

University of Chicago Library

Guide to the Louis E. Asher Papers 1894-1914



© 2006 University of Chicago Library

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Descriptive Summary	3
Information on Use	3
Access	3
Citation	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope Note	4
Related Resources	4
Subject Headings	4
INVENTORY	4
Series I: Correspondence	4
Series II: Advertising	5
Series III: Miscellaneous Material	7

Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.ASHER
Title	Asher, Louis E.. Papers
Date	1894-1914
Size	1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	Advertising executive and businessman. Contains correspondence, advertising materials, and photographs relating primarily to Asher's activities while working at Sears, Roebuck and Company. Correspondents include Julius Rosenwald and Richard W. Sears.

Acknowledgments

Information on Use

Access

No restrictions.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Asher, Louis E.. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Louis Eller Asher was born in Jackson, Mississippi in 1877. He moved to Chicago in 1898 where he worked successively as a reporter for the Daily News, and later for a local trade paper, soliciting advertisements. An article he wrote in late 1898 about the American Woolen Mills, a subsidiary of Sears, Roebuck and Co., brought him to the attention of Richard W. Sears who, impressed by his imagination and writing ability, hired him as an advertising writer for American Woolens. In 1901, Asher was appointed advertising manager of Sears, Roebuck and Co., in 1906 assistant general manager, and later in that same year general manager of the company. Asher, working closely with Richard Sears, was responsible for many of the great promotion schemes of the company. Resigning from Sears, Roebuck in 1909, Asher entered the mail-order business himself, founding the very successful Banner Tailoring Company, of which he was president until he retired in 1927. In 1942, Asher, with Edith Heal, wrote *Send No Money*, a history of Sears, Roebuck and Co. under the leadership of Richard W. Sears. Active in Chicago civic and social life, Asher was one of the founders of Poetry Magazine, a member of the Chicago Art Institute, and the Chicago Museum of Natural History. He established a fellowship in social

sciences at the University of Chicago in 1944 and later one in the humanities. Asher died in Chicago in 1948.

Scope Note

The collection, made up of correspondence, advertising materials, and other miscellaneous documents, concern, with few exceptions, affairs of Sears, Roebuck and Co. The correspondence (approximately 200 letters) included 120 letters written by Richard W. Sears to Asher. Correspondence of Asher to Sears and to and from Asher with other officials of Sears, Roebuck and Co., are also included. The correspondence deals mainly with advertising policies. Asher stated in the forward to *Send No Money* that among the source materials used in preparing the book was correspondence with Richard Sears. The letters of Sears to Asher are not extensively quoted throughout the narrative. An appendix, however, was added that included excerpts, many severely edited, from 60 of the letters which are a part of the collection. Asher wrote of this correspondence: "The letters reflect the creative presence of Richard Sears in the business whether he was on the ground or abroad." The remainder of the collection generally concerns advertising matters. Included are original memoranda and copies of Richard Sears' ideas for various advertising schemes, sample letters sent to prospective customers, examples of customers' correspondence, account sheets on the cost of advertising, and photostats of advertisements placed in the catalogs or magazines. Among the miscellaneous documents are banquet programs of a Sears, Roebuck organization - Seroco, employee publications, and miscellaneous photographs. The papers, including the photostats, cover the years 1894-1914.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Asher, Louis Eller, 1877-1948
- Sears, Richard Warren, 1863-1914
- Rosenwald, Julius, 1862-1932
- Sears, Roebuck and Company
- Advertising
- Advertising executives

INVENTORY

Series I: Correspondence

Box 1

Folder 1

Richard W. Sears to Louis E. Asher, 1900-1905 (27 items)

Box 1

Folder 2

Richard W. Sears to Louis E. Asher, 1906 (22 items)

Box 1

Folder 3

Richard W. Sears to Louis E. Asher, 1907 (23 items)

Box 1

Folder 4

Richard W. Sears to Louis E. Asher, January-June, 1908 (19 items)

Box 1

Folder 5

Richard W. Sears to Louis E. Asher, July-September, 1908 (25 items)

Box 1

Folder 6

Richard W. Sears to Louis E. Asher, 1909-1914 (8 items)

Box 1

Folder 7

Richard W. Sears to Louis E. Asher, (typewritten transcriptions, bound), 1900-1911

Box 1

Folder 8

Louis E. Asher to Richard W. Sears (carbons), 1901-1907 (19 items)

Box 1

Folder 9

Personal letters from Sears family to Louis E. Asher, 1906-1918 (6 items)

Box 1

Folder 10

R. W. Sears correspondence with W. W. Wehrle Stove Company, 1905-1907 (6 items)

Box 1

Folder 11

Elmer Scott to Louis E. Asher, 1901, 1906-1909 (20 items)

Box 1

Folder 12

Miscellaneous documents to and from L. E. Asher, 1903-1911 (18 items)

Box 1

Folder 13

Julius Rosenwald to Louis E. Asher, 1918 (5 items)

Box 1

Folder 14

Official notices of L. E. Asher's appointments; letters of congratulations, 1901, 1906 (8 items)

Box 1

Folder 15

Examples of letters written to company by customers (originals and copies), 1905-1912

Series II: Advertising

Box 2

Folder 1

Advertising drafts by Richard W. Sears (holograph), 1908 (1 item)

Box 2

Folder 2

Advertising copy by Richard W. Sears (typewritten), 1905-1908 (10 items)

Box 2

Folder 3

Memoranda to department heads by Richard W. Sears, L. E. Asher and others, 1898-1908 (12 items)

Box 2

Folder 4

L. E. Asher to miscellaneous newspapers about advertising (copies), 1900 (3 items)

Box 2

Folder 5

Reference notes by L. E. Asher on early advertising (Prepared for Send No Money) (40 pp)

Box 2

Folder 6

Stove Premium Plan, sample copy of letter and literature, 1908 (4 items)

Box 2

Folder 7

Sample copies of letters to customers about stoves, 1908 (4 items)

Box 2

Folder 8

"Solicitation for business" letter, applications and pamphlet ("Iowaizing"), 1908 (4 items)

Box 2

Folder 9

Advertising effectiveness comparisons, 1900-1907 (22 items)

Box 2

Folder 10

Profit and loss statements, Iowaizing campaign (Photostats), 1902-1908 (5 items)

Box 2

Folder 11

Catalog inquiries on sewing machines, 1904 (5 items)

Box 2

Folder 12

Catalog distribution cost account sheets, 1906, 1908 (2 items)

Box 2

Folder 13

Profit sharing certificates (2 items)

Box 2

Folder 14

Electric Belt Catalog (1 item)

Box 2

Folder 15

Photostats of advertisements, 1900-1908 (22 items)

Box 2

Folder 16

Photostats of advertisements, 1900-1908 (11 items)

Box 2

Folder 17

Photostats of advertisements, 1900-1908 (40 items)

Box 2

Folder 18

Photostats of pages from Texas Catalog, 1906 (25 items)

Box 2

Folder 19

Duplicate photostats of advertisements (negative) (50 items)

Box 2

Folder 20

Photograph, Richard W. Sears (1 item)

Series III: Miscellaneous Material

Box 3

Folder 1

Memorandum by Louis E. Asher on duties of a mail order correspondent [1901?] (1 item)

Box 3

Folder 2

Chart-Department organization under Louis E. Asher, 1905 (1 item)

Box 3

Folder 3

Photographs, Richard W. Sears' birthplace, A. C. Roebuck's home, etc. (9 items)

Box 3

Folder 4

Balance sheets and profit and loss statements (printed,) 1907-1908

Box 3

Folder 5

Clipping, Sears, Roebuck and Co. offers to buy complete output of factories (1 item)

Box 3

Folder 6

Banquet programs, Seroco, 1901-1906 (14 items)

Box 3

Folder 7

Employee publications, Seroco Topics (miscellaneous issues) (1 item)

Box 3

Folder 8

Employee publications, The Skylight (miscellaneous issues) (6 items)

Box 3

Folder 9

"Sears, Roebuck and Co. and Their Employees," by E. L. Scott (9 items)

Box 3

Folder 10

Pamphlet (February, 1926), "From a Wayside Station to the World's Largest Store" (1 item)

Box 3

Folder 11

Published articles on Richard W. Sears and Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1898-1914 (7 items)