

HOLLISTON MILLS, INC.

PAPERS, 1935-1985, n.d.

MSS #7
Vol.: 1 box

Processed by: Jane E. Ward
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Provenance: A number of items in this collection were given by Timothy McCusker on 28 March 2006 and have been marked accordingly. The provenance of the remainder of the collection is unknown.

Conservation: Newspaper clippings have been photocopied onto acid-free paper; in some cases the original clippings have been discarded due to their condition. Photographs have been placed in plastic mylar sleeves. Some original items were loaned to the Society by Timothy McCusker for photocopying purposes; the Society has retained the photocopies in this collection and they have been marked accordingly.

Copyright: Requests for permission to publish material from this collection must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director of the Norwood Historical Society.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Holliston Mills was established in 1893, when Herbert M. and Howard E. Plimpton (of the Plimpton Press) established a company called the Security Manufacturing Company on the site of what would become the Plimpton Press. The name Holliston Mills was adopted in 1895, possibly named after Hollis Plimpton, who joined the firm at that time. The company engaged in the making of bookbinding glue as an adjunct to the next-door press company. By 1900, the company began making bookbinding cloth, which subsequently became the primary product of the Holliston

Mills, but it was not until 1920 that Holliston Mills was formally incorporated as a separate company from its parent, the Plimpton Press.

After Howard Plimpton's death in 1900, Henry P. Kendall acquired a major interest in the company and bought out Herbert Plimpton's interest in 1920 to gain total control of the company. Kendall then engineered the construction of a new company plant on Lenox Street. Business was so good that a new plant was established in Kingsport, Tenn., to be closer to the supply of cotton goods (and next door to the Kingsport Press) in 1926; a large new plant was built in New Canton, Tenn., ten miles from Kingsport, in 1964. In 1923, Holliston Mills began using the East Braintree Finishing Company (owned by the McCusker family) to do the bleaching of its cloth locally, but after the Tenn. plant was opened, bleaching operations were moved down south.

In 1940, the McCusker era began at Holliston Mills when Thomas B. McCusker, who had worked for Holliston Mills for many years, bought out the Plimpton Press assets in Holliston Mills, Inc. (in Norwood), the Holliston Mills in Tenn., and the East Braintree Finishing Company. Thomas McCusker died in 1960, but the McCusker family continued to run the plant. However, active manufacturing in Norwood ceased in 1960 and all production was moved to the Tenn. plant. Only the executive offices remained in Norwood.

During its heyday, the company made not only bookbinding cloth but also produced window-shade materials, tracing cloths, label cloths, photographic cloths, broadcloth for shirting and pocketing, tag cloths, stationery fabrics, sign cloths, map cloths and waterproof fabrics. During World War II the company produced tent duck and other fabrics for the war effort.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Like many of the other Norwood industry collections, the Holliston Mills Papers provide only a glimpse of the company's business. Box 1, Folder 1 contains newspaper clippings and articles about the history of the company (1935-73, n.d.). Folder 2 contains handwritten notes about the history of the company, which eventually were codified into a typewritten history of the company done by Ernest J. Baker, probably in 1935. (Baker held a number of positions in the company from 1903 through at least 1935.) Folder 3 contains a copy of a thesis on the Holliston Mills, written in 1950. Folder 4 contains a copy of a brochure about the Holliston Mills plant in New Canton (Kingsport), Tenn., probably done shortly after the plant opened in 1964. Folder 5 contains two copies of a small book produced by the Holliston Mills, entitled The Making of Bookbinding Fabrics. The book is undated, but may have been done in the early 1900s.

Folder 6 contains photographs of the exterior of the plant, some possibly done in the 1940s; the one with employees outside the building was probably done in the 1970s. The print of the photograph of the sales force was scanned from an original retained by a member of the McCusker family. The photograph dates from the early 1960s; the identification of virtually everyone in the photograph was provided by two members of the McCusker family. The slides in this folder date from the late 1950s or early 1960s. Folder 7 contains information about various members of the McCusker family, including a 1960 obituary of Thomas McCusker, photographs of the company plane (one shot of which includes Henry and Richard McCusker), and a 1985 photograph of the five McCusker children of Thomas B. McCusker.

CONTENTS LIST

Box Folder

1	1	Clippings, articles, 1935-36, 1964, 1973.
	2	Notes and history of the company by E. J. Baker, 1935.
	3	Thesis on Holliston Mills (copy), [1950].
	4	Brochure on Holliston Mills plant in Kingsport, Tenn., [1964].
	5	Two copies of <u>The Making of Bookbinding Fabrics</u> , n.d. (early 1900s?).
	6	Photographs and slides of Holliston Mills, 1940s-1970s, n.d.
	7	McCusker family information: Photographs of the company plane, including one with Henry and Richard McCusker; a copy of the obituary of Thomas McCusker, 1960; photograph of the five children of Thomas B. McCusker, 1985.