

Mitchell & Company Records, 1936-1985

Collection Summary

Reference Code:	MRQ, US.
Repository:	Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
Call Number:	MSS 36
Collector:	Haverhill Public Library
Title:	Mitchell & Company Records, 1936-1985
Dates:	1936-1985
Size:	4.209 Linear Feet (4 boxes)
Language(s):	Collection materials are in English.
Abstract:	This collection provides a general overview of the history and activities of Mitchell & Company, a department store in Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Organizational History

Mitchell & Company was founded in 1872, by Frank J. Mitchell and his brother, Seth K. Mitchell. Five years later Mr. George W. Thayer joined the organization. Calico, cotton cloth, silks, and dry goods were the principal items sold in the first few years. This partnership continued until 1902 when it was dissolved and Mr. Nicholas C. Johnson became associated with Mr. Mitchell. The firm was incorporated in 1905, with Frank J. Mitchell as president and Nicholas C. Johnson as treasurer. Upon the death of Frank Mitchell in 1921, Nicholas Johnson became president and treasurer with Tom W. Mitchell as vice-president. In 1926 Nicholas C. Johnson and his three sons acquired the Mitchell interest in business.

In April 1945, Mitchell & Company purchased two buildings and two parcels of land partially occupied by the store immediately adjoining it. The property, at 90-98 Merrimack Street, was occupied on the ground floor by Whelan Drug Company, and Di Tommaso & Sons, jewelers, with offices and tenements on the second and third floors. The reason for the purchase was to allow for further expansion in future. In April 1959, the top two floors of the Mitchell and Johnson Building, 76 to 86 Merrimack Street, were torn down; the cost of repairing, heating, and taxes were a major factor in the decision.

In 1971, Mitchell & Company was doing well; there were 28 departments in the store and it employed 100 people. However, in late 1979, the company said that they were having trouble attracting women shoppers between the ages of 18 to 30. As a way to address the issue, they looked to consolidate departments and move some of the women's department from the

basement to street level. The department store continued to face challenges and, in 1985, the 113-year-old company closed, due partially to flagging sales and a shift in customer buying habits.

Scope and Content Note

This collection provides a general overview of the history and activities of Mitchell & Company, a department store in Haverhill, Massachusetts. It has been arranged into four series. Series one contains an employee handbook and a scrapbook. Series two consists of photographs. Series three contains advertisements and series four contains objects, such as boxes, a clothes hanger, and pneumatic tubes used in the store.

Arrangement

Series 1: Business Information, 1936-1985, undated

Series 2: Images, 1936-1953, undated

Series 3: Advertisements, 1964, 1980, undated

Series 4: Objects, undated

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation:	[Item Identification], Mitchell & Company Records, 1936-1985, MRQ, US., Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
Custodial History:	Much of the material was acquired from creator. The Haverhill Public Library also collected materials from the creator.
Acquisition Information:	Unknown
Processing Information:	Processed by Erik R. Bauer, 2019. Updated by Tamara Gaydos, 2021.
Access Rights:	Collection is open for research.
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Tech. Access Restrictions:	None.
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Related Material:	None
Separated Material:	None.

Conservation Notes: Newspaper clippings were photocopied onto archival quality paper and a scrapbook was photocopied for preservation purposes.

Subjects: Department stores
Department stores – Massachusetts -- Haverhill
Mitchell & Company
Haverhill (Mass.)—History

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Business Information, 1936-1985, undated

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Employee Handbook [2 copies], undated	1	1
Mitchell & Company Scrapbook, 1936-1985	2	
Mitchell & Company Scrapbook (photocopy), 1936-1985	1	2

Series 2: Images, 1936, 1953, undated

Exterior of Mitchell & Company, 1936	1	3
Interior of Mitchell & Company, 1953	1	4
Photocopies of Interior and Exterior Photographs, undated	1	5
Photographs of windows, 1936	3	

Series 3: Advertisements, 1964, 1980, undated

Mitchell & Company Ad [photocopy], 1964	1	6
Mitchell & Company ad mockups, 1980	1	7
<i>Simplicity Fashion News</i> [patterns catalog], undated [1980s]	1	8

Series 4: Objects, undated

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Necktie Box [2], undated	1	9
Clothes hanger and gift box, undated	3	
Pneumatic Tubes (12), undated	4	