

Roy Brothers, Inc., Barnet, Vermont
Collection, 1925-1938
MSA 895

Introduction

This collection contains catalogs, printed ephemera, photographs, and newspaper clippings documenting the history of Roy Brothers, Inc., manufactures of wooden ware, in Barnet, Vermont, for the period 1925-1938. Most of the items in this small collection were donated by Delsie Hoyt of Fairlee, Vermont, in 2020. A portion of the collection came from items already in the VHS collection. The collection is stored in one archival flip top box and consumes .25 linear feet of shelf space.

Biographical and Organizational Notes

The Roy Brothers factory claimed at one time to be the largest croquet factory in the world. A newspaper article from the fire of 1925 said the factory employed fifty people and made 40,000 croquet sets the year before.

John G. Roy and his brother Elmer Ellsworth Roy founded the Roy Brothers company in 1888 in Barnet, Vermont. The company dealt in many wood products including butter boxes and stamps, cattle stanchions, finished lumber, and croquet sets of various sizes and configurations. In 1918, Elmer sold his portion of the company to Dan Fulford and John's son Wendell also joined the family business, eventually leading the company.

In 1925, a lightning strike set the facility on fire and the factory; outbuildings, blacksmith shop, stockpiles, and John Roy's home went up in flames. Only the dedication of the firemen and the heavy rains protected nearby properties from burning in the fire as well. During the Flood of '27, the company lost its dam and buildings along the Passumpsic River. The company replaced the dam and factory. Another fire in September 1938 destroyed the factory again. John Roy began the process to rebuild. He obtained a ten-year tax deferment from the town of Barnet, but he died a year later. The company never recovered.

John G. Roy was born in 1859 in Barnet, the son of Alexander and Eliza Gates Roy. He married Ellen Paddleford, a schoolteacher, of Monroe, New Hampshire. The couple had a son, Wendell Paddleford Roy, born in 1908. Ellen outlived her husband and died in 1955. Wendell served in the Army during the Second World War and worked for Fairbanks Morse Weighing Company during the latter part of his life. He graduated from UVM in 1928 with a degree in electrical engineering.

The company co-founder, Elmer Roy, began with the firm in 1888 but sold his shares in 1918. He lived until 1932.

Scope and Content

The collection includes several catalogs and brochures that include the various croquet sets available for purchase as manufactured by Roy Brothers in East Barnet, Vermont. A few list the New York office and sales room at Riemann – Seabrey Company, Inc., 1107 Broadway (at 24th Street) in New York City. Unfortunately, most catalogs and other materials lack dates. Catalogs typically showed individual croquet sets of various configurations, mostly in a black and white format, but a few are in full color. Also included in the collection are two rule books for the game of croquet, one as manufactured by Roy Brothers, the other by Wendell P. Roy.

Other business items include pamphlets on butter stamps and cattle stanchions as well as samples of company letterhead (Folder 2). There are several photos of the factory and the site on the Passumpsic River and two large photos from inside featuring workers (Folder 3). An undocumented timeline from around 1927 is included as well as a poem written about some of the employees and their duties on the production line (Folder 4). A few photos of Ellen Paddleford Roy are included along with a handwritten letter describing the flood damage in 1927 she wrote to her son (Folder 5).

Related Collections

- Collection of broadsides, including price lists for croquet sets, butter stamps and stanchions. Call no.: Small Bside 674.88 R812
- Kathleen Monroe, *Legends of Barnet, Vermont: history, mystery, curiosities of a small Vermont Town*, 2020. Call no.: 974.31 B264m

Inventory

MSA 895: : 01a Croquet, catalogs for croquet sets
:01b _____, balls, mallets, price lists, rules
: 02 Other products and letterhead
: 03 Business photographs
: 04 Newspaper clippings
: 05 Miscellaneous documents
: 06 Ellen Paddleford Roy

Harry Harrington
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RoyBrothers.docx