Guide to the Thomas J. O'Rourke collection

Finding aid prepared by Adrienne Harling and Sara Chabino Lott
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Title: Thomas J. O'Rourke collection
Identifier/Call Number: X3105.2005
Contributing Institution: Computer History Museum
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 4.13 Linear feet, 1 record carton, 1 manuscript box, 1 half manuscript box, 2 periodicals boxes, 3 volumes, 1 oversize folder
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1960-1990
Date (inclusive): 1950-1997
Abstract: The Thomas J. O'Rourke collection includes business records pertaining to O'Rourke's work at Tymshare, a corporation he co-founded, the General Electric Company (GE), and to the computer services industry as a whole. There is an emphasis on internal company communications such as memoranda, employee newsletters, employee reunion documentation, and stock value information. Most materials pertain to Tymshare. Materials span the years 1950 to 1997.
creator: O'Rourke, Thomas J.
Access Restrictions
The collection is open for research.
Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of Item], [Date], Thomas J. O'Rourke collection, Lot X3105.2005, Box [#], Folder [#], Catalog [#], Computer History Museum.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of Thomas J. O’Rourke’s son, Tim O’Rourke, 2005.
Processing Information
Doug Jerger of the Software History Center inventoried this collection in April of 2004 as part of the donation process. His inventory included descriptive notes and identified material of special value within the collection. Many of his notes were included in the description field in the catalog entries for the folders.
Biographical/Historical Note
Thomas J. O’Rourke was the founder, President and CEO of Tymshare (founded in 1964 and sold in 1984), a time-sharing company in Cupertino, California. Prior to founding Tymshare, he worked at General Electric (GE). O’Rourke received a degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Washington in 1948. He was a venture capitalist for Hambrecht & Quist Venture Partners from 1985 to 1990. O’Rourke was married to Marge O’Rourke and a father of six children. He and his family resided in Mountain View, California from 1964 until he passed away in 2002.
O’Rourke started at GE in the welding department. When the company phased that department out, he became the district manager for the GE computer department in Los Angeles. In this role, he worked on the development of the Electronic Recording Method of Accounting (ERMA), a banking accounting system that GE was building for Bank of America. Later he moved to a sales position in Phoenix, Arizona, followed by a regional manager position in San Francisco. After being fired from this position due to a personality conflict with a manager, O’Rourke declined an offer to relocate and stay with GE and instead started his own business.
The business, at first called O’Rourke Enterprises and later renamed to Tymshare, was based on an idea for time-sharing computer systems. O’Rourke had been exposed to the idea of time-sharing at GE when a Dartmouth University project team had approached GE for donations of computers with which to test this innovative idea. O’Rourke was intrigued by the concept and felt that it was a promising business idea. Tymshare was incorporated in 1966.
Tymshare worked on ways of improving data transfer, and formed a division called Tymnet. Tymnet was likely the first commercial application of a new packet technology that increased the capacity of phone lines to handle larger quantities of data being transferred.
Tymshare became a public company in 1970, going on the New York Stock Exchange in 1974. The business, originally targeting the engineering market, developed new markets including software, financial services, and communications. As the company grew, first domestically and then internationally, it acquired other companies along the way. Tymshare became active in the industry trade group Association of Data Processing Service Organizations (ADAPSO). In 1984
Tymshare was acquired by McDonnell Douglas Automation.

**Scope and Content of the Collection**

The Thomas J. O'Rourke collection includes records that Thomas J. O'Rourke collected as the founder of Tymshare and former employee of General Electric (GE), as well as thirteen books related to the computer industry. Over half of the materials pertain to Tymshare.

The collection spans 1950 to 1997, with the bulk of the material dated between 1960 and 1990. Highlights of the collection include speeches that Tom O'Rourke gave to employees and at conferences, Tymnet diagrams and other product literature, and New York Stock Exchange information and photographs. Also included is quite a bit of content regarding employee reunions at both companies. There is an emphasis on Tymshare stock value and industry trends from a business perspective.

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into 3 series:

Series 1, Tymshare, 1965-1988
Series 2, General Electric, 1950-1997

**Separated Material**

Physical objects were separated from the main collection. To view catalog records for separated material search the CHM catalog at [http://www.computerhistory.org/collections/search/](http://www.computerhistory.org/collections/search/).

**Related Collections at CHM**

O'Rourke, Tom (Thomas J.) oral history, Lot X3778.2007, catalog number 102657984.
Tymes, LaRoy oral history, Lot X3800.2007, catalog number 102657988.
Schmidt, Dave oral history, Lot X3802.2007, catalog number 102657990.
Sanden, Lynn oral history, Lot X3801.2007, catalog number 102657989.
Timesharing and Remote Processing Services meeting session #1 : technology : the early years, Lot X5386.2009, catalog number 102702883.
Gary Morgenthaler collection, Lot X3708.2007, catalog number 102733952.
SRI ARC/NIC records, Lot X3578.2006, catalog number 102706170.

**Related Collections at Other Repositories**


**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Computer service industry - United States
General Electric Company. Computer Department
Time-sharing computer systems
Tymshare, Inc.
**Tymshare, Series 1, 1965-1988**

**Series Scope and Content**

This series contains internal documents such as memoranda, correspondence, speeches, planning and marketing materials, photographs, and employee retreat and reunion documentation. The series also contains information about products, such as Tymnet. There is substantial information about Tymshare financials and information for shareholders such as Annual Reports. Press coverage of Tymshare can also be found in this series. The series is arranged into 6 subseries:

- **Subseries 1.1, Speeches, 1972-1984**
- **Subseries 1.2, Annual Reports, 1971-1982**
- **Subseries 1.3, New York Stock Exchange, 1966-1982**
- **Subseries 1.5, Gary Myers, 1969-1984**
- **Subseries 1.6, General, 1965-1986**

**Speeches, Subseries 1.1, 1972-1984**

**Subseries Scope and Content**

This subseries contains a variety of presentations, speeches, and related materials. The speeches were given by Tom O'Rourke to employees, shareholders, and attendees at conferences, as well as to government agencies and other industry organizations. The speeches have rich content about Tymshare and the computer services industry. This subseries is in its original order.

102726401 *Thomas J. O'Rourke speeches 1 1973-1976; 1979; 1983*
102726402 *Wall Street Journal advertisement for the 76 Tsai forum 1976-01-06*
102726403 *Thomas J. O'Rourke speeches 2 1972; 1974; 1979; 1984*
102726404 *Thomas J. O'Rourke speeches 3 1979-1983*
102726405 *Tymshare articles 1983-1984*
102726406 *Thomas J. O'Rourke speeches 4 1974-1975; 1978; 1983*

**Annual Reports, Subseries 1.2, 1971-1982**

**Subseries Scope and Content**

This subseries contains a complete run of Tymshare annual reports spanning the years 1971 to 1982. This subseries is arranged chronologically.

102726407 *Tymshare annual reports 1971-1982*

**New York Stock Exchange, Subseries 1.3, 1966-1982**

**Subseries Scope and Content**

This subseries includes a substantial amount of prospectus, shareholder reports, financial statements, and related documents pertaining to Tymshare stock value. There is also a set of 8x10 black and white photographs of Tom and Marge O'Rourke and others at the New York Stock Exchange, showing Tymshare on the stock exchange in the background. This subseries is in its original order.

102726409 *New York Stock Exchange listing 1970; 1977*
102726410 *It's about tym : a newsletter for tymshare employees 1977-09*
102726411 *Tymshare, Inc. : financial statements 1966-1969*
102726412 *Tymshare shareholder reports 1973; 1976-1978*
102726413 *Tymshare stock-related documents 1974; 1977*
102726415 *Tymshare Inc. form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1976 1976*

Subseries Scope and Content

This subseries includes materials related to organized reunions for Tymshare employees. There are numerous lists of employee names and addresses, as well as correspondence between Tymshare alumni and reunion organizers. This subseries also contains photographs of employees in different contexts such as social events, at the office, at retreats, and more. This subseries is in its original order.

102726422 Tymshare reunion bank account 1988-1989
102726423 Tymshare alumni association 1987-1988
102726424 Tymshare reunion mail 1988-1989
102726425 Tymshare reunion event 1988-09
102726426 Tymshare reunion 1967-1968
102726427 Billing department photographs 1976
102726428 Tymshare reunion directory 1987-1988
102726429 Tymshare reunion photographs ca. 1988
102726430 Employee list 1982 1982
102726431 Western region promotional fliers 1988
102726432 Pajaro dunes photographs ca. 1982
102726433 Management offsite meeting photographs ca. 1980
102726434 Product marketing photographs 1984
102726435 Fremont operations photographs ca. 1980

**Gary Myers, Subseries 1.5, 1969-1984**

Subseries Scope and Content

This subseries includes materials that appear to belong to Tymshare employee Gary Myers. Myers worked in sales and the series includes materials used to motivate sales teams, as well as more information about Tymshare stock value. This subseries is in its original order.

102726436 Hambrecht & Quist investment studies 1971; 1974; 1976
102726437 Burnham and Company Tymshare report 1971-12-14
102726438 Shareholder letter 1980-04-22
102726439 Tymshare, Inc. : corporate finance 1975; 1978
102726440 Morgan Stanley progress report 1979-08-28
102726441 Computer service industry review 1976-12-31
102726442 Western region 1975 review, 1976 plan 1975-1976
102726443 Western region 1974 review, 1975 plan 1974-1975
102726444 Tymshare memoranda 1977-1978
102726445 1978 objectives industry services division 1977-12
102726446 Performance review 1971-1972
102726448 Tymshare, Inc. schedule 14D-9 ca. 1984
102726449 Tymshare, Inc. 10-K forms 1975-1977; 1979

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General, Subseries 1.6, 1965-1986

Subseries Scope and Content
This subseries contains a variety of materials including incoming and outgoing correspondence, product information, photographs, employee newsletters and presentations, and planning materials. Of particular note are several large format diagrams of Tymnet nodes and infrastructure. This subseries is in its original order.

General Electric, Series 2, 1950-1997

Series Scope and Content
This series contains material related to numerous computer department reunions, including reunion photographs, marketing management material, and a few employee newsletters, including several issues of the alumni newsletter. Of particular note is documentation of a reunion for the team that built the Electronic Recording Method of Accounting (ERMA), as well as a lyrics book for tongue-in-cheek songs about computer product development. This series is in its original order.

Series Scope and Content

This series contains published, bound books pertaining to the computer industry and technical aspects of computer products. There is also a volume documenting a GE computer department sales meeting. This subseries is arranged alphabetically by title.

102726476 Arithmetic operations in digital computers 1955
102726472 Automation in business and industry 1957
102726473 Capability-based computer systems 1984
102726471 Data communications and business strategy 1972
102726478 Digital computer programming 1957
102726469 Electronic computers and management control 1956
102726477 Faith, hope and parity 1966
102726480 Frontiers of progress : computer department national sales meeting, Apache Junction, Arizona 1961-05
102726470 Future of the computer utility, The 1967
102726481 Government regulation of the computer industry 1972-02
102726474 Managing information : the challenge and the opportunity 1985
102726479 Networks for higher education : proceedings of the Educom spring conference 1972-04-13
102726475 Programming business computers 1959; 1961