

Carter's Ink Company Collection

Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Provenance: Ongoing donation by John Hinkel, April 2018.

Collection ID: CHC031

Dates: circa 1909-1976

Extent: 1.6 linear feet (1 flat file box)

Finding aid by: Brittany Fox, September 2019. Finding aid will be updated as new donations come in.

Access: Collection is available for research under the CHC rules of use

Collection Description:

This collection contains ephemera relating to the Carter's Ink Company that was collected by John Hinkel, a "labeled master inks" collector from Missouri. The Carter's Ink Company, a nationally-prominent manufacturer of inks and office supplies produced various forms of marketing tools in order to distribute information to both the general public, merchant sellers, and employees. The company's products supplied a wide scope of locations, both within and outside of the United States. Its transcontinental reach is reflected in some items within the collection, namely the advertising materials.

This collection consists of approximately 130 items in 8 folders of advertisements, internal corporate documents, and external publications. The independently produced advertisements range from cardstock illustrations, postcards, bottle-shaped adverts, a calendar, and a dictionary. Other advertisements are incorporated in larger magazine or newspaper publications. The bulk of the corporate documents concern information pertinent to general workers, including employee rules, as well as the official company newsletter. Other items include product catalogs, price guidebooks, and pocket pamphlets for sellers and buyers.

Historical Note:

The Carter's Ink Company was established in the late nineteenth century but was rooted in an earlier endeavor by William Carter, a wholesale paper dealer based on Water Street, Boston. In 1858, Carter created Carter's Combined, a small writing and copying ink venture. After the Civil War, he and his relative, John W. Carter, expanded the business with a third business partner and salesman, James P. Dinsmore. They added a separate office on Broad and Congress Streets in Boston as well as a detached firm, Carter, Dinsmore, & Co. The firm relocated to Batterymarch Street after the Boston Fire of 1872 with a subsequent move to Columbus Avenue at a later date.

The late-nineteenth century brought major administrative and organizational changes to the business, instigated by James P. Dinsmore's retirement in 1888 and John W. Carter's unexpected death. In 1895, John W. Carter died by drowning; prior to his death, he married Helen Burrage

Carter (d. 1934) in 1873. They had two sons who worked for the family business: Philip W. Carter and president Richard B. Carter. In 1910, the Carter's Ink Company relocated to a new facility on First Street in Cambridge. An L-shaped four-story building designed by Densmore & LeClear, it was positioned across Athenaeum Street from Ginn & Co.'s printing and publishing plant. The new automated plant facilitated an expansion of the business so that by 1930 it became one of the biggest ink manufacturers in the country. It even had a branch in Montreal, Quebec. The Montreal branch was established by William Carter's son, Edward (1839-1891). The company also added a manufacturing unit located at 18 Ames Street in Cambridge.

The prominence of the company was associated with its production of iron-gall, blue-black permanent ink. This type of ink is made of iron salts and tannin suspended in a colorless liquid. The components react with oxygen and create the blue colorant. Over time, the blue fades and the iron-gall develops into its permanent black form. In the 1890s, the company expanded its product list to include Photography Paste with other items following suit.

Carter's Ink Company was also a major participant in local Cambridge activities-- especially sports-- after its relocation to the city in 1910. Starting around 1920, it participated in the Cambridge Industrial Athletic League. The league members competed in bowling, track, swimming and diving, shot put, baseball, and basketball. They often placed at the local Y.M.C.A. and the group had supplementary leagues, including: the Cambridge Municipal Baseball League and Cambridge Industrial Bowling League, two of the most popular sports. Additionally, the company formulated a War Savings Society during WWI and it was a member of the Kendall Square's Manufacturers' Association. To give back to the community, the Carter's Inc Company dedicated a rooftop clock to Cambridge in 1926. It was the second largest illuminated clock in New England at the time.

To encourage sales, Carter's Ink Company created many imaginative marketing tools and advertising stratagems. The items in this collection are of high graphic quality and reflect the advanced design characteristics of their period, although some of the promotional material has not transitioned well into the modern age. For example, a figure called the Inky Racer was the mascot of the company's erasing solution. These racist depictions do not reflect the views of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

The marketing and advertising materials are significant for their associations with a major national industry and for the high quality of the commercial artwork and graphic designs they contain.

Carter's highlighted its corporate history and the general history of ink through its pamphlet publications. It published the book "Little Known Boston" in 1927 which sketched points of interest in Boston. The illustrations were drawn by Francis Hight and the effort was promoted by the company's advertising manager, Fletcher W. Taft.

The Carter's Ink Company's success waned through the second half of the twentieth century. It witnessed an employee strike in October 1965 of undetermined cause. In 1976 it was purchased and incorporated into the Dennison Manufacturing Company in Waltham, Mass.

Resources Consulted:

A.N. Murray. *Our Neighbors at Kendall Square*. Cambridge: The Murray Printing Company, 1922.

Cambridge Historical Society, "Carter's Ink," *Industry in Cambridge*, 2012.

<https://cambridgehistory.org/industry/cartersink.html>

Cambridge Public Library's Historic Cambridge Newspaper Collection.

<https://cambridge.dlconsulting.com/?a=p&p=home&e=-----en-20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-%22corcoran+park%22----->

Processing and Arrangement Notes:

The original order of the collection mainly reflected the material type and size of the items. This organization was generally upheld except for some outlier items, such as some pocket-sized catalog pamphlets.

Additionally, during the physical processing of the collection, improper plastic encasements were removed and replaced. Additional plastic protectors were added to secure the structural integrity of any items deemed fragile.

Related Materials:

For more information on the Carter's Ink Company, see the *Cambridge Industry and Business -- Manuals and Promotional Materials (1916-1965)* subseries of *Series V: Published Materials* in the Cambridge Ephemera Collection, CHC002.

Scope and Content:

This collection is arranged into three series comprised of Advertising materials; Guidebooks; and Internal publications and memos. Each series is further divided by intended use and format type. The arrangement hierarchy expresses this organization:

Series I: Advertising materials

 Subseries I: Card ads and mementos

 Subseries II: Magazine and newspaper ads

Series II: Guidebooks

 Subseries I: User publicity

 Subseries II: Merchant guides and catalogs

Series III: Internal publications and memos

 Subseries I: Worker guides and memos

 Subseries II: *Inkling* newspaper

Item-Level List:

This list itemizes the individual record unless otherwise expressly stated. The names of the folders correspond to the Series and Subseries indicated in the Scope and Content section.

Folder 1: Card Ads and Mementos

Inky Racer promotional card
Carter's Carmine Fluid mockup drawing
Carter's Mucilage promotion card
Carter's promotion card for McAuliffe Paper Co., Burlington, VT
Call for Carter's Fountain Pen Ink card
Carter's Inx Writing Fluid card
Carter's Writing Fluid card
Call for Carter's Howard N. Eliot card
Carter's Fountain Pen Fluid card featuring Col. Roosevelt's route in Africa
Call for Carter's card for F.H. Brown Co., Greenfield, MA
Carter's Ink 10¢ card
Carter's Cico card for Coley Drug Co, Milan, TN
Stationary Carter's Inks card
Carter's Carbon Papers card for Mark. W. Duncan, Albia, IA
Call for Carter's card for O.E. Johnson Drug Co., Kanawha, IA
Safe! For your precious fountain pen! Card for Homer L. Matthews, North Vernon, IN
Carter's Writing Fluid for General Office Use card for R.G. Schaffer, Phoenixville, PA
Carter's Ink Co. envelope addressed to estate of L.J. Wright, Lockport, NY, 1908
Ryto Ink card for Hallett Book Store, Sterling, IL
Carter's Ink Company postal order card
After all Carter's Ink is the Best, Old Bookkeeper is Discriminating promotion
Old Bookkeeper's Verdict Office Supplies card for S.G. Adams Stamp & Seal Co., St.
Louis, MO
Old Bookkeeper's Verdict promotional calendar, 1903
The Standard Office Fluid card for Seiler Bros, Muscatine, IO
Ink indifference call for Carter's mockup
Carter's Writing Fluid paper bottle ad
Carter's Crimson Fluid paper bottle ad
Carter's Mucilage paper bottle ad

Folder 2: Card Ads and Mementos

Carter's Ink Co. dictionary; stamped by L.C. Sears, Agt., Buffalo, NY

Folder 3: Magazine and Newspaper Ads

Not Just Ink--Call for Carter's ad in *Sunset Magazine*
Cico magazine page ad
Don't Take Ink Risks magazine page ad
Call for Carter's ad in *Sunset Magazine*
Call for Carter's ad in *Sunset Magazine*
Ink Indifference ad in magazine
Carter's Inx Products ad in *The Atlantic Monthly*
Your Signature Represents You-- Do it in Carter's magazine page ad
Wise Ones always use Carter's Inks ad in *Munsey's Magazine*
Carter's Fountain Pen Ink made Specially for all Kinds of Fountain Pens magazine page
ad
After All Carter's Ink is the Best, Old Bookkeeper is Discriminating mini-poster

Don't Say Ink magazine page ad
After All-- No Ink Like Carter's Writing Fluid and Cico magazine page ad
4¢ Introduces you to Cico ad in *The World's Work*
It's Easy to Say Carter's magazine page ad
Carter's Inks Known to the World over as the Best ad in *Harper's Magazine*
All the Great Railway's Use it, They Wouldn't if it Wasn't Good ad in *The Cosmopolitan*
Have You Met Mr. & Mrs. Carter's Inx? newspaper ad
Inklings in Ink ad in *Harper's Magazine*
Don't Take Ink Risks magazine ad
Permanency is Not a Visible Quality ad in *The Cosmopolitan*
Orders Taken Here window ad featuring Carter's Indelible Ink

Folder 4: Magazine and Newspaper Ads -- Oversized

A Call for a Name, \$2,000 in Cash Prize ad in *The Literary Digest*, March 15, 1924
Historical Manuscripts No. 3-- Your Signature Represents you, Do it in Carter's ad in
The Literary Digest, May 8, 1920
Writes a Strong, Rich Blue ad in *The Literary Digest*, May 10, 1919
Writes a Strong, Rich Blue and Carter's Fountain Pen Ink ad in *Metropolitan*
Don't Say "Ink"-- Say Carter Inx Ad in *The Saturday Evening Post*, October 24, 1914
Truth Lies at the Bottom of a Well Ad in *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 14, 1914
Who is Carter? Ad in *The Saturday Evening Post*, September 12, 1914
This is Ink Confidence ad in *The Saturday Evening Post*, October 3, 1914
This Desk Stand Fits Any Pen! magazine ad
Carter Presents the 1937 "Grand Slam" in INK magazine ad
This Insurance Doesn't Cost a Cent magazine ad
More People are Careless than Dishonest... magazine ad
Ink as Styled by Carter magazine ad
They're all on my "Style Parade"-- and they ALL say Carter's Ad in *Collier's*, November
8, 1941
Safe! For your Precious Fountain Pen! Magazine ad featuring cats
Quick Drying-- Gentle as a Kitten to Your Precious Fountain Pen! magazine ad
In Home, Office, Workshop Too, Carter's Helpers Work for you! magazine ad featuring
cats
Not a Cent of Cost for this Valuable Insurance magazine ad
Carter's Stylewriter ad in *The Saturday Evening Post*, September 7, 1946
What! Not a Drop Spilled? magazine ad
Historical Manuscripts No. 2-- Your Signature Represents You, Do it in Carter's ad in
The Literary Digest, April 10, 1920
Announcing the Winners of Carter Inx Name Contest ad in *The Literary Digest*, October
4, 1924
Carter's Inky Racer poster
Carter's Ink copy print featuring angles
Carter's Kittens artist model prototypes (four items)

Folder 5: User Publicity

Lee, C.F. *Carter's Amateur Guide and Photographic Encyclopedia*. Boston, Mass.:
Carter's Ink Company, 1899.
The Story Your Ink Bottle Tells pamphlet about the history of ink
A History of the Carter's Ink Company pamphlet, 1975

Folder 6: Merchant Guides and Catalogs

"Carter's Ryto Ink in the Modern Cathedral Bottles" 3-fold
"Carter Racer Family Gives Complete Spot Insurance" product guide
"Carter's Cico Liquid Paste" 3-fold
Carter's Inks Retail Prices. Recommended by the National Catalog Commission, 1913.
"Carter's Inks and Adhesives Selling Manual"
"Carter's Carbon Papers, Typewriter Ribbons, Inks, Adhesives, and Specialties Export Catalog"
"Carter's Inks, Adhesives, Specialties: Time Saver Catalog". 1947
"Announcing New Packages... Lower Prices: Supplement to Catalog 100"
"Carter's Inks and Adhesives: Complete Price List." January 1, 1934
"Carter's Inks, Adhesives, and Specialties: Catalog Number 94." April 1952.
"42 Nationally Advertised 10¢ Items for the Wholesaler" catalog
"How Carter's Ryto Cathedral Bottles can be Converted into Beautiful Electric Lamps"
how-to guide
"Carter's Ink, Adhesives, and Specialties" catalog, April 15, 1955.
"Carter's Inks and Adhesives: Five and Ten Price List" catalog no. 83, March 2, 1942
"Carter's Inks: Mucilage and Paste" catalog no. 100.
"Carter's Ink Catalog No. 80," April 1, 1939.

Folder 7: Worker Guides and Memos

"Your Guide to Carter's" pamphlet, 1959
"Report to Employees," pamphlet, February 23, 1967
"Report to Employees," pamphlet, March 28, 1969
Letter to employees from N.C. Hubley, Jr., May 17, 1976; Proposed press release
Letter to employees from N.C. Hubley, Jr., May 21, 1976

Folder 8: *Inklings* Newspaper

Inklings, Vol. 5, No. 2, February 1962
Inklings, Vol. 5, No. 4, April 1962
Inklings, Vol. 17, No. 12, December 1974
Inklings, Vol. 19, No. 8, August 1976

Added Entries:

Ink bottles
Printing ink
Ink industry
Dennison Manufacturing Company
Paste
Advertisements

Commercial catalogs

Return to CHC Collections home:

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/researchaids/archivalcollections>