



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Direct Mail Advertising Collection

NMAH.AC.0115

Robert Harding

1998

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Direct Mail Advertising Collection
Date:	1976-1977, 1980-1981, 1984
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0115
Creator:	Wells, Ellen B.
Extent:	9.6 Cubic feet (29 boxes)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Dibner Library, National Museum of American History, through Ellen Wells, 1984.

Processing Information

Collection processed by NMAH Staff, 1998

Preferred Citation

Direct Mail Advertising Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted research access on site.

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Biographical Note

Donor is a Smithsonian Institution librarian.

Scope and Contents

Unsolicited mail received by Ellen Wells during two twelve month periods, 1976-1977 and 1980-1981. Ms. Wells kept all materials received during these periods as a sample of the changing use of this mass communication medium. Ms. Wells received the first group in Ithaca, New York, and the latter in Alexandria, Virginia. This collection provides a substantial sample of materials used in direct mail advertising and solicitation. These techniques of mass communication have become increasingly sophisticated and more widely used in recent years and the products of these techniques--commonly called "junk mail"--are ubiquitous in contemporary society.

Scope and Contents

Because this collection consists of materials received by only one individual, it is not a scientific sample; however, it reflects the targetting of individual consumers based on interests, tastes, and past buying patterns; and the use of direct mail by a wide range of organizations and institutions and the changing techniques employed.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Advertising, Direct-mail

Types of Materials:

Direct mail

Container Listing

Series 1: Sample Period, 1976-04-1977-03

Box 1, Folder 1	Alumni Materials, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Automobile related, undated
Box 2	Books, magazines and recordings, undated
Box 3	Books, magazines and recordings, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Charitable, humanitarian, educational and civic organizations, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Charitable, humanitarian, educational and civic organizations, undated
Box 4	Collectibles, undated
Box 5	Department and Discount Stores, undated
Box 6, Folder 1	Insurance, undated
Box 6, Folder 4	Mail Order Catalogs, undated
Box 7	Mail Order Catalogs, undated
Box 6, Folder 2	Political and Governmental, undated
Box 6, Folder 3	Miscellaneous, undated

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Series 1: Sample Period, 1980-1981

Box 8, Folder 1	Alumni Materials, undated
Box 8, Folder 2	Automobile related, undated
Box 9, Folder 1	Books, recordings, undated
Box 10, Folder 1	Magazines, undated
Box 11, Folder 1	Charitable, undated
Box 12, Folder 1	Department and Discount Stores, undated
Box 12, Folder 2	insurance, undated
Box 12, Folder 3	Mail Order, American Express, undated
Box 12, Folder 4	Mail Order, Catalogues, Food, undated
Box 13	Mail Order, Catalogues, General, undated
Box 14	Mail Order, Catalogues, General, undated
Box 15, Folder 1	Political and Governmental, undated
Box 15, Folder 2	Sweepstakes, undated
Box 15, Folder 3	Miscellaneous, undated

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Series 3: Sample Period, 1984

Box 16, Folder 1	Alumni Materials, undated
Box 16, Folder 2	Automobile related, undated
Box 17	Books, undated
Box 18	Books, undated
Box 19, Folder 1	Credit card applications and bank information, undated
Box 19, Folder 2	Charitable, humanitarian, educational and civic organizations, undated
Box 20, Folder 1	Charitable, humanitarian, educational and civic organizations, undated
Box 20, Folder 2	Coupons, undated
Box 21	Department and Discount Stores, undated
Box 22	Department and Discount Stores, undated
Box 23	Department and Discount Stores, undated
Box 24	Department and Discount Stores, undated
Box 25	Department and Discount Stores, undated
Box 26, Folder 1	Mail Order, Foods, undated
Box 26	Magazine and renewal information, undated
Box 27	Mail Order Catalogs, undated
Box 28, Folder 1	Political and Governmental, undated
Box 28, Folder 2	Sweepstakes, undated
Box 29	Miscellaneous, undated

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