

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the John L. Thompson Sons and Co. Records

Collection Summary

Collection Title: John L. Thompson Sons and Co. Records

Call Number: CG 531

Creator: John L. Thompson Sons and Co.

Inclusive Dates: 1818-1972

Bulk Dates: 1818-1889

Abstract:None

Quantity: 1 box, 2.5 linear inches

Administrative Information

Custodial History: Given to the Institute at two different times in 1977. Ellis Robison, President of Thompson, Sons and Co. of Troy, NY donated the groups of papers, number 77-4.2. The group of papers, numbered 77-24 were given by an unknown source on June 9, 1977.

Preferred Citation: John L. Thompson Sons and Co. Records, CG 531, Albany Institute of History and Art Library, New York.

Acquisition Information:

Accession #: 77-4.2; 77-24

Accession Date: March and June 1977

Processing Information:

Initial Inventory and Preliminary Processing By/Date: Unknown

Final Processing and Finding Aid By/Date: Heather Harrington, October 2, 2003

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: None

Restrictions on Use: None

Index Term

Persons: Dr. Gale, Samuel Jr.; Gale, William; Thompson, John L.; Cowee, David; Cowee, James; Thompson, John I.; Thompson, William A.; Cowee, Harvey; Thompson, William Leland; Robison, Ellis S.; Thompson, William Leland Jr.;

Organizations: John L. Thompson Sons and Co.;

Subjects: Drug companies;

Places: Troy, NY;

Document Types receipts; bills; inventories;

Biography/History of The John L. Thompson Sons and Co.

The John L. Thompson Sons and Co. Wholesale Druggists are located in Troy, NY. In 1797, Dr. Samuel Gale, Jr. established an apothecary in connection with his medical office. This was the beginning of Thompson Sons. By 1799, Dr. Gale's business was well established and already assuming the aspects of a wholesale drug store. In 1805, Dr. Gale formed a partnership with his brother William. In 1806, Dr. Gale became Postmaster of Troy. In 1810, Dr. Gale married Miss Betsy Thompson. In 1818, her brother, John L. Thompson, at age 19 became an apprentice in the shop. In 1820, the original shop was torn down, as it had become far too small for the growing business. A new building was built at 161 River Street. In 1821, Gale and Thompson formed a partnership called Gale & Thompson. Seven years later, Dr. Gale retired, and sold his interest to Thompson. The name was changed to J.L. Thompson. The business continued growing so much that another new building was required just north of the River Street address. In 1835, David Cowee was employed as a clerk, and six years later admitted as a partner, accounting for the addition of "and Co." to the title. In 1852, a building next door was acquired to warehouse stock. In 1851, the entrance of John I. And William A. Thompson, sons of John L. the firm adopted the name it has today. In 1867, James F. Cowee, son of David, was admitted to the partnership. At this time, the business began to veer away from wholesale drugs, to sell heavy chemicals. In 1901, John I. Thompson died, and William followed two years later. In 1903 the business was incorporated, with James Cowee serving as president, Harvey Cowee as vice-president, and William Leland Thompson, son of the late William A, as treasurer. William Leland became president upon the death of James Cowee, and served until 1954. Ellis H. Robison entered the business in 1927 as a general manager. In 1947, he became vice-president and treasurer. He succeeded William Leland as president in 1954. At this time, William Leland Jr. becomes the sole owner of the business, and Chairman of the Board. He would serve until his death in 1957.

Scope and Contents of the Records

The collection covers business dealings, such as receipts, bills, inventories for the John L. Thompson Sons and Co. drug company, primarily from the 19th century. There is one item, an Anniversary brochure from 1972 in the collection as well. There is some water damage, mold discoloration, and animal damage. Also, some sections are lacking.

Organization of the Records

The collection is contained in one box, with 6 folders. The folders are divided up by groups of years. All folders are labeled "Business Papers."

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
1	1	Business Papers, 1818, 1821, 1827-28
1	2	Business Papers, 1829
1	3	Business Papers, 1830
1	4	Business Papers, 1831-33
1	5	Business Papers, 1839-49, 1869, 1879, 1889
1	6	Anniversary Brochure, 1972