

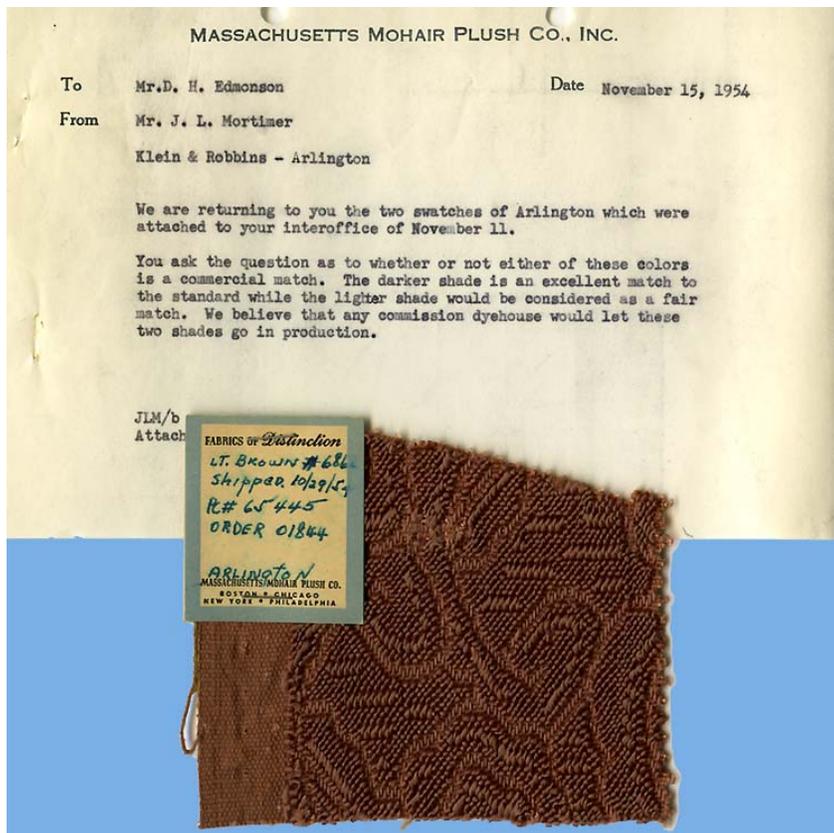


National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Finding Aid

Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company Records, 1934-1956 (Bulk dates 1953-1955)

Catalog No. LOWE 15732
Lowell National Historical Park
Lowell, Massachusetts



LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS

FINDING AID FOR THE
***MASSACHUSETTS MOHAIR PLUSH COMPANY RECORDS,
1934-1956 (BULK DATES 1953-1955)***

CATALOG NUMBER: LOWE 15732 -- COLLECTION

PREPARED BY

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Northeast
MUSEUM SERVICES CENTER

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*Cover illustration: Sample of Fabric "Arlington" with memo re: its production, 15 December 1954, Massachusetts Mohair Plush Records, Box 4, Folder 1.
Above: Detail of label on the "Arlington" sample.*

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PREFACE

This document, the *Finding Aid for the Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company Records, 1934-1956 (bulk dates 1953-1955)*, describes records created and maintained by the Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company Records at their facilities in Lowell, Massachusetts. These records are now part of the archives of Lowell National Historical Park (LOWE). These records and those of other Lowell textile-related industries were processed as part of a backlog cataloging project carried out by the Northeast Museum Services Center (NMSC) with FY08 Backlog Cataloging funds.

The cataloger would like to express her gratitude towards the staff of LOWE for their assistance in carrying out this work. Former curator Andrew Chamberlin saved these records from certain destruction in 1984, and other LOWE staff, including Dan Walsh, former Collections Manager, cared for them in the years before this cataloging project. In addition, thanks must go to Museum Specialist Jack Herlihy and David Blackburn, Chief of Cultural Resources and Programs, for their aid and advice during this project.

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INTRODUCTION

The documents described in this finding aid are a small portion of the records generated by the Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company (MMPCo), an important manufacturer of upholstery for over half a century. In 1984 while searching for and removing Proprietors of the Locks and Canals records in that company's record rooms in the Boott Mills before a mass destruction of materials, former LOWE curator Andrew Chamberlain salvaged these Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company's files. The samples of fabric attached to the records in particular attracted his attention. The files were part of LOWE-111, accessioned as a field collection.

The reason for these records' presence near those of Proprietors of the Locks and Canals may be surmised. The Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company leased space from the Lowell Industrial Development Company in the 1950s if not earlier. (The Company previously operated out of entire buildings elsewhere in Lowell.) Boott Mills took over the Lowell Industrial Development Company in 1956, and presumably the Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company left these records when its lease ended in the 1960s. Subsequently, the Boott Mills and the Proprietors of the Locks and Canals stored records together as the same management team ran both companies.

NMSC staff delivered the materials to the NMSC offices in the Charlestown Navy Yard for cataloging during the fiscal 2008 year. NMSC Archivist Margaret Welch processed the collection under the direction of Regional Archivist David Vecchioli. During this project, the NMSC was administered by Sara Wolf, Director, and Giles Parker, Deputy Director. Backlog cataloging moneys funded this project. During processing, the records were rehoused in acid-free boxes, file folder names when present were transcribed onto the acid-free folders. Rusting staples were removed from the fabric samples, and the fabrics were rehoused in inert polyester sleeves.

The finding aid is divided into four sections:

- Part 1: Collection Description:
 - Scope and content note (or brief synopsis of the collection);
 - Outline showing the organization of the collection;
 - Descriptions of the various series into which the collection is organized.
- Part 2: Corporate History.
- Part 3: Collection Listing:
 - Document boxes: a box and folder list;
- Bibliography.

PART 1:

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company Records, 1934-1956 (Bulk Dates 1953-1955)

Accession number: LOWE-111.

Catalog number: LOWE 15732.

Quantity: 4.5 linear feet (approximately 7,200 items).

Storage: 9 document boxes, 2 flat boxes, 1 index box, and 1 map folder.

Location: Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell, Massachusetts 01852-1029,
(978) 970-5241.

Description: The Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company Records, 1934-1956 (bulk dates 1953-1955) were created and maintained by the Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company at their facilities in Lowell, Massachusetts. They contain correspondence, fabric samples, time cards, and vertical files.

The records are organized into five series: I. Client Orders and Correspondence; II. Labor Records; III. Neisler Mills, Inc.; IV. Miscellaneous, and V. Oversize Materials.

Cross-references: Other collections in the LOWE Archives provide additional information about the company in the 1950s and 1960s:

- Boott Mills Records, 1905-1989 (bulk dates 1955-1985) (LOWE 15733)
- Lowell Industrial Development Company, 1937-1956 (bulk dates 1949-1951) (LOWE 15734)
- The Proprietors of the Locks & Canals Records, 1813-2008 (bulk dates 1890-1970) (LOWE 5058, various catalog numbers)¹

Series Descriptions

I. Client Orders and Correspondence, 1953-1955

The memoranda, telegrams, letters, and completed order forms related to the purchase of fabrics and received by the Lowell office were gathered together and stored according to the client company and calendar year. They contain much information about the

¹ See file related to MMPCo., Box 98, Folder 15.

production of the individual fabrics because clients voiced concerns about the color, weave, and backing of the lots sent to them. Samples of the fabrics in question were sent to MMPCo and kept with the files for future reference. Unfortunately, only a portion of the 1953-1955 files remain. However small the remainder, the files indicate that MMPCo sold upholstery to major automobile manufacturers such as Chrysler, Kaiser-Frazer Corporation, and the Flxible [sic] Company as well as to furniture manufacturers.

II. Labor Records

A. Time Cards, 1958-1959

A very small portion of time cards related to a limited group of individuals is present. It is unclear why these individuals' records remained together.

III. Neisler Mills, Inc., 1935-1959

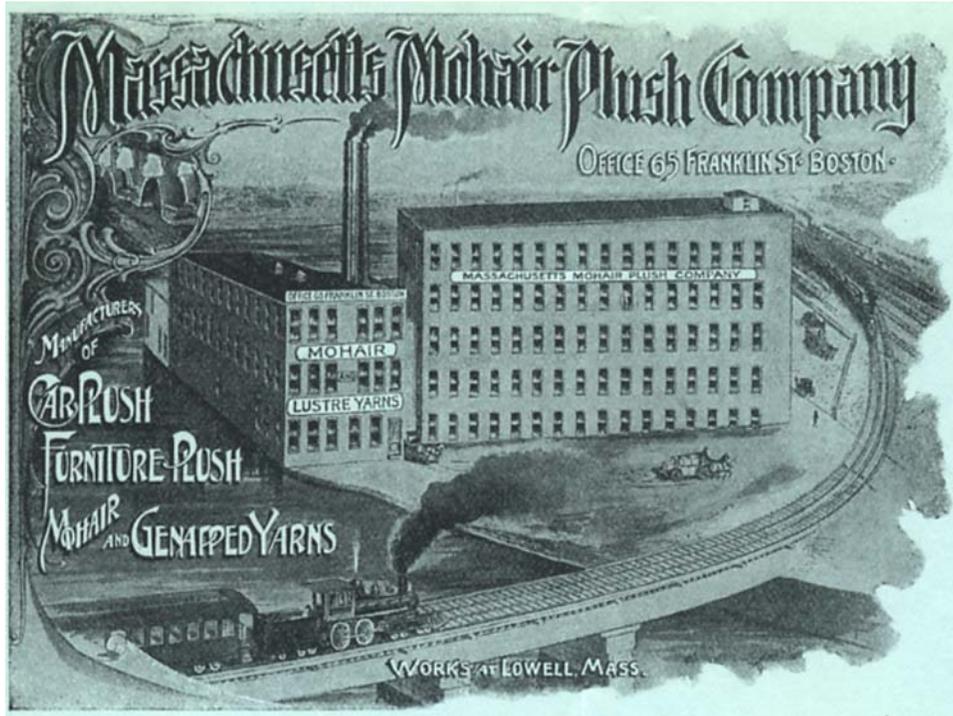
MMPCo. acquired the textile production company, Neisler Mills, Inc., as a separate division probably around 1955. Neisler Mills continued to manufacture textiles out of Kings Mountain, North Carolina. Worksheets with samples of the fabrics Neisler manufactured for various U.S. sale houses are present. These worksheets represent probably a fraction of Neisler Mills, Inc., designs.

IV. Miscellaneous, 1934-1956

These folders, apparently gathered from various management staff after the files' active use, were at one time mixed with the client correspondence files (see above). The original labels clearly differentiate them from the clients' files. MMPCo staff probably saved them for their important subject matter such as quality control, synthetic fiber production, and workers' accidents. Several plans and diagrams not associated with particular folders are also included.

PART 2:

CORPORATE HISTORY



Letterhead from Hiram F. Mills's Files #34, "Massachusetts Mohair Plush Co., 1900-1907," Proprietors of the Locks and Canals on Merrimack River Records, LOWE Archives, Box 98, Folder 15.

Chronology

- 1891 Company incorporated. Business situated in former Corem Building on Western Avenue, Lowell.
- 1893 Products exhibited at Columbian Exposition in Chicago.
- 1900 New plant for sorting and scouring built.
- 1910 Five-story building erected on Western Avenue.
- 1935, ca. "Weaver" building erected on Western Avenue.
- 1952 New-York based businessmen George A. and Ernest V. Horvath buy the company.
- 1953 Portion of company renamed "The Bliss Company."²
- 1955 MMPCo with Horvath brothers as owners buys entire stock of Boott Mills.
- 1959 Horvaths acquired entire stock of Proprietors of Locks and Canals.
- 1960s "Lowell Group" takes over Horvath interests including MMPCo.

² "Bliss Company" and "Massachusetts Mohair Plush Co." files, Corporate Card File Database, Corporations Division, Secretary of the Commonwealth [State of Massachusetts]. Accessed August 2008 at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/COR/coridx.htm>.

Historical Narrative

The Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company was incorporated in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1891. It built manufacturing facilities on Central Street in Lowell in the early part of the twentieth century and also had mills in Salmon Falls, New Hampshire. It displayed “mohair plush, grained plush, and Spanish velvet” at the 1893 Columbian Exposition where it listed Boston as location of the offices. It later opened showrooms in Chicago and New York. Its specialization in railroad car upholstery transformed into that for automobiles; it made natural and synthetic fabric for Chrysler and other car manufacturers.

In the 1950s, the gradual demise of the company’s manufacturing capacity commenced. George and Ernest Horvath of New York City bought the company in 1952 and sold off a major part of the Central Avenue facilities to Joan Fabrics later in the decade. The company rented space from the Lowell Industrial Development Company in the old Massachusetts Mills and then leased space in the Boott Mills.³ The Horvaths use the company and the others in their portfolio mainly as security to borrow money;⁴ the pension fund of the Teamsters’ Union lent the brothers millions.

The fortunes of other Lowell companies became intertwined with those of the Massachusetts Mohair Co. The Horvath brothers, through the Massachusetts Mohair, bought all the stock of the Boott Mills in 1955 and the Proprietors of Locks and Canals in 1959.

³ See “Boott Mills: Floor Plans and Estimated Cost of Renovating for Tenant Occupancy,” 1 August 1956, Box 21 Folder 7, Boott Mills Records, LOWE Archives for mention of MMPCo. lease in the main Boott Mills.

⁴ Box 20, Folder 8, Boott Mills Records, LOWE Archives, holds appraisals requested by George Horvath in order to secure loans.

PART 3:

COLLECTION LISTING

Series I. Client Orders and Correspondence

Box 1 (5.0" legal size)

Year 1953

1. Chrysler, 1953-1954 (Part 1 of 2)⁵
2. Chrysler, 1953-1954 (Part 2 of 2)⁶
3. Dulaney's, Oklahoma City, 1953⁷
4. Elastic Tip Company, Boston, 1953⁸
5. "Misc[ellaneous] F," 1953⁹
6. Flxible [sic] Co., Loudonville, OH, 1953¹⁰
7. Franklin Furniture, Columbiana, OH, 1953 (Part 1 of 2)¹¹
8. Franklin Furniture, Columbiana, OH, 1953 (Part 2 of 2)¹²
9. [Hadley Upholstering, Lowell], 1953¹³
10. [Hampden Parlor Furniture, Chicago, IL], 1953¹⁴
11. [Hanlon and Goodman, Belleville, NJ], 1953¹⁵
12. [L.E. Hobbs, Rochester, NY], 1953
13. [Hoch & Selby, Portland, OR], 1953¹⁶
14. [Hoffman & Hoffman Upholstered Furniture Corp., Syracuse, NY], 1953¹⁷

Box 2 (5.0" legal size)

1. [Jamestown Royal Upholstery, Jamestown, NY], 1953¹⁸
2. [Kaiser-Frazer Corp., Willow Run, MI], 1953 (Part 1 of 2)
3. [Kaiser-Frazer Corp., Willow Run, MI], 1953 (Part 2 of 2)¹⁹
4. [N. Kawadri & Co., Damascus, Syria], 1953²⁰
5. Kroehler, Naperville, IL, 1953²¹

⁵ Oversize items moved to Box 12, Folder 1.

⁶ See also: 1 February 1955 memo re: Detroit manufacturers upholstery preferences, Box 7, Folder 11. Oversize items moved to Box 12, Folder 1.

⁷ Includes textiles.

⁸ Includes textiles.

⁹ Includes textiles.

¹⁰ Includes textiles.

¹¹ Oversize textile moved to Box 12, Folder 2.

¹² Includes textiles.

¹³ Includes textiles.

¹⁴ Includes textiles.

¹⁵ Includes textiles.

¹⁶ Includes textiles.

¹⁷ Includes textiles.

¹⁸ Includes textiles.

¹⁹ Includes textiles.

²⁰ Includes textiles.

Year 1954

6. "Barker, Paul A. Co.," New York, NY, 1954 (Part 1 of 2)²²
7. "Barker, Paul A. Co.," New York, NY, 1954 (Part 2 of 2)²³
8. [Chrysler: W. Dawson Correspondence], 1954
9. Clarin Manufacturing Co., Chicago, IL, 1954²⁴
10. Original Label for Drawer Files "D" to "Kris," 1954
11. Dupont [E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Company], 1954

Box 3 (5.0" legal size)

1. Eagle Dyeing & Finishing Co., 1954²⁵
2. Elastic Company, Boston, 1954²⁶
3. Empire Upholstering, New Britain, CT, 1954²⁷
4. Franklin Furniture, Columbiana, OH, 1954 (Part 1 of 2)
5. Franklin Furniture, Columbiana, OH, 1954 (Part 2 of 2)
6. Gebhardt, Inc., Milwaukee, WI, 1954²⁸
7. Griggs Equipment, Belton, TX, 1954²⁹
8. "Miscellaneous H," 1954³⁰
9. Hampden Parlor Furniture, Springfield, MA, 1954
10. Hoch & Selby, Portland, OR, 1954³¹
11. Ideal Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1954³²
12. Imperial Upholstering, Salt Lake City, UT, 1954³³

Box 4 (5.0" legal size)

1. Klein & Robbins, New York, NY, 1954 (Part 1 of 2)³⁴
2. Klein & Robbins, New York, NY, 1954 (Part 2 of 2)³⁵

²¹ Oversize materials moved to Box 12, Folder 3.

²²Includes textiles.

²³Includes textiles.

²⁴Includes textiles.

²⁵Includes textiles.

²⁶Includes textiles.

²⁷Includes textiles.

²⁸Includes textiles.

²⁹Includes textiles.

³⁰Includes textiles.

³¹Includes textiles.

³²Includes textiles.

³³Includes textiles.

³⁴Includes textiles.

³⁵Includes textiles.

3. Sherman Bros., Jamestown, NY, 1954³⁶
4. Standard Products, Gaylord, MI, January-August 1954 (Part 1 of 3)³⁷
5. Standard Products, Gaylord, MI, January-August 1954 (Part 2 of 3)³⁸
6. Standard Products, Gaylord, MI, January-August 1954 (Part 3 of 3)
7. Standard Products, Gaylord, MI, September-December 1954 (Part 1 of 3)³⁹
8. Standard Products, Gaylord, MI, September-December 1954 (Part 2 of 3)⁴⁰

Box 5 (5.0" legal size)

1. Standard Products, Gaylord, MI, September-December 1954 (Part 3 of 3)
2. Superior Upholstering, New Britain, CT, 1954⁴¹
3. Union City Body Co., Union City, IN, 1954⁴²
4. Union Upholstering, Jefferson, WI, 1954⁴³
5. Valentine-Seaver, Naperville, IL, 1954
6. Virginia-Carolina Chemical Corp., New York, NY, 1954⁴⁴
7. Western States Sales, Phoenix, AZ, 1954⁴⁵
8. Wiley Bros., Pittsburg, PA, 1954⁴⁶
9. M. Winograd & Co., Cleveland, OH, 1954⁴⁷

Year 1955

10. Acme Upholstery Supply Co., Denver, CO, 1955⁴⁸
11. American Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955 (Part 1 of 5)⁴⁹
12. American Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955 (Part 2 of 5)

Box 6 (5.0" legal)

1. American Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955 (Part 3 of 5)⁵⁰

³⁶ Includes textiles.

³⁷ Includes textiles.

³⁸ Oversize textile moved to Box 12, Folder 2.

³⁹ Includes textiles.

⁴⁰ Includes textiles.

⁴¹ Includes textiles.

⁴² Includes textiles.

⁴³ Includes textiles.

⁴⁴ Includes textiles.

⁴⁵ Includes textiles.

⁴⁶ Includes textiles.

⁴⁷ Includes textiles.

⁴⁸ Includes textiles.

⁴⁹ Includes textiles.

⁵⁰ Includes textiles.

2. American Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955 (Part 4 of 5)⁵¹
3. American Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955 (Part 5 of 5)⁵²
4. American Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955-1956 (Part 1 of 2)
5. American Seating, Grand Rapids, MI, 1955-1956 (Part 2 of 2)⁵³
6. American Textile Co., Boston, MA, 1955 (Part 1 of 2)⁵⁴
7. American Textile Co., Boston, MA, 1955 (Part 2 of 2)⁵⁵

Box 7 (5.0" legal)

1. Atchison Topeka Sante Fe Railroad, 1955⁵⁶
2. Bauman Bros. Furniture Manufacturing, 1955⁵⁷
3. Edward H. Best & Company, Boston, MA, 1955⁵⁸
4. Original Label for Drawer Files "C thru H," 1955

Series II. Labor Relations⁵⁹

A. Time Cards

Box 8 (4 ½ X 5 ½ X10 negative box)

Time Cards, 1958-1959

Series III. Neisler Mills, Inc.

Box 7 (cont.)

5. Fabric Orders Notebook, 1935-1950
6. Production Correspondence, 1948-1948, 1953 (Part 1 of 2)⁶⁰
7. Production Correspondence, 1948-1948, 1953 (Part 2 of 2)⁶¹
8. Letterhead, 16 January 1959

Box 9 (11 ½ X 17 ¾ X 3 ½" flat box)⁶²

⁵¹ Includes textiles.

⁵² Includes textiles.

⁵³ Includes textiles.

⁵⁴ Includes textiles. *See also:* memo re: a visit to American Textiles Co. in folder "Quality Control," July 1955 (Part 1 of 2), Box 10, Folder 14.

⁵⁵ Includes textiles.

⁵⁶ Includes textiles.

⁵⁷ Includes textiles.

⁵⁸ Includes textiles.

⁵⁹ See also: "Safety" folder which holds reports of workers' accidents.

⁶⁰ Includes textiles and jacquard card.

⁶¹ Includes textiles and jacquard card.

1. Pattern Worksheet #667, "ONeal" for Golding Bros., 31 August 1938
2. Pattern Worksheet #1270, Four Patterns for Marietta Mills, 6 August 1940
3. Pattern Worksheet #1270 (cont.), Four Patterns for Marietta Mills, 20 November 1940
4. Pattern Worksheet #1707, "Puffette" for David Rothschild Company, 9 October 1945
5. Pattern Worksheet #1821, Pattern #9453 for David Rothschild Company, 9 October 1945
6. Pattern Worksheet #1828, "Pattern #51256 as Larry" for Morgan Fabrics Corp., 8 November 1945
7. Pattern Worksheets #656, Pattern "Vogue" for Vancourt Fabrics, 29 November 1945

Series IV. Miscellaneous

Box 7 (cont.)

9. Chicago Office [Showroom], 1954 (Part 1 of 2)⁶³
10. Chicago Office [Showroom], 1954 (Part 2 of 2)
11. [Detroit Automobile Fabrics], 1 February 1955

Box 10 (5.0" legal)

1. Maurice W. Harrison, "An Analysis of the Manufacture of Continuous Filament Jacquard Nylon Fabrics," 5 April 1955 (copy 1)⁶⁴
2. Maurice W. Harrison, "An Analysis of the Manufacture of Continuous Filament Jacquard Nylon Fabrics," 5 April 1955 (copy 2)⁶⁵
3. Maurice W. Harrison, "An Analysis of the Manufacture of Continuous Filament Jacquard Nylon Fabrics," 5 April 1955 (copy 3)⁶⁶
4. "James Keddie" [Job Analysis], 1953
5. "Machinery," 1954-1955⁶⁷
6. "Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company Incorporated Visual Control Analyzer," 16 December 1953 [blueprint] (2 copies)⁶⁸
7. Monument Mills, Housatonic, MA, 5 February 1934 [diagram]⁶⁹
8. "Notices" [from Superintendent], 1956
9. "Quality Control," April 1956⁷⁰

⁶² Textiles attached to worksheets.

⁶³ Includes textiles.

⁶⁴ Includes textiles.

⁶⁵ Includes textiles.

⁶⁶ Includes textiles.

⁶⁷ Item moved to Map Folder #1. Contains photos and textiles.

⁶⁸ Items moved to Map Folder #1.

⁶⁹ Item moved to Map Folder #1.

⁷⁰ Includes textiles. The folders labeled "Quality Control" are kept in the reverse chronological order in which they

10. "Quality Control," October 1955 (Part 1 of 2)⁷¹
11. "Quality Control," October 1955 (Part 2 of 2)
12. "Quality Control," August 1955 (Part 1 of 2)⁷²
13. "Quality Control," August 1955 (Part 2 of 2)
14. "Quality Control," July 1955 (Part 1 of 2)
15. "Quality Control," July 1955 (Part 2 of 2)⁷³

Box 11 (5.0" legal)

1. "Quality Control," January-May 1955⁷⁴
2. "Quality Control," 1954⁷⁵
3. "Safety" [Accident Reports], 1952-1953
4. "Bill Shea," 1954
5. "Shrinkage" [weekly reports], 1954⁷⁶
6. "Synthetic Fiber Data" [article], 1951

Series V. Oversize Materials

Box 12 (20 1/2 X 24 1/2 X 1 1/2" flat box)

Removed from Series I. Client Orders and Correspondence

1. Materials from folders "Chrysler" (Part 1 & 2)⁷⁷
2. Fabrics from Folders "Franklin Furniture" and "Standard Products"⁷⁸
3. Materials from Folder "Kroehler"⁷⁹

Removed from Series IV. Miscellaneous

4. Shrinkage Reports⁸⁰

36X48" Map Folders

were found.

⁷¹ Includes textiles.

⁷² Includes textiles.

⁷³ Includes textiles.

⁷⁴ Includes textiles.

⁷⁵ Includes textiles.

⁷⁶ Oversize items moved to Box 12, Folder 4.

⁷⁷ Moved from Box 1, Folders 1,2.

⁷⁸ Moved from Box 1, Folder 7 and Box 4, Folder 5.

⁷⁹ Moved from Box 2, Folder 5.

⁸⁰ Moved from Box 11, Folder 5.

Map Folder #1

Removed from Series IV. Miscellaneous

- Material from folder “Machinery” [“Proposed Additions to Present Dry Box”]⁸¹
- “Visual Control Analyzer”⁸²
- “Monument Mills ...”⁸³

⁸¹ Moved from Box 10, Folder 5.

⁸² Moved from Box 10, Folder 6.

⁸³ Moved from Box 10, Folder 7.

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