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Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Cloak Drummer Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Columbus Nursery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>E.J. Willis Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Hay &amp; Todd Manufacturing Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Mandel Bros. Department Store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Poste, John, 1833-1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Towle Mfg. Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Catalog Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>1883–1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>0.1 Linear feet (6 catalogs, 306 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Six catalogs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Three are clothing catalogs, one is a plant catalog, one is an automobile supply catalog, and one is a biography/silverware catalog.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Preferred Citation note
Biographical/Historical note

A mail order catalogue is a publication containing a list of general merchandise from a company. Companies who publish and operate mail order catalogues are referred to as cataloguers within the industry. Cataloguers buy or manufacture goods then market those goods to prospective customers.

Mail order is a term which describes the buying of goods or services by mail delivery. The buyer places an order for the desired products with the merchant through some remote method such as through a telephone call or web site. Then, the products are delivered to the customer. The products are typically delivered directly to an address supplied by the customer, such as a home address, but occasionally the orders are delivered to a nearby retail location for the customer to pick up.

In 1872, Aaron Montgomery Ward of Chicago produced the first mail-order catalogue for his Montgomery Ward mail order business. By buying goods and then reselling them directly to customers, Aaron Montgomery Ward was consequently removing the middlemen at the general store and to the benefit of the customer, lowering drastically the prices. This first catalogue was a single sheet of paper with a price list, 8 by 12 inches, showing the merchandise for sale and ordering instructions. Montgomery Ward identified a market of merchant-wary farmers in the Midwest. Within two decades, his single-page list of products grew into a 540-page illustrated book selling over 20,000 items.

Scope and Contents note

This collection consists of five catalogs from 1883 to 1907, advertising plants, clothing, automobile tires, and home fashions.

The first catalog is the 1883 Spring “Catalogue of Plants” from the Columbus Nursery in Columbus, Ohio, John Poste, proprietor. The catalog covers all type of plants including dahlias, verbenas, roses, petunias, fuchsias, phloxes and geraniums and is illustrated.

Next is the “Cloak Drummer Co. Fall and Winter 1904–1905” which is heavily illustrated. Each page depicts various ladies and children’s coats, capes, fur stoles, and muffins. There are also several pages devoted to skirts and waists (blouses).

The third is the “Automobile Tires and Supplies” catalog from the E. J. Willis Co. of Reade Street, New York City, New York. This catalog is not dated but there is a footnote that states, “Owing to War conditions tire prices subject to change without notice” which indicates it is probably from the 1910s.

The fourth is the “Illustrated Catalogue Ypsilanti Full Fashioned Jersey Fitting Underwear for Fall & Spring, 1890–1891” from the Hay & Todd Manufacturing Company of Ypsilanti, Michigan. This catalog is illustrated but not as detailed as the others.
The fifth catalog is from the Mandel Brothers department store in Chicago, Illinois. Although the cover is missing from this catalog, dates inside indicate that it is the 1902 catalog. This catalog is heavily illustrated with drawings of the fashions for men, women and children and for the home also.

The final booklet is not a catalog; it is “An Account of the Life of Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert Dumotier Marquis de La Fayette… with illustrations of the La Fayette Pattern of Sterling Silver Tableware” by the Towle Manufacturing Company of Newburyport, Massachusetts, published in 1907. As the title indicates this is a biography of the Marquis de La Fayette with only 19 pages illustrating the various pieces of the La Fayette sterling silver pattern.

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**Administrative Information**

**Publication Information**

W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama June 2008

**Revision Description**

December 2012

**Conditions Governing Access note**

None

**Conditions Governing Use note**

None

**Provenance**

unknown

**Processed by**

Martha Bace, 2008; updated by Martha Bace, 2012

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**Controlled Access Headings**
Genre(s)

- Memoir and Biography
- Sales catalogs

Personal Name(s)

- Lafayette, Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert Du Motier, marquis de, 1757-1834

Subject(s)

- Advertising
- Automobiles--Tires--Catalogs
- Business and Labor
- Clothing and dress--United States--20th century--Catalogs
- Department stores--Illinois--Chicago
- Nurseries (Horticulture)--Catalogs
- Tableware--United States--History--20th century--Catalogs
- Technology and Industry
- World War I
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