Jay T. Last Collection of Transportation: N.N. Hill Brass Company Business Correspondence: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Diann Benti.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.
Prints and Ephemera
The Huntington Library
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Overview of the Collection

Title: Jay T. Last Collection of Transportation: N.N. Hill Brass Company Business Correspondence

Dates (inclusive): 1892-1919

Bulk dates: 1894-1900

Collection Number: priJLC_TRAN_Hill

Collector: Last, Jay T.

Extent: approximately 770 items in 9 binders

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Abstract: The N. N. Hill Brass Company business correspondence, a subset within the Jay T. Last Collection of Transportation, contains records of the N.N. Hill Brass Company, a bell manufacturing company in East Hampton, Connecticut, that date from the early 1890s through the 1910s. The approximately 770 pieces of incoming correspondence and related documents focus on the company's manufacture, advertisement, and sale of bicycle bells, and their involvement with the bicycle industry and related trade associations and bicycle clubs.

Language: English.

Note:
Finding aid last updated on September 22, 2015.

Access
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Preferred Citation

Provenance
This collection forms part of the Jay T. Last Collection of Graphic Arts and Social History, which was donated to the Huntington Library by Jay T. Last in 2005 as a gift in progress. The bulk of the transportation ephemera was transferred to the Library in 2010. The N.N. Hill Brass Company records described in this finding aid were originally acquired along with a small amount of additional business correspondence to the company. This additional material was received by the Library as part of other ephemera series within the Jay T. Last Collection and is organized according to the industry associated with the correspondent.

Background of the Jay T. Last Collection

The Jay T. Last Collection is an unparalleled archive of printed paper artifacts that documents American lithographic, social, and business history. The collection began in the early 1970s when physicist and Silicon Valley pioneer Jay Last moved to Southern California and started collecting citrus box labels he found at local flea markets and rummage sales. As his collection grew, Last realized that these labels conveyed important information about commercial printing, graphic design, and social history, and he expanded his collection to include other forms of American visual culture. Today this collection contains more than 200,000 lithographic prints, posters, and ephemera of mostly nineteenth and early twentieth century American origin and represents works by more than five hundred lithographic companies.

Background of the N. N. Hill Brass Company


Scope and Content
The N. N. Hill Brass Company Business Correspondence, a subset within the Jay T. Last Collection of Transportation, contains approximately 770 pieces of incoming correspondence, and some related documents, written to the N.N. Hill Brass Company of East Hampton, Connecticut, from the early 1890s through the 1910s that focus on the company's manufacture, advertisement, and sale of bicycle bells, and their involvement with the bicycle industry and related trade associations and bicycle clubs. The letters were received primarily from bicycle manufacturers and sellers and concern the purchase of bicycle bells including issues related to orders; shipments; invoice and payment matters; and requests for price quotes, catalogs and price lists. The collection also includes correspondence related to advertising, requests for donations of prizes by bicycle clubs, correspondence from trade associations, and bicycle shows related to exhibits and exhibit programs.

The materials include both handwritten and typed correspondence primarily on company stationery from a variety of companies across the United States and in other countries. Some of the letterhead has engraved or lithographed images of bicycles or commercial or industrial scenes.

Jay T. Last Collection of Transportation Prints and Ephemera.
N. N. Hill Brass Company Records. Mss 47. Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Arrangement
The collection is arranged in binders according to the general type of correspondent (such as bicycle manufacturers, parts manufacturers, bicycle retailers, other retailers etc.) and then alphabetically by company within each section.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library’s Online Catalog.

Genres
Business records -- United States -- 19th century.
Business records -- United States -- 20th century.
Letters (Correspondence).
Letterheads.

Subjects
N.N. Hill Brass Co.
Advertising -- Bicycle industry.
Bells -- Connecticut -- East Hampton.
Bicycle industry.
Transportation equipment industry.

Binder 1

Bicycle Manufacturers A-L, by company
Physical Description: approximately 100 items
Scope and Content Note
Contains business correspondence primarily with bicycle manufactures, as well as a printed 1916 N. N. Hill Brass Company price list.

Binder 2

Bicycle Manufacturers M-Z, by company
Physical Description: approximately 100 items
Scope and Content Note
Contains business correspondence primarily with bicycle manufacturers and some advertisers.

Binder 3

Bicycle Parts Manufacturers, A-Z by company
Physical Description: approximately 95 items
Scope and Content Note
Contains correspondence primarily with parts manufacturers.
Binder 4  **Bicycle Retailers, A-G by company**  
Physical Description: approximately 90 items  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains correspondence primarily with retail bicycle sellers.

Binder 5  **Bicycle Retailers, H-N by company**  
Physical Description: approximately 70 items  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains correspondence primarily with retail bicycle sellers.

Binder 6  **Bicycle Retailers, O-Z by company**  
Physical Description: approximately 90 items  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains correspondence primarily with retail bicycle sellers.

Binder 7  **Other Retailers, A-Z by company**  
Physical Description: approximately 80 items  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains correspondence primarily related to sales with retailers and wholesalers whose primary business was selling products other than bicycles.

Binder 8  **Bicycle Clubs, Events, Trade Associations**  
Physical Description: approximately 35 items  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains correspondence primarily with bicycle clubs and shows, and correspondence related to advertising in exhibit programs, etc.

Binder 9  **Advertising, Foreign Correspondence**  
Physical Description: approximately 110 items  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains business correspondence primarily related to advertising with and participation in trade organizations such as the Bicycle Bell Association and the National Association of Bicycle Jobbers and business correspondence from companies outside the United States including companies in Australia, Europe, Great Britain, South America, Canada, Mexico, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, and Japan.