

THE HISTORY OF NICKEL



Nickel has been found in artifacts from more than 2,000 years ago; however, the understanding of the metal and its uses dates back to more recent times. The metal's name originated in medieval times when German miners looking for copper would sometimes come across a red ore with flecks of green. The miners believed they had found copper but once they mined the ore and started smelting it they found the ore did not produce copper. They then named the ore "kupfernickel" or "devil's copper" since it was believed the devil switched out the useful metal to confuse the miners. The ore is referred to as nickel to this day. Below is a brief historical timeline of nickel and its uses.

- Nickel was originally identified as an element by Swedish chemist Axel Cronstedt in 1751.
- Nickel's use in plating and in alloys with copper and zinc began in the 19th century.
- In 1857, nickel, alloyed with copper, began being used in coins in the U.S.
- Nickel was introduced into steel production in 1889, greatly increasing nickel demand.
- In the early 20th century stainless steels were discovered and nickel was found to have a beneficial role in many of the common grades, which is still true today.
- Demand for nickel continued to grow in the 20th century as it was discovered that nickel alloys were found to have excellent corrosion and high temperature resistance, making them suitable for chemical plants and jet engines, among many other uses.
- Nickel continues to be an important metal that is used in many products today including: jet engines, cars, solar and wind energy, and stainless steel hospital and kitchen equipment.

Sources:
<http://www.nickelinstitute.org/NickelUseInSociety/AboutNickel.aspx>
<http://chemistry.about.com/od/elementfacts/a/nickel.htm>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nickel>