

Francis W. Carpenter Papers Inventory

Processed by: Doris C. Sturzenberger

Custodial History:

The Francis W. Carpenter papers were donated to The Strong in 2009, as a gift of Diane Olin. The collection was formally accessioned by the museum as Object ID 109.15291 on October 19, 2009.

Conditions Governing Access and Use:

This collection of papers is open to research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library. The donor has unconditionally given the papers to The Strong.

Size: 3 feet

Dates: 1860–1934

Collection Scope and Content Note:

The Francis W. Carpenter Papers document the life and work of an American cast-iron toy inventor and manufacturer during the late 19th-century. Comprised of both business records and personal papers, the Carpenter Papers present a thorough picture of the day-to-day operation of Carpenter's business during the 1880s and 1890s through correspondence, business records, advertising materials, and a handful of patent-related materials. The personal papers span a period from 1860 through 1934 and include family papers (correspondence, bills, property maps, and family photographs), documents relating to Francis W. and Hannah Carpenter's personal bankruptcy filing in 1904, and biographical and genealogical materials.

The Papers are divided into five series:

- Series 1: Business Records, 1876–1925
- Series 2: Trade Sheets/Catalogs, n.d.
- Series 3: Patents, 1878–1883
- Series 4: Family Papers, 1860–1934
- Series 5: Miscellaneous

Series 1: Business Records, has been divided into two subseries – Correspondence and Accounts. Subseries 1, Correspondence, is divided into incoming and outgoing materials. Materials sent to Carpenter between 1876 and 1892 include letters, invoices, receipts, and envelopes arranged by correspondent. Outgoing correspondence from 1889 – 1892 is contained in Carpenter's letterpress book. These materials generally concern accounts payable, purchases, patent royalty requests to Pratt & Letchworth, and a smattering of family correspondence and accounts.

Subseries 2, Accounts, embraces the period from 1884 through 1897. Much of the material represents standard double entry bookkeeping practices in the late 19th century. Included in the collection are four "toy sales journals" (1884 – 1897) in which the daily business of

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Carpenter's shop was recorded, and one ledger (1889 – 1890) in which the accounts of individuals and other companies with Carpenter were reconciled on a regular basis. Carpenter retained a separate file of receipts for wages paid to his employees – only two years 1880 and 1888 are represented in the collection.

Series 2, Trade Sheets and Catalogs, contains twelve examples of F.W. Carpenter's advertising sheets and promotional materials. These materials depict his cast iron toys as well as his other products including his patented dustpans and a chicken feeder.

Series 3, Patents, contains seven items related to Carpenter's patents for toys and dustpans. The first two items are issued patents for a toy horse, and a toy horse and wagon combination. The remainder of the file contains material related to Carpenter's efforts to patent his own dustpan designs including correspondence with his attorney and examples of prior art with which his own invention was competing.

Series 4, Family Papers, contains biographical and genealogical material related to the Carpenter family, a small amount of family correspondence (including household accounts), family photographs, and a file relating to Carpenter's personal bankruptcy filing in 1904.

Series 5, contains miscellaneous and collateral items that were found in the collection when it was donated in 2009.

Subject Headings:

Carpenter, Francis W., 1844–1925

Metal toys

Toy industry--United States--Nineteenth Century

Biographical Sketch:

Toy inventor and manufacturer Francis W. Carpenter was born in New York City of Quaker parents in 1844, and died in 1925 in Greenwich, New York. His mother was a direct descendant of Stephen Hopkins, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He married Hannah L. Field; they had five daughters and three sons.

Carpenter set up shop in Rye, New York, and was one of the first two manufacturers to apply for a patent on a cast iron toy locomotive, filing an application on October 1, 1879—the same date as rival Jerome Secor. In private correspondence, Secor proposed that Carpenter withdraw his application and admit that “I am the first inventor of the cast locomotive...as though you had not applied for a patent.” Then Secor would license Carpenter “to make the cast iron locomotive you described to me, viz. cast in halves and without a mechanical movement.” His intent was that “you and I would have the field.” Carpenter agreed, and the date June 8, 1880, is found on toys of both men. Carpenter's patent applications, dated May 4 and May 25 of that year, depict a simple train set which was apparently never produced.

Carpenter's toy company had two predominant lines: horse-drawn toys (carts, wagons, carriages, and fire engines) and trains, made of malleable iron. The toys were cast at the Connecticut

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foundry of Bridgeport Malleable Iron. Company records show that the first train made was the Rapid Freight Train produced in 1879.

Carpenter moved his operations to Harrison, New York, in 1882. He enjoyed his peak production years there from 1884 through 1888, when he moved to Port Chester, New York. In 1890 the business was turned over to Pratt & Letchworth (P&L) of Buffalo, which manufactured Buffalo brand toys. P&L produced Carpenter trains at least through 1896; some and possibly all were sold under the XL brand name. While Carpenter began making toys once again in 1892, none were trains. Carpenter and his wife filed for bankruptcy in 1904.

In his lifetime Carpenter was granted some 267 patents, only some of which were for toys. He was interested in farming, and one of his patents, granted late in life, was for a feed hopper for chickens. He was also involved in real estate, both in New York City and the Port Chester area.

Carpenter's toy patents are:

- 227216 – Toy Railway Train, May 4, 1880
- 227956 – Toy Railway Train, May 25, 1880
- 234534 – Toy Horses and Wagons, November 16, 1880
- 241188 – Toy Horse, March 28, 1881
- 244433 – Toy Horse and Wagon, July 19, 1881
- 245702 – Toy Locomotive and Cars, August 16, 1881
- 251093 – Toy Horses and Cart, December 20, 1881
- 251763 – Toy Building Blocks, January 3, 1882
- 267773 – Toy Sleigh, November 21, 1882
- 287095 – Toy Horse and Cart, October 23, 1883
- 298446 – Toy [Horse and Cart], May 13, 1884
- 389364 – Toy [Locomotive], September 11, 1888
- 432693 – Toy Figure [Fireman on Hose Cart], July 22, 1890
- 467332 – Toy Fire Escape, January 19, 1892
- 475486 – Toy [Fire Escape], May 24, 1892
- 809092 – Toy [Fire Escape], January 2, 1906
- 981977 – Toy [Firehouse with Horse-Drawn Fire Engine], January 17, 1911

Carpenter's toys are considered highly collectible. In 2005, Carpenter's Tally Ho toy (consisting of a carriage, four horses, driver, and six passengers) sold at auction for \$92,000; at the same auction, his intricate Burning Building toy sold for \$54,625.

Biographical Sources:

“Francis W. Carpenter Dies; Noted Inventor.” Port Chester *Daily Item*. December 26, 1925.

Francis W. Carpenter Papers, Box 4, Series 4, Family Papers.

“Francis W. Carpenter – Toymaker.” n.d.. Francis W. Carpenter Papers, Box 4, Series 4, Family Papers.

O'Brien, Richard. *Collecting Toys: A Collector's Identification & Value Guide*. 5th ed. 1990.

Ralston, Rick. *Cast Iron Floor Trains: An Encyclopedia with Rarity & Price Guide*. 1994.

Strong National Museum of Play. Library. Patent papers.

Series Descriptions:

Series Number: 1

Series Title: Business Records

Series Dates: 1876–1925

Series Quantity: 2½ feet

Series Arrangement: Generally by type of record, with bound volumes in chronological order and individual correspondence in alphabetical order by correspondent.

Series Container/Folder List:

Box 1:

Sales journal, October–December 1884

- Bound volume; brief accounts of toys and dust pans sold and money received

Toy sales journal, 1885–1887

- Bound volume; detailed accounts, in chronological order, of toys sold, noting specific toys and prices, amounts billed and received

Toy sales journal, 1888

- Bound volume; detailed accounts, in chronological order, of toys sold, noting specific toys and prices, amounts billed and received

Toy sales journal, 1889–1897; other sales, 1890–1897

- Bound volume; detailed accounts, in chronological order, of toys sold, noting specific toys and prices, amounts billed and received; detailed accounts of dust pans sold; royalties received from Pratt & Letchworth

Sales ledger, 1889–1890

- Bound volume; list of accounts receivable indexed by purchaser (includes R. H. Macy & Co.; F.A.O. Schwarz; Best & Co.; Bridgeport Malleable Iron Co.; Lord & Taylor; Pratt & Letchworth)

Employee wage receipts, 1880, 1888–1889

- Individual paper receipts

Outgoing business correspondence, 1889–1892

- Bound volume of carbon copies of outgoing correspondence in chronological order; correspondence generally concerns purchase orders, accounts payable, and royalties from Pratt & Letchworth; includes carbon copies of check vouchers; includes some correspondence regarding family matters, real estate, and work on Carpenter's property

Incoming business correspondence, 1876–1925

- Letters, invoices, receipts, and envelopes arranged alphabetically by correspondent and then chronologically

Box 2:

- A. A. Hoffman, 1884–1885
- A. D. Matthews & Sons, 1888
- A. Guenther, 1889
- A. M. Howard, 1884, 1887–1889
- Adolph Forster & Co., 1888
- Alexander & Mason, 1876–1878
- American Photo-Engraving Co., 1884–1894
- American Tack Co., 1884
- Babcock, H. H., 1879–1880
- Barlow Foundry Co., 1910
- Bergmann, Hoffmann & Co., 1885
- Bloomingdale Bros., 1885
- Brandau & Schott, 1888
- Bridgeport Malleable Iron Co., 1882–1885, 1888–1890, 1892, 1896; 7 folders

Box 3:

- Burke, FitzSimons, Hone & Co., 1888
- C. B. Hewitt & Bros., 1893
- C. J. Smith & Co., 1882
- C. P. Kalkenbrenner, 1880
- Carpenter, Howard F., 1898
- Carpenter, J. W., 1884, 1888
- Chas. E. Griffith, 1889
- Charles H. Howell & Co., 1889
- Charles Mayer & Co., 1885
- Crook, Charles [Crook & Herring], 1885, 1887–1888
- Delorme & Quentin, 1888
- E./Edward Ridley & Sons, 1879–1880, 1884
- E. I. Horsman, 1885, 1888
- Edwin F. Smith, 1884–1885
- Emmons Smith & Co., 1885
- Excelsior Trunk Factory, 1888
- F.A.O. Schwarz, 1885, 1888, 1904
- F. Decker, 1888
- F. W. Anthes, 1884
- F. W. Gesswein, 1889
- F. W. Wardwell, 1888
- Francis L. Hughes, 1886
- G. Cronemeyer, 1888
- Geo. Borgfeldt & Co., 1884
- Geo. E. Sciple, 1888

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- Gill, Mrs., 1884
- Gilmore, Smith & Co., 1878
- Green Joyce & Co., 1884
- H. Hardy & Co., 1888
- H. J. McMahan, 1884
- H. Mace & Co., n.d.
- H. T. Patterson & Co./Patterson, Jordan & Gottfried/Patterson, Gottfried & Hunter, 1888–1889, 1892–1893
- Hausle & Kraus, 1888
- Henry Van Kuyck & Son, 1885
- Horace Partridge & Co., 1888–1889
- Houghton & Dutton, 1885
- J. C. Althaus, 1888
- J. C. Brokaw, 1888
- J. D. Williams & Bro., 1889
- J. T. O'Brien & Sons, 1888
- J. W. McKeever, 1888
- James Gallagher Brass Foundry, 1884
- Jas. Jardine, 1885, 1888
- James McCarthy, 1884–1885
- John C. Sullivan, 1888
- John Henry & Sons, 1884
- John Luck, 1888
- John W. McCarty, 1894
- Johnson Bros., 1888
- Julius M. Jagel, 1884–1885
- Levy & Davis, 1888–1889
- Levy & Stearn, 1888
- Lord & Taylor, 1888
- Lyman & Curtiss, 1880, 1884
- Mabley & Company, 1886
- Manhattan Railway News Co., 1885
- Meinecke & Co., 1884
- Morse, George, 1892
- New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company, 1889
- New York Nickel Plating & Manufacturing Co., 1889
- Parker Brothers, 1886
- Peabody & Whitney, 1888
- Peck & Snyder, 1888
- Phillips, H., 1888
- Port Chester *Enterprise*, 1885
- Port Chester Paper Box Co., 1923
- R. A. Stowell & Co., 1888
- R. H. Macy & Co., 1888

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- R. H. Staveley, 1888
- Richard Schwarz, 1884–1885, 1888–1889
- Rogge & Koch, 1888–1889
- S. O. Barnum, 1888
- S. Tyroler, 1885
- Scharles Bros., 1889
- Schlingheyde & Merrill, 1888
- Schott & Co., 1888
- Secor, Jerome B., 1880 [photocopies]
- Serrell, Lemuel W./Serrell & Son, 1881, 1884, 1888, 1896, 1910, 1919, 1925
- Sloop *John G. Perry*, 1878
- Spooner Manufacturing Co., 1887–1889
- Stirn & Lyon, 1884–1885, 1888–1889
- Strobel & Wilken, 1885, 1888–1889
- Tower Manufacturing Co., 1888
- W. L. Sommer, 1885, 1889, n.d.
- W. O. Sweet, 1888
- Wahl & Snaith, 1888
- Williard & McKee/H. F. Williard, 1884–1888
- Unknown correspondents

Series Number: 2

Series Title: Trade Sheets/Catalogs

Series Dates: n.d.

Series Quantity: 12 items

Series Arrangement: Unarranged; duplicates kept together

Series Container/Folder List:

Box 1:

Item 1: 1 sheet, 1 side, printed, n.d., no prices; depicts:

- Carpenter's One Horse Dump Cart, No. 5
- Carpenter's Two Horse Dump Cart, No. 6
- Carpenter's Galloping Horse, No. 7
- Carpenter's Small Horse & Cart, No. 8

Item 2: 1 sheet, 1 side, photostat, n.d., with prices

- *Carpenter's Durable Iron Toys for Children, Made of Malleable Iron*; depicts:
 - Two Horse Express Wagon, No. 11
 - Depot Wagon, No. 12
 - Two Horse Dump Cart, No. 6
 - Large Wagon (with Barrels), No. 23

Item 3: catalog, 2 sheets, 2 sides, 8 pages, printed, n.d., no prices

- *F. W. Carpenter's Patented New Iron Toys* (4 copies); depicts:
 - Carpenter's Iron Tally-Ho Coach, No. 555
 - Carpenter's Iron Fire Engine, No. 53/3
 - Carpenter's Iron Fire Engine, No. 33
 - Carpenter's Iron Fire Patrol, No. 55
 - Carpenter's Iron Hose Carriage, No. 35
 - Carpenter's Iron Hook & Ladder, No. 52
 - Carpenter's Engine House, No. 58
 - Carpenter's Iron Locomotive & Tender, No. 500
 - Carpenter's Iron Coal Cart, No. 10
 - Carpenter's Two Horse Express Wagon, No. 11
 - Carpenter's Iron Depot Wagon, No. 12
 - Carpenter's Iron Freight Train, No. 200
 - Carpenter's Iron Passenger Train, No. 221/2
 - Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 800/2
 - Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 800/3
 - Carpenter's Large Wagon (With Barrels), No. 23
 - Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 20
 - Carpenter's Iron Passenger Train, No. 221
 - Carpenter's Adjustable New York & Brooklyn Bridge, No. 550

Item 4: 1 sheet, 2 sides, printed, n.d., no prices

- *F. W. Carpenter's Patented New Iron Toys*; depicts:
 - Carpenter's Engine House, No. 58
 - Carpenter's Iron Fire Engine, No. 53/3
 - Carpenter's Iron Hook & Ladder, No. 52
 - Carpenter's Iron Hose Carriage, No. 35
 - Carpenter's Iron Fire Patrol, No. 55

Item 5: catalog, 1 sheet, 2 sides, 4 pages, printed, n.d.; 1 with no prices, 1 with prices

- *F. W. Carpenter's Patented Durable Iron Toys* (2 copies); depicts:
 - Iron Freight Train, No. 1
 - Iron Freight Train, No. 2
 - Iron Puffing Locomotive, No. 3
 - Iron Locomotive, No. 4
 - One Horse Dump Cart, No. 5
 - Two Horse Dump Cart, No. 6
 - Galloping Horse, No. 7
 - Small Horse & Cart, No. 8
 - Pony Cart, No. 9
 - One Horse Coal Cart, No. 10
 - Two Horse Express Wagon, No. 11
 - Depot Wagon, No. 12

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Item 6: 1 sheet, 1 side, printed, n.d., no prices

- *Carpenter's Adjustable Elevated or Surface Railroad, No. 525*; 3 copies

Item 7: 1 sheet, 1 side, printed, n.d., no prices; depicts:

- Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 22
- Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 2
- Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 1
- Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 15
- Carpenter's Iron Locomotive, No. 4
- Carpenter's Iron Locomotive, No. 50
- Carpenter's Iron Locomotive, No. 44
- Carpenter's Iron Train, No. 441

Item 8: 1 sheet, 1 side, printed, n.d., with prices

- *Carpenter's Patented Self-Supporting Dust-Pans With Long, Upright Handle*

Item 9: 1 sheet, 1 side, printed, n.d., no prices

- *No More Stooping. Carpenter's Star Dust Pan*

Item 10: 1 sheet, 2 sides, printed, n.d., with prices

- *F. W. Carpenter's Improved Poultry Feeder*; 8 copies

Item 11: 2 sheets, photostats, n.d., with prices

- *Carpenter's Durable Iron Toys for Children, Made of Malleable Iron*; depicts:
 - Two Horse Express Wagon, No. 11
 - Depot Wagon, No. 12
 - Two Horse Dump Cart, No. 6
 - Large Wagon (with Barrels), No. 23
 - One Horse Coal Cart, No. 10
 - Small Horse and Cart, No. 8
 - Tally Ho Coach, No. 555
 - Iron Locomotive and Tender, No. 500

Item 12: 2 sheets, proofs, n.d., no prices; depicts:

- *Carpenter's Iron Freight Train with Puffing Locomotive, No. 100*
- illustrations of burning-building toy

Series Number: 3

Series Title: Patents

Series Dates: 1878–1883

Series Quantity: 7 items

Series Arrangement: Unarranged

Series Container/Folder List:

Box 1:

Item 1: folded sheet, printed and handwritten, February 21, 1878

- Power of Attorney, Francis W. Carpenter of Harrison, NY, to William P. Carr of New York, NY

Item 2: single sheet, printed, n.d.

- Patent #241,188, Francis W. Carpenter, Toy Horse: diagram and claim

Item 3: 3 sheets, photocopy, July 19, 1881

- Patent #244,433, F. W. Carpenter, Toy Horse and Wagon: diagrams and specification

Item 4: 1 sheet, printed and handwritten, June 4, 1883

- Patent Office search related to Patent #216,529, Samuel M. Perry, Dust Pans

Item 5: 3 sheets, photocopy, June 8, 1880

- Patent #228562, J. B. Secor, Toy Locomotive: diagrams and specification

Item 6: 2 sheets, printed, June 17, 1879

- Patent #216,529, S. M. Perry, Dust-Pan: diagrams and specification

Item 7: 2 sheets, printed, February 1, 1881

- Patent #237,115, B. Macardle, Dust Pan: diagrams and specification

Series Number: 4

Series Title: Family Papers

Series Dates: 1860–1934

Series Quantity: 5 inches

Series Arrangement: Generally by type of item

Series Container/Folder List:

Box 4:

Bankruptcy papers, Francis W. and Hannah Carpenter, 1904

- Correspondence and invoices from the law office of E. B. & C. P. Cowles, New York City, September–November 1904.

Biographical information, 1925, n.d.

- “Francis W. Carpenter Dies; Noted Inventor,” newsprint, Port Chester *Daily Item*, December 26, 1925
- “Francis W. Carpenter – Toymaker,” photostat of typescript, author and date unknown

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Business papers (non-toy- or patent-related), 1873–1934, n.d.

- Letters, bills, and envelopes

Correspondence, 1860–1930, n.d.

- Letters and envelopes

Genealogies, n.d.

- Family records, lists, and correspondence concerning Carpenter genealogy

Map, n.d.

- “Map of Lots on the Property of Francis W. Carpenter, in the Village of Port Chester, N.Y.,” printed

Photographs, n.d.

- 9 photos:
 - 4 photos of Carpenter, wife, and pets outside
 - 1 group photo (Carpenter, wife, and daughters?)
 - 1 formal portrait of young woman
 - 1 photo of 3 soldiers in a horse-drawn cart
 - 1 photo of a ramshackle building
 - 1 photo of a large, multi-story house

Series Number: 5

Series Title: Miscellaneous

Series Dates: n.d.

Series Quantity: 1 envelope, 1 folder, and 1 small box

Series Arrangement: Generally by type of item.

Series Container/Folder List:

Box 4:

Research notes?

- Set of 4” by 6” handwritten index cards, primarily an index of Carpenter correspondents; n.d., incomplete entries?

Miscellaneous papers

- Notice of a course of three lectures by Rev. Geo. Macardle
- Blank invoice/statement stationery for F. W. Carpenter, Manufacturer of Toys, Novelties, Etc.
- Recipe card/advertising for Cottolene shortening

Box 5:

Objects

- Brass key with attached disk inscribed "F. W. Carpenter"
- 3 lumps of coal
- 2 zinc printing plates mounted on wood blocks, depicting 2 cuts of the Burning Building toy