

ZENQUIRER

WRC wants to know

ZENECA Ag Products

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100 Years in Richmond

by Cynthia Lipton

In 1897, Stauffer Chemical Company opened the Stege Plant in Richmond at the northeastern edge of San Francisco Bay. In 1997, Zeneca Ag Products will close its production facility at the same site. The plant closure is a sad centennial for the 32 employees whose lives will change forever. Their 646 years of service and dedication to the company will be remembered with pride.

Back in the 1880's John Stauffer was a representative for several European chemical producers. During his visits to San Francisco, he noticed that

English sailing ships were dumping cliffstone from the chalk cliffs of England into the bay. The ships carried American grain to England, and on their return journeys, they carried English cliffstone as ballast. Their waste became Stauffer's treasure. John Stauffer also knew that local manufacturers paid high prices for imported white chalk.



John Stauffer

Christian de Guigne

In 1885, Stauffer convinced Christian de Guigne, a French-born banker, to back him financially. Stauffer bought two shiploads of cliffstone and invested in a grinding facility. He sold the chalk whiting at



The Richmond Plant in 1912

Stauffer's major products for years.

Stauffer continually sought waste which could be converted into useful products. He extracted cream of tartar and tartaric acid from waste products that wine producers discarded as

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