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Guide to the Carl Company Records, 1891-1991 (2006.3)

Creator: Carl Company

Accession Number: 2006.3

Extent: 2.5 cubic feet of vertical materials (6 boxes), 33 ledgers, and 1 box oversized ephemera and photographs.

Source: Various

Inclusive Dates: 1894-1991

Access: Access to this collection is unrestricted.

Abstract: The collection is composed of memorabilia and records of the Carl Company chain of department stores.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection is composed of memorabilia and records of the Carl Company chain of department stores. The collection includes a number of photographs, mostly dated from the 1940s through the 1980s, showing employees of the store at 430 State Street, annual anniversary sales, and exteriors and interiors of area Carl Company stores. The collection also includes material related to the closure of the Carl Company stores in 1991, including entries in store memory books, letters, and newspaper clippings.

Company History:

The Carl Company began as a dry goods store owned by Charles W. Carl, Sr. (1871-1940) at Medina, New York in 1891. Carl soon expanded, opening several stores in western New York State, including stores in Lockport, Brockport, Tonawanda, and Hornellsville. The Lockport store was one of the Carl Company's earliest, opening in 1891 or 1892 and remaining in operation until 1968.

In 1906, the Carl Company shuttered several of its smaller stores to open a store in Schenectady, and Charles W. Carl, Sr. and his wife, Lily Swick Carl (d. 1976), moved to the city. The Schenectady department store was initially located in the Kinium Building at 256 State Street (now 240 State Street) before the Carl Company constructed a new building at 430 State Street in 1916, where the store remained until closing in 1991. The downtown store was further expanded in 1925, as the Carl Company acquired property on Smith Street across from the rear of the store for a warehouse and expanded the store

west on State Street. In 1972, the building was renovated and modernized. By the following year, after the closure of the H.S. Barney Co. and Wallace Co. stores, Carl's became the sole Schenectady-based department store downtown.

The Carl Company continued to grow in the area. Its first area branch store, at 288 Saratoga Road, Schenectady, in the Mayfair shopping center (later called Willowbrook Plaza), was opened in 1954. With the opening of the Mayfair store, the Carl Company became the first locally-owned department store to open a branch location. In 1963 the Carl Company opened its Shoporama store in Rotterdam, followed by a Saratoga Springs store in 1973, a Clifton Park store in 1976, an Amsterdam store in 1981, and a Troy store in 1983. After operating as a cash-only store and offering Gold Bond Dividend stamps with each purchase since 1894, Carl Company first offered charge accounts in 1957. The company continued to offer its Gold Bond Dividend stamps until its stores were closed in 1991.

Charles W. Carl, Sr. served as president of the Carl Company until his death in 1940. Subsequently, his wife, Lily Swick Carl, served as president until 1957. Their son, Charles W. Carl, Jr. (1924-2001), served as president of the company from 1957 until 1984, when the family sold its stores to General Atlantic Corporation, a New York City-based private-investment banking firm. Charles W. Carl, Jr. chose Joel Helfman as his successor as president. Helfman served as the president of Carl Company until its stores were closed in 1991.

After 100 years of business, the Carl Company announced in February 1991 that it would cease operations. All stores were closed by May 1991. The State Street store closed on May 25, 1991. The closing of all area stores and its distribution center left 597 people out of work.

Condition Note:

Most of the materials in the collection are in good condition. Some newspaper clippings and a few photographs are torn and fragile and should be handled with care.

Finding Aid Created By/Date: Melissa Tacke, 21 July 2011

Item/Box/Folder Listing:

Box	Folder	Folder Title
1	1	[photographs/scans of gift boxes]
1	2	Advertisements – Brockport and Tonawanda stores – 1894-1899
1	3	Awards and certificates – United Way – 1986-1991
1	4	Entries in store memory book [photocopy] – 1991 [1 of 3]
1	5	Entries in store memory book [photocopy] – 1991 [2 of 3]
1	6	Entries in store memory book [photocopy] – 1991 [3 of 3]
1	7	Letters regarding store closings [photocopy] – 1990-1991
1	8	Store credit certificates, Gold Bond Dividends, and coupons – 1967-1991
1	9	Store charge cards and card wallets – ca. 1980s, 1991

2	1	Christmas placemats
2	2	Gold Bond stamp books and stamps – n.d.
2	3	Newspaper clippings – 1909-1991
2	4	Miscellaneous – 1917-1978
2	5	Oversized photographs – ca. 1910, 1955-1964
2	6	Original receipt for work on 430 State Street building – 1917.
2	7	Employee wage statements – 1938-1941
2	8	Employee payroll details – 1936-1939
2	9	Lockport retail inventory – 1943
3	1	Photographs – Employee Activities – 1922-1957, n.d.
3	2	Photographs – Employees, Miscellaneous – ca. 1900-1989
3	3	Photographs – Interiors [and exteriors] – ca. 1920s-1981 [1 of 2]
3	4	Photographs – Interiors [and exteriors] – ca. 1920s-1981 [1 of 2]
3	5	Photographs – Miscellaneous – ca. 1900-1981
3	6	Photographs – Store Openings – 1954-1983
3	7	Photographs – Fashion Show – Fall 1981
3	8	Photographs – Fashion Show – Spring 1982
3	9	Photographs – Fashion Show – Fall 1982
3	10	Photographs – Fashion Show – Spring 1983
3	11	Photographs – Fashion Show – Fall 1983
3	12	Photographs – Fashion Show – Spring 1984
3	13	Photographs – Fashion Show – Fall 1984
4	1	Photographs – [Photos from mounted display] – 1891-1896
4	2	Photographs – Negatives – 1930s-1950s
4	3	Photographs – CD of early photographs – ca. 1900-1914
4	4	Photographs – Anniversaries – Miscellaneous – 1938-ca. 1960
4	5	Photographs – 60 th – 69 th Anniversary – 1951-1960
4	6	Photographs – 67 th Anniversary snapshots – 1958
4	7	Photographs – 70 th Anniversary – 1961
4	8	Photographs – 71 st Anniversary – 1962
4	9	Photographs – 72 nd Anniversary – 1963
4	10	Photographs – 73 rd Anniversary – 1964
4	11	Photographs – 75 th Anniversary – 1966
4	12	Photographs – 76 th Anniversary – 1967
4	13	Photographs – 78 th Anniversary – 1969
4	14	Photographs – 79 th Anniversary – 1970
4	15	Photographs – 80 th Anniversary – 1971
4	16	Photographs – 81 st Anniversary – 1972
4	17	Photographs – 82 nd Anniversary – 1973
4	18	Photographs – 83 rd Anniversary – 1974
4	19	Photographs – 84 th Anniversary – 1975
4	20	Photographs – 85 th Anniversary – 1976
4	21	Photographs – 86 th Anniversary – 1977
4	22	Photographs – 87 th Anniversary – 1978
4	23	Photographs – 88 th Anniversary – 1979

4	24	Photographs – 90 th Anniversary – 1981
4	25	Photographs – 91 st Anniversary – 1982
4	26	Photographs – 92 nd Anniversary – 1983
4	27	Photographs – 93 rd Anniversary – 1984
4	28	Photographs – 94 th Anniversary – 1985
4	29	Photographs – 95 th Anniversary – 1986
5	N/A	Board of Directors meeting minutes – 1927-1934
5	N/A	Maximum price lists of cost of living commodities – July-December 1942
5	N/A	Stock certificate book [unused certificates]
5	N/A	Stock certificate book [unused common stock certificates]
5	N/A	Stock record book – 1924
5	N/A	Plaques – Lily S. Carl memorial plaque – 1979
5	N/A	Plaques – United Way to Carl Co. employees – 1986
5	N/A	Plaques – United Way Award of Excellence – 1982, 1983
6	N/A	Ephemera and oversized items – Buttons, ribbons, and wooden bucks – ca. 1980s
6	N/A	Ephemera and oversized items – Matted photograph of Lockport store, ca. 1925
6	N/A	Ephemera and oversized items – Certificate of appreciation to Lily Swick Carl and Charles W. Carl, Jr. from Carl Company employees, 1963.
6	N/A	Ephemera and oversized items – Assorted bags and boxes, ca. 1960s – ca. 1980s
6	N/A	Ephemera and oversized items – Oversize newspaper clippings – 1911-1964
6	N/A	Ephemera and oversized items – Drawing of Charles W. Carl, Sr. – n.d.
7	1	Deeds and Leases
7	2	Abstracts of Title
7	3	Mortgage Releases
7	4	Maps and Legal Agreements
N/A	N/A	Carl Company engraving plates – logos, etc. – n.d.
N/A	N/A	Carl Company gift box [1] – ca. 1960s [see Box 1, Folder 1 for images]
N/A	N/A	Carl Company gift box [2] – ca. 1960s [see Box 1, Folder 1 for images]
N/A	N/A	Framed photograph of Carl Company State Street store main floor – ca. 1960
N/A	N/A	Wall plaque honoring Charles Carl, Sr. – 1952

Carl Company Ledgers, 1908-1934

Name of Item	Notes	Date
1908-1909 Ledger	Year not labeled on outside	1908-1909
1910-1911 Ledger	Year not labeled on outside	1910-1911
1911 Ledger (#671)	Year not labeled on outside	1911
1914 Ledger (#6)		1914
1916 Ledger (#7)		1916
1918 Ledger (#8)		1918
1919 Ledger (#9)		1919
1920 Ledger (#10)		1920

1918-1919 Journal		1918-1919
1919-1920 Journal		1919-1920
1921-1922 Journal		1921-1922
1923-1924 Journal	Bad Condition-Moldy-Water Damage	1923-1924
1926-1927 General Journal	#6633	1926-1927
1928-1929 General Journal	#6745	1928-1929
1929-1930 Time Book	Time records of company employees	1929-1930
1931 Time Book	Time records of company employees	1931
1932 Time Book	Time records of company employees	1932
1932-1933 Time Book	Time records of company employees	1932-1933
1933 Time Book	Time records of company employees	1933
1934 Time Book	Time records of company employees	1934
1916-1918 Ledger	Year not labeled on outside	1916-1918
1920-1921 Ledger	Year not labeled on outside	1920-1921
1921-1922 Ledger	Year not labeled on outside	1921-1922
1929-1936 Ledger	Years not labeled on outside	1929-1936
1908-1912 Journal		1908-1912
1913-1914 Journal	Damage to spine	1913-1914
1929 Cash Journal		1929-1929
1930-1931 Cash Journal	Cash Disbursements	1930-1931
1931-1932 Cash Journal	Cash Disbursements	1931-1932
1911-1926 Ledger	Info for all Carl Company Stores	Various
1925-1927 Ledger		1925-1927
1927-1928 Ledger		1927-1928
Stock Certificate Book	Cancelled and non-cancelled certificates	