

THE HISTORY OF ASPHALT PAVING AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION

615 B.C. Babylon first uses bitumen, also known as asphalt, to pave the "Procession Street of Babylon."¹

The Greeks, Romans and other civilizations were using "asphaltos," the Greek word for asphalt, as waterproofing, caulking for ships and to seal things like aqueducts, reservoirs and their famous baths.

300 B.C.

The Romans made road construction an art by using layered building methods. These roads could be up to 35-inches thick and were often comprised of four distinct layers: a rubble base followed by a course mixture of local stones, then a finer mixture and finally large stone slab pavers for the surface. These slabs were most often grouted with lime to seal them in place.



At its height, the Roman road network was more than **62,000 miles long**. Via Appia, also known as the Appian Way, began construction in 312 B.C. and is still in use today.



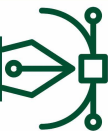
1595 Explorer Sir Walter Raleigh discovers a lake of asphalt on Trinidad, a Caribbean island east of Venezuela. He used the discovered substance to re-caulk his ships.



At the beginning of the 19th century, Scotsmen Thomas Telford and John Macadam helped revolutionize modern road-building layering techniques with an eye toward weight carrying capacity.²

TELFORD'S

design, which included a base of stones that were at least 4-inches wide, two layers of 2.5-inch stone and then a layer of course gravel, was estimated to support 500 lbs. per inch.



MACADAM

introduced sloped subgrades to enhance drainage and smaller aggregate stone sizes. Macadam's roads were only about 9.8-inches thick compared to Telford's 14- to 17-inch thick roads but could support 900 lbs. per inch.



1824

The Parisian boulevard Champ-Elysses was paved with blocks of asphalt and is frequently cited as the first asphalt road similar to the roads we use today.³



1866

Tar macadam pavement, which utilized a mixture of coal tar, sawdust, ashes and more, was used to pave roads in Knoxville, Tennessee. Washington, D.C. received similar tar concrete paved roads in 1871.



1870

The United States got its first asphalt road in Newark, New Jersey thanks to Belgian chemist Edmund J. de Smedt. His formula, which de Smedt called sheet asphalt pavement, is considered by many to be the first modern asphalt paving solution.



1907

As demand for more miles of better roads rapidly increased, pavers in the United States began relying on petroleum-derived asphalt rather than naturally occurring bitumen.

1956

The U.S. Congress passed the Interstate Highway Act, giving the states a combined \$51 billion to improve roads.

The Interstate Highway Act was one of the primary driving forces behind the adoption of more advanced paving methods and technology, including things like vibratory steel-wheel rollers and extra-wide finishers.



2005

The United States passed the 2.5-million-mile mark for paved roads. The Federal Highway Administration documented more than 2,601,490 miles of pavement.



**BENEFIT FROM HIGH QUALITY ASPHALT PAVING IN THE SEATTLE AREA
CALL LAKERIDGE PAVING COMPANY FOR A REPAIR OR INSTALLATION ESTIMATE**

COVINGTON
253-631-8290

TACOMA
253-535-6305

BELLEVUE
425-453-0073

TOLL FREE
888-403-8290

¹http://www.asphaltpavement.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21

²<https://www.pavementinteractive.org/reference-desk/pavement-types-and-history/pavement-history/>

³<https://www.uniquepavingmaterials.com/asphalt-paving-throughout-history/>