



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Virgil Johnson Collection of Cigarette Packages

NMAH.AC.0645

Mimi Minnick

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Virgil Johnson Collection of Cigarette Packages
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0645
Date:	circa 1890-1997
Extent:	25 Cubic feet (26 boxes)
Creator:	Brown and Williamson. Johnson, Virgil American Tobacco Company. Benson and Hedges. Philip Morris, Inc. Lorillard. Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company. Reynolds, R. J.
Language:	English
Summary:	As a teenager, Virgil Johnson [b.1918] became interested in the designs and symbols on cigarette packs like "Black Cat" and "White Roll", and he began actively collecting in the 1930s. His interest intensified during the 1940s when he was stationed in North Africa and across the Mediterranean region as a photographer with the U.S. Navy. Mr. Johnson collected cigarette packs for over fifty years, and was a member of the Cigarette Pack Collector's Association. Approximately 6000 cigarette packages, foreign and American, arranged in 24 albums. Manufacturers include names such as those shown below.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the Archives Center of the National Museum of American History in July 1998, by Mr. Virgil Johnson, a resident of Alexandria, Virginia.

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Separated Materials

Thirty (30) empty wood, metal, and plastic cigarette packs are also part of the Virgil Johnson Collection. They are housed with the Consumer Culture Collections in the Cultural History Division, which also holds several dozen cigarette packs from the Walter Landor/Landor Associates Industrial Design Collection (AC 500).

Related Materials

The Archives Center is nationally recognized as a site in which to pursue research into the history of tobacco advertising. The Warshaw Collection (AC 60) include many thousands of tobacco advertisements and cigar box labels from the 19th and 20th centuries; the Ayer Collection (AC 59) includes advertising proofsheets for American Tobacco, Phillip Morris, R.J. Reynolds and other cigarette and cigar manufacturers since the 1870s. The Marlboro Collection (AC 198) includes print ads, company publications, and oral history interviews with tobacco industry and advertising agency personnel. The Walter Landor/Landor Associates Industrial Design Collection (AC 500) includes documentation on package design for numerous tobacco companies since the 1950s, and the newly acquired Sandra and Gary Baden Collection of Celebrity Endorsements in Advertising (AC 611) contains several hundred ads featuring movie stars, singers, politicians, and athletes promoting tobacco products since the 1890s.

4,000 cigarettes, also donated by Mr. Johnson, each contained in a screw top glass vial, were donated to the Center for Disease Control's Office of Smoking and Health in Atlanta, Georgia.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Mimi Minnick, July 1998

Preferred Citation

Virgil Johnson Collection of Cigarette Packages, 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

As a teenager, Virgil Johnson [b.1918] became interested in the designs and symbols on cigarette packs like Black Cat and White Roll, and he began actively collecting in the 1930s. His interest intensified during the 1940s when he was stationed in North Africa and across the Mediterranean region as a photographer with the U.S. Navy. Mr. Johnson collected cigarette packs for over fifty years, and was a member of the Cigarette Pack Collector=s Association.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of approximately 6,000 cigarette packages, ca. 1890-1997, arranged in 24 albums. The cigarette packages offer a strong base for research into the categories of [visual imagery](#) created, associated with, and manipulated for the sale of tobacco products. Researchers interested in the history of

design will also find these packages a useful source, as they reflect design modifications (in image, logo, typeface, and package features) over time for virtually every brand marketed in the U.S. and an enormous selection of those marketed overseas, by both U.S. and other global tobacco concerns.

Series 3: BOOKS ABOUT TOBACCO AND TOBACCO COLLECTING These titles have been transferred to NMAH Library.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into 3 series.

Series 1: Cigarette Packages

Series 2: Articles and Other Publications About Tobacco

Series 3: Books About Tobacco and Tobacco Collecting

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Cigarettes -- 1850-2000
- Cigarettes -- 20th century
- Packaging -- 1850-1900
- Packaging -- 20th century
- Tobacco -- 1850-2000
- Tobacco -- 20th century

Types of Materials:

- Albums

Container Listing

Series 1: Cigarette Packages, circa 1890-1997

Series 1: Cigarette Packages, 1890-1997 Packages were [carefully unfolded and flattened](#) by the collector, then mounted with Duco cement on heavyweight 11" x 17" paper. For each package there are also a cigarette wrapper and a sample of the filter material.

Subseries 1.1: Foreign Cigarettes manufactured and/or sold in foreign countries, including American cigarettes sold overseas. They are organized by country of origin and then under alphabetically by name of manufacturer.

Subseries 1.2: American Cigarettes manufactured and sold in the United States; arranged alphabetically by name of manufacturer.

Subseries 1.3: Index Cards Card file index maintained by the collector cross-referencing name and manufacturer and indicating album location, date, and other identifying information for each pack. Boxes 22 and 23 are foreign cigarettes arranged alphabetically by brand. Box 24 is American cigarettes arranged alphabetically by brand.

Subseries 1.1: Foreign

Box 1, Folder 1	Unknown Origins
Box 1, Folder 2	Afghanistan Image(s) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 3	Algeria Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 4	Angola
Box 1, Folder 5	Argentina
Box 1, Folder 6	Aruba
Box 1, Folder 7	Austria Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 1	Belgium
Box 2, Folder 2	Bolivia
Box 2, Folder 3-8	Brazil
Box 2, Folder 9	Bulgaria
Box 2, Folder 10	Burma
Box 3, Folder 1	Cambodia

	Image(s)
	Image(s)
Box 3, Folder 2	Canada
Box 3, Folder 3	Ceylon
Box 3, Folder 4	Chile
Box 10, Folder 1-7	China
Box 3, Folder 5	Columbia
Box 3, Folder 6	Cuba
Box 3, Folder 7	Czechoslovakia
Box 3, Folder 8	Denmark
Box 4, Folder 1	Ecuador
Box 4, Folder 2	European Economic Community
Box 4, Folder 3-7	Egypt
Box 4, Folder 8	Finland
Box 4, Folder 9	France
Box 5, Folder 1-3	Germany
Box 5, Folder 4	East Germany
Box 5, Folder 5	Ghana
Box 5, Folder 6	Gibraltar
Box 11, Folder unfolded	Great Britain Image(s)
Box 5, Folder 7	Greece
Box 5, Folder 8	Grenada
Box 5, Folder 9	Guatamala
Box 6, Folder 1	Haiti
Box 6, Folder 2	Honduras
Box 6, Folder 3-4	Hong Kong

Box 6, Folder 5	India
Box 6, Folder 6-7	Indonesia
Box 6, Folder 8	Iran
Box 6, Folder 9	Ireland
Box 6, Folder 10	Israel Image(s) Image(s)
Box 6, Folder 11	Italy
Box 7, Folder 1	Jamaica
Box 7, Folder 2-4	Japan Image(s)
Box 7, Folder 5	Kenya
Box 7, Folder 6	Korea
Box 7, Folder 7	Libya
Box 7, Folder 8	Lithuania
Box 7, Folder 9	Luxembourg
Box 7, Folder 10	Madagascar
Box 7, Folder 11	Malaysia
Box 7, Folder 12	Mexico Image(s)
Box 7, Folder 13	Moldova
Box 7, Folder 14	Morocco
Box 7, Folder 15	Nepal
Box 7, Folder 16	Nigeria
Box 7, Folder 17	Norway
Box 7, Folder 18	Okinawa
Box 7, Folder 19	Pakistan
Box 7, Folder 20	Paraguay

Box 7, Folder 21	Peru
Box 7, Folder 22	Philippines
Box 12, Folder 1-8	Poland
Box 7, Folder 23	Portugal
Box 7, Folder 24	Puerto Rico
Box 8	Romania
Box 8	Spain
Box 8	Sweden
Box 8	Switzerland
Box 9, Folder 1	Taiwan
Box 9, Folder 2	Thailand
Box 9, Folder 3	Trinidad
Box 9, Folder 4	Turkey
Box 9, Folder 5	Ukraine
Box 9, Folder 6	Union of South Africa
Box 9, Folder 7	Venezuela

Subseries 1.2: American

Box 13	American Tobacco Company Image(s) Image(s)
Box 14	Benson & Hedges and Lorillard
Box 15	Brown & Williamson Image(s)
Box 16	Liggett and Myers
Box 17	Philip Morris
Box 18	R.J. Reynolds
Box 19	Other manufacturers, A-M

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 20 Other manufacturers, N-Z

Box 21 Generics

Subseries 1.3: Index Cards

Box 22 Foreign, arranged alphabetically by brand, A-K

Box 23 Foreign, arranged alphabetically by brand, L-Z

Box 24 American, arranged alphabetically by brand name

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Series 2: Articles and Other Publications About Tobacco and Tobacco Collecting , 1927-1994

Includes one box of publications about the history of tobacco and tobacco collecting, and one box of newsletters of the Cigarette Pack Collector's Association, *Brandstand: Viewing the World of Cigarette Collecting*, ca. 1978-1998.

Box 25, Folder 1	The Brown and Williamson Story, undated
Box 25, Folder 2	The Story of Lucky Strike: The Romance of Tobacco and the Exciting Story of Cigarette Manufacture, 1953
Box 25, Folder 3	The Marlboro Story (advertisement), undated
Box 25, Folder 4	Philip Morris Inc. Annual Report, 1983
Box 25, Folder 5	Georgopoulo & Co. Manufacturers and Importers of Luxury Cigarettes since 1905, undated
Box 25, Folder 6	Brochures: Danville, Virginia tobacco history sites, ca. 1984-1985
Box 25, Folder 7	"North Carolina's Tobacco Heritage," The Tobacco Institute, undated
Box 25, Folder 8	"Tobacco: Deeply Rooted in American's Heritage," the Tobacco Institute, undated
Box 25, Folder 9	Newspaper clipping: "Cigarettes Named for Candidates [Eisenhower and Stevenson] Selling Furiously," 1952
Box 25, Folder 10	Newspaper clipping: "Odd Cigarettes Included in Tolland Collection," 1953
Box 25, Folder 11	Newspaper clipping: "Soviet Smokers Now Have Filters," <i>NY Times</i> , September 11, 1958
Box 25, Folder 12	"Pack Art," <i>Washington Post Magazine</i> , November 8, 1991
Box 25, Folder 13	Tobacco Advertising: The Great Seduction, 1996
Box 25, Folder 14	"Light Up and Drink Up: Cigarette Makers," pp. 765-782, undated
Box 25, Folder 15	<i>Tobacco Products Permittee List</i> , Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Department of Treasury, 1977
Box 25, Folder 16	"An Illustrated Listing of Generic, House Brand and Price--Competitive Cigarette Packs," 1984
Box 25, Folder 17	Directory of Cigarette Brands, 1864-1988
Box 25, Folder 18	"Cigarette Brands, 1927 - ," n.d.

- Box 25, Folder 19 Carl Clawsen, Jr., *The Cigarette Pack's Collectors Compendium: A Comprehensive Listing of U.S. Cigarette Merchants, Brand Names and Factory Numbers*, June 1994
- Box 25, Folder 20 International Cigarette Manufacturer's Address List, undated
- Box 25, Folder 21 Revenue stamps [key]; "Cigarette Identifier" [foreign language key]; "Brands Manufactured in the United States" [key]
- Box 26, Folder 1-20 *Brandstand: Viewing the World of Cigarette Collecting*[newsletters of the Cigarette Pack Collectors Association], 1978, 1980-1998
- Box 26, Folder 21 CPCA Directory, 1983

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Series 3: Books About Tobacco and Tobacco Collecting

These titles have been transferred to National Museum of American History Library.

Dunhill, Alfred. *The Gentle Art of Smoking*. NY: Putnam, 1954.

Flanagan, Roy and Pat Flanagan Hooker. *The Story of Lucky Strike*, American Tobacco Co., 1953

Lewine, Harris. *Good- bye To All That*, undated

Wood, Neil. *Smoking Collectibles: A Price Guide*, Gas City, Indiana: L.W. Booksales, 1994

The American Tobacco Company. *Sold American!": The First Fifty Years: 1904-1954*, 1954

Heimann, Robert. *Tobacco and Americans*, McGraw Hill, 1960

Mullen, Chris. *Cigarette Pack Art: A Unique Blend of Cigarette Pack Design*, NY: St. Martins Press, 1979

Sobel, Robert. *They Satisfy: The Cigarette in American Life*. NY: Doubleday, 1978

Tilley, Nannie M. *The R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Caroline Press, 1985.

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