450



Stokes Forest Green  
2035-40



St. John Blue  
CSP-675



Taupe  
2110-10



Chrome Green  
HC-189



Cat's Eye  
2036-10



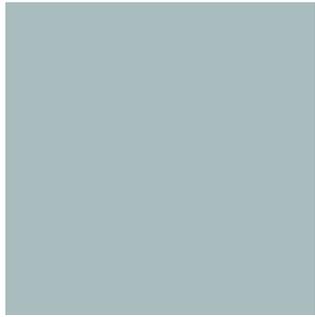
Grassy Fields  
2034-30



Kelly Green  
2037-30







Yarmouth Blue  
HC-150



Stonington Gray  
HC-170



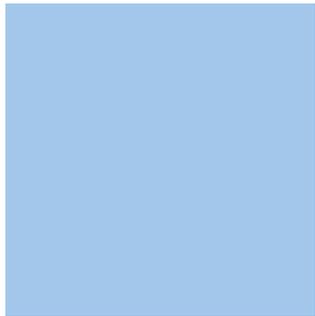
Iron Ore Red  
2089-10



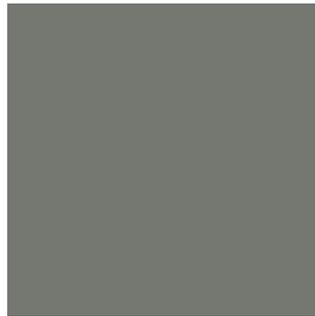
Red Oxide  
2088-10



Vermillion  
2002-10



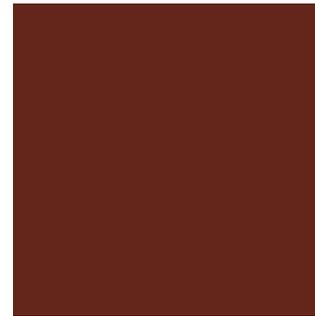
Bluebelle  
2064-60



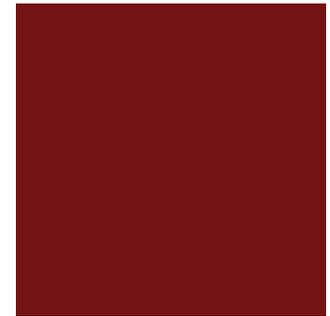
Secret  
AF-710



Storm  
AF-700



Brick Red  
2084-10



Caliente  
AF-290



Sailor Sea Blue  
2063-40



Prussian Blue  
CW-625



Gray Shower  
2125-30



Bewitched  
CSP-450



Cottage Red  
HC-184

Left: Lloyd George House, Dildo.





Left to right: Archibald Christian House, Trinity; Western Union Operator's House, Heart's Content.  
Back: Adams Home, Cape Onion.

## A COLOUR COLLABORATION

Paint Shop began in 1975 in St. John's, NL with a single location on Campbell Avenue that sold paint and wallpaper. Over the past 45 years they have become Atlantic Canada's largest home decorating network with 36 locations that sell paint, flooring, and window treatments. Locally owned and operated, Paint Shop has grown to become the largest Benjamin Moore retailer in Canada and is proud to support this Heritage NL initiative.

Heritage NL is a not-for-profit provincial Crown agency mandated to help preserve, promote, and protect the rich architectural and intangible cultural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. Visit [www.heritagel.ca](http://www.heritagel.ca) to learn more.



**Yarmouth Blue**  
HC-150



**Seedling**  
AF-450



**Sailor Sea Blue**  
2063-40



**Pink Punch**  
2006-50

