

Use

Moore

Paint

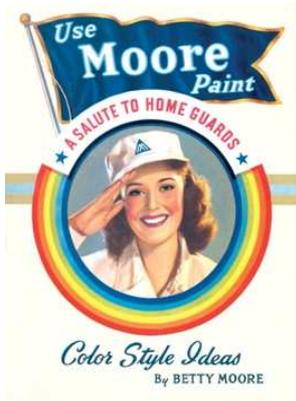
A SALUTE TO HOME GUARDS



Color Style Ideas

By BETTY MOORE

Betty Moore – Exceptional Character



Who was Betty Moore?

An imaginary character created to provide warm and friendly decorating advice over the radio, Betty Moore was given life by a succession of actresses from approximately 1930 to the 1960s.

The actresses may have been pretending, but the advice they offered was real.



Betty became an excellent medium for the communication with consumers. A group of well-trained decorators—mainly women—who staffed Benjamin Moore’s Home Decorating Department provided the information.

They also personally answered consumer decorating questions by mail and created Betty Moore paint and decorating guides that were distributed to the public by mail and through Benjamin Moore® paint retailers.

This is a “portrait” of Betty Moore as imagined by an artist some time in the 1930s. (Benjamin Moore Archives)



Betty Moore on the Radio.

Here’s a typical poster advertising the Betty Moore radio programs. Such posters would have been prominently featured in paint store windows.

As radio became more popular in the 1920s, national networks and sponsored programs developed. Benjamin Moore started broadcasting nationally in 1929 around the same time as the company established its department of home decorating.

The first radio voice of the paint company was that of Ida Bailey Allen, a decorating authority of the time. By 1930, the fictional Betty Moore was presenting the company’s color and decorating advice coast to coast from midwinter through early summer at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesdays.

As the second broadcasting season came to an end on July 22, 1932, an estimated 100,000 listeners were members of the Betty Moore Triangle Club, free to all (although occasionally a small fee of ten cents might be collected for a series of mailed decorating booklets).

The radio programs featured Betty Moore talking about room color schemes and giving simple decorating tips and advice on how to do a good job when painting. All was not paint alone on the 15-minute programs. A crooner provided light entertainment and exchanged banter with Betty Moore.

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Betty Moore in Paint Stores.

Store window displays and signs such as this one at Hankammer Hardware & Radio advertised the Betty Moore Paint Service.



Benjamin Moore encouraged paint retailers to make use of the Betty Moore persona to personalize the process of decorating with paint. Many retailers took advantage of the opportunity, as this store front shows. Betty Moore also made in-store appearances to which consumers were invited.

The company offered retailers regular weekly syndicated newspaper features on color and decorating under the Betty Moore byline for submission to their local newspaper. Some typical headlines were: Color Brightens Closets, Paint Renews Furniture, Summer Charm for Winter Bedrooms, and New Colors Make Good Kitchen Companions.



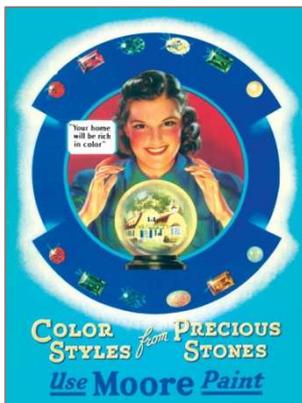
Decorating by the Book with Betty Moore.

Printed illustrated brochures described the decorating schemes of the radio broadcasts. These were available free to consumers who wrote in for them or who visited a paint store to pick up a copy. Color and decorating schemes were available for virtually every house as well as exteriors.

Here's a typical example—a "springtime kitchen" with a cheerful blue white and coral color scheme—virtually all of it created thanks to the magic of Benjamin Moore® paint. Walls, ceiling, upper cupboards, freestanding furniture and wood trim were ivory with coral trim Lower cupboards were cornflower blue. The existing linoleum floor was treated to a marbled blue and white painted finish with a black border. Either Dulamel or Interior Gloss, both Benjamin Moore® paint brands of the day, were the suggested paints.

"This kitchen combines cool (blue) and warm (coral) tones attractively against a neutral ivory background. The perky curtain arrangement gives the window width," commented Betty Moore. Though the illustration is undated, it is probably from the late 1930s or early 40s.

This "Springtime Kitchen" is an example of a typical room setting in the late 1930s and early 40s, as promoted by Betty Moore.



Betty Moore's Color Advice.

Betty Moore is cast as a fortuneteller in this brochure from 1942.

In the 1920s and early 30s, Americans enthusiastically embraced the radio as an entertainment and information medium. By 1932, one out of every three homes in the United States had a radio and devoted listeners responded to what they heard and to offers of help by writing letters. Betty Moore's mail often topped 400 letters a day. On February 23, 1934, for example, 497 letters were received at company headquarters at 511 Canal Street in lower Manhattan.

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One correspondent wrote: "Your decorating suggestions and talks help so much in planning a nice home and are a great help in my 4H work. I display your photos and charts in my girls' club room." Who answered all these letters and responded to decorating questions? Trained colorists who were known in the company as "Betty Moores." They responded in the name of Betty Moore to queries from consumers about paint, color schemes and decorating. The Betty Moores also prepared color schemes for paint retailers who were handling commercial jobs such as repainting a hospital, dormitory or hotel.



Betty Moore No More.

This kitchen and dining area pictured in a Betty Moore’s Color Living brochure, dating from the 1950s, offers guidance for decorating small apartments.

There was a hunger for more color after World War Two ended in 1946. Wartime paint shortages abated as people went back to peace-time pursuits of fixing up their home and property. Housing was hard to come by, however, and many people were making do in small apartments.

Betty Moore responded with suggestions for small-space decorating. “Coordinate color for small apartments,” she advises in this post-war consumer brochure. “Small apartments seem larger if the walls are painted in light tones and the color schemes are closely coordinated. Notice the subtle relationship of color in these two rooms which might well be used in the same small apartment. Quiet backgrounds with well-placed accents of brilliant color lend distinction to your rooms and create the illusion of spacious dignity.” The suggested colors include primrose yellow for walls and ceiling, silver gray for trim, and light blue and white for furniture.

By 1960, Betty Moore had been dispensing decorating advice for 30 years, but her time was drawing to an end.

The exact date when Betty Moore retired to a well-earned rest is unknown but as the decade progressed, the company moved on to satisfy consumer demand for ever more colors and more sophisticated and personalized decorating choices by developing computerized color matching and other methods with choices of thousands of hues in which to paint their rooms and possessions.

