

Herff Jones Collection

Processed and arranged in 2020

Montgomery County Archives, Courthouse Annex III, Montgomery, Alabama, 36104, (334)-
832-7173

Processed by: Dallas Hanbury

Collection Creator: Herff Jones

Collection: Herff Jones Collection

Collection Dates: Ca. 1903- ca. 2003

Collection Size: 11.6 Linear Feet

Abstract: The Herff Jones Collection primarily consists of photographs, documents, and oversized images related to the Paragon Press/Herff Jones printing company. The Herff Jones portion of the collection documents the history and operations of its printing plant in Montgomery, Alabama.

Repository: Montgomery County Archives, Courthouse Annex III, Montgomery, Alabama, 36104, (334)-832-7173

Reference Code: 2020.001

Languages and Scripts: The entire collection is recorded in English.

Administrative/Biographical History: Paragon Press was founded in Montgomery, Alabama in 1903. In 1963 Paragon Press was subsumed by the Herff Jones company, which was founded in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1920. Herff Jones sells and produces yearbooks, as well as class rings, graduation caps and gowns, and other school and graduation-related products. At some point after 1963 the Carnation Company purchased Herff Jones. In 1985 forty Herff Jones employees bought the company back from the Carnation Company. In 1989 Herff Jones became primarily owned by its employees as it transitioned to an employee stock ownership program.

Scope and Content: This collection documents the history of the Paragon Press company of Montgomery, Alabama, as well as the history of the Herff Jones company plant in Montgomery, Alabama. Other major themes in the collection include records documenting the preparations for the seventieth-fifth anniversary open house celebration of Paragon Press in 1978. The collection also contains some correspondence and corporate records. The collection primarily divides into three parts: documents, images, and oversized images. In addition to oversized images, the image series also contains colored slides and a subseries of negatives. A very small series, ephemera, also exists.

System of Arrangement: This collection is organized into four series:

Series I: Documents

- Subseries I: Publicity
- Subseries II: Historical Documentation
- Subseries III: Newspaper Clippings
- Subseries IV: Corporate Documents
- Subseries V: Correspondence
- Subseries VI: Business Records

As evidenced by the number of subseries, the “Documents” series contains a wide range of material from the historical to the routine records creation of day-to-day business.

Series II: Images

- Subseries I: Negatives

The photographs in the “Images” series document the history of Paragon Press, corporate anniversaries, and day-to-day work in the Paragon Press/Herff Jones Montgomery, Alabama plant.

Series III: Oversized Images

The “Oversized Images” series contains colored drawings of the Herff Jones Plant located at 2800 Selma Highway, as well as photographs depicting daily work at the Paragon Press/Herff Jones plant in Montgomery.

Series IV: Ephemera

The “Ephemera” series contains two bound volumes, one containing board minutes and correspondence, and the other consisting of Paragon Press stock certificates.

Location of Originals: Montgomery County Archives; Vault 116, Bay 10B, (Box 1, due to its size, is located in vault 121)

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: The Collection consists of paper-based photographs, film slides, film negatives, framed oversized images, documents and two bound volumes.

Access Points:

Montgomery (Ala.)

Printing

Business

Conditions Governing Access: Collection is open for access.

Accruals: No further accruals are expected with this collection.

Acquisition Info: Montgomery, Alabama Herff Jones plant manager Julie [?] contacted the Montgomery County archivist Dallas Hanbury and explained that Herff Jones was closing the Montgomery plant due to consolidation and that the plant offices contained a number of unique historical items including documents, photographs, slides, and oversized images. Julie offered the collection to the Montgomery County Archives, which accepted it.

Alternative Forms: None

Additional Finding Aids: None

Appraisal Process: The Montgomery County Archives' mission statement notes that the MCA collects non-government records, as long as they pertain to the history of Montgomery County.

Custodial History: The Herff Jones Collection was in the possession of the Herff Jones Montgomery, Alabama plant until its transfer to the Montgomery County Archives on July 29, 2020.

Preferred Citation: (Name of record cited, type of record, date of record,) Herff Jones Collection, Montgomery County Archives.

Processing Information: In July 2020 Montgomery County Archivist Dallas Hanbury created a basic, top-level finding aid as he began initial processing of the collection. The collection then underwent processing from July 2020 to September 2020. During processing a number of deaccessions and other processing actions occurred. They are as follows: removed from folder titled "Paragon History" a number of photographs of Herff Jones/Paragon Press management. Some of the images obviously depict the plant dedication/ground breaking ceremony for the construction of the Herff Jones plant located at 2800 Selma Highway. These photographs were moved to the photograph series. From the "Paragon History" folder Paragon Press guest register sheets dated between March 31 and April 1, 1964 were moved to the deaccession pile. It is likely this around the time the Herff Jones plant at 2800 Selma Highway opened. These records were deaccessioned because of the lack of significant evidential value regarding Paragon Press/Herff Jones Company. From the same folder a September 8, 1963 *Montgomery Advertiser* clipping about an award Herff Jones received for the production of a book was removed and put into the "Newspaper Clippings" subseries. Also removed from the "Paragon History" folder a note presumably written by former CEO Ed wise. The note was signed by "Ed." It was attached to a 1915 document authorizing the president of the company to borrow money on behalf of the company. The note and document was placed in another folder titled "Herff Jones History." Also removed "Certificate of increase" from a pile of corporate related records to the deaccession pile.

Said record is already recorded in the Montgomery County Probate Judge's office. Also from the corporate records pile was removed to the deaccession pile a packet of correspondence between the Capital Refrigeration Company and Herff Jones that discussed the installation and maintenance of air conditioners at the Paragon Press company. These letters do not provide any valuable information about the overall history or operations of the Paragon Press. Also removed from the corporate records a lease agreement dated January 10, 1963 between Paragon Press and B. H. Klein for storage at an office located at No. 9, 137 South Court Street. This document provides no lasting value to the collection. Also removed from the corporate records pile a mortgage between Paragon Press and the First National Bank of Montgomery dated April 16, 1958. This document is already recorded in the Montgomery County Probate Judge's Office in Mortgage Book 856, beginning at page 368. From corporate records was removed a mortgage satisfaction certificate issued to Paragon Press by Liberty National Life Insurance Company on October 14, 1957. This certificate appears totally symbolic and adds no value to the collection. Removed from a folder titled "Contracts-Important Papers" a significant amount of correspondence which was placed in the correspondence subseries. In fact, about half of the "Contracts-Important Papers" folder consisted of correspondence. From corporate records to the deaccession pile was moved a large number of business and store licenses for Paragon Press that date from 1956 to 1963. These records added little to no value to the collection. From the corporate records was moved to the deaccession pile a copy of Paragon Press's incorporation papers. The incorporation papers were already recorded in the Montgomery County Judge of Probate's office. Removed to the deaccession pile two photographs that appear to be of an inventory/order form that contains the phrase "Herff Jones" and "Inv # 9=230485."

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use: It is presumed corporate and individual copyrights have been retained by copyright owners. Copyright restrictions apply. Users of materials should seek necessary permissions from the copyright holders to comply with U.S. copyright laws.

Separated Materials: None

Bibliography: Herff Jones, "About" <https://www.herffjones.com/about/> (accessed July 30, 2020).

"100 Years of Memories: Herff Jones/Paragon Press 100th Anniversary Celebration 1903-2003". (Publication is in the collection)

Inventory

Series I: Documents

Box 1

Subseries I: Publicity

Folder 1: "Open House"

Folder 2: "Open House 9/78"

Folder 3: "Invitations-1978"

Folder 4: "Open House 9/78"

Folder 5: "Open House Invitations 9/78"

Folder 6: "Open House Refreshments 9/78"

Folder 7: "75th Anniversary Open House"

Folder 8: "Open House Publicity 9/78"

Subseries II: Historical Documentation

Folder 1: "Herff Jones History"

Folder 2: "Silver Anniversary 1903-1928"

Folder 3: "Fourteen Adams Avenue: A Story of Two Houses"

Folder 4: "100 Years of Memories: Herff Jones/Paragon Press 100th Anniversary Celebration 1903-2003"

Folder 5: "Paragon History"

Subseries III: Newspaper Clippings

Folder 1: Newspaper Clippings

Subseries IV: Corporate Documents

Folder 1: "Employment Agreement [:] Herff Jones Company & Edwin S. Wise"

Subseries V: Correspondence

Folder 1: "Goodrich & Warren"

Folder 2: Correspondence

Folder 3: Correspondence

Subseries VI: Business Records

Folder 1: Assorted Business Records

Folder 2: "Appraisal for the Paragon Press [:] 34 Adams Street, Montgomery, Alabama"

Folder 3: "Board Minutes, By-Laws, and Other Corporate Records"

Folder 4: "Board Minutes, By-Laws, and Other Corporate Records"

Series II: Images

Box 1: Images 1-34; 45-106

Box 2: Images 107-234

Box 3: Images 35-44 (Separated out from box 1 and 2 because of size difference)

Box 4: Three double-sided, over-sized image collages mounted on poster board

Subseries I: Negatives

Box 1: 1-94

Series III: Oversized Images

Box 1: Six oversized images that include a colored drawing of the Herff Jones plant located at 2800 Selma Highway, Photographs of the shop floor at Paragon Press, and architectural plans for the Herff Jones plant at 2800 Selma Highway.

Box 2: Contains two framed photographs of what appear to be the Paragon Press offices at 14 Adams Street. Box also contains a framed proclamation by Alabama Governor Bob Riley declaring August 13, 2003 "Herff Jones Day."

Series IV: Ephemera

Box 1: Contains one bound volume of Paragon Press/Herff Jones Montgomery Board Minutes and related documents and one bound volume of Paragon Press stock certificates, and one copy of the 1924 Montgomery County High School yearbook, "Clover Leaves."