



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Zippo Lighter Advertising Collection

NMAH.AC.0094

Frank Jenkins

2004

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
archivescenter@si.edu
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3
Series 1: Advertising and Promotional Material, 1937 - 1998.....	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Zippo Lighter Advertising Collection
Date:	1937 - 1998
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0094
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Domestic Life (Collector)
Creator:	Zippo Manufacturing Company (Author) Jones, William (Vice President, Zippo Lighter) (Collector)
Extent:	0.75 Cubic feet (2 boxes, 3 oversize folders)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by William Jones, Vice President of Zippo, March 1983.

Provenance

The first part of the collection was donated to the Division of Domestic Life in 1983 by William Jones, Vice President of the Zippo Company and transferred to the Archives Center in February, 1983. The second part, the 65th Anniversary material, was donated in 1997 to the Archives Center by Patrick Grandy, the Marketing Communications Manager of Zippo.

Related Materials

Collected in conjunction with accession no. 1983.0394, Division of Home and Community Life (now Division of Cultural and Community Life).

Processing Information

Collection processed by Frank Jenkins, 2004

Preferred Citation

Zippo Lighter Advertising Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

The Zippo Company has made over 300 million cigarette lighters since it was founded in 1932. The founder, George Blaisdell, believed that the policy of planned obsolescence repulsive, so he guaranteed his product "forever". Any Zippo lighter sent back to the factory has always been repaired at no charge to the customer. According to the company's official history, the lighter's qualities, windproof and rugged, caught on big during World War II when just about every man in the service, dogface to Dwight D. Eisenhower, had one. There are numerous stories of the lighter being used to illuminate airplane instrument panels and as emergency signaling devices. There is a confirmed instance of a lighter working after being frozen in solid ice for four months, and one which survived an 1,100 foot fall. Zippo began diversifying in 1962 into such products as money clips, flashlights and pocket rules. The Case Cutlery Company has been a subsidiary of Zippo since 1993.

Scope and Contents

Advertising brochures, posters, and articles on the company.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Cigar lighters -- 1930-1980
Smoking -- 1930-1980

Types of Materials:

Articles
Pamphlets -- 20th century
Posters -- 20th century

Names:

National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Domestic Life

Container Listing

Series 1: Advertising and Promotional Material, 1937 - 1998

Box 1, Folder 1	Advertisements, 1962 - 1982
Box 2, Folder 1	Advertisements, 1937 - 1968
Map-folder 1	Advertising posters, 1962 - 1967
Box 1, Folder 2	Brochures
Box 1, Folder 3	Car brochure
Box 1, Folder 4	Executive diary, 1998 - 1998
Box 1, Folder 5	Fiftieth anniversary report, 1982 - 1982
Box 1, Folder 6	History of Zippo
Box 1, Folder 7	License plate holder
Box 1, Folder 8	Mouse pad
Box 1, Folder 9-11	Press kit, 65th anniversary, 1997 - 1997
Box 1, Folder 12	Press kit, Zippo flashlight, 1997 - 1997
Box 1, Folder 13	Zippo/case swap meet 1 Videocassettes (VHS)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)