



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Joseph Pedott Papers

NMAH.AC.0898

Cassandra A. Schmitt

2009

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-3270
Fax Number: Fax: 202-786-2453
archivescenter@si.edu
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	3
Arrangement	3
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
Series 1: Oral History Interview, April 2008, 2004 September	5
Series 2: Chia Pet, 1981 - 2005, undated	6
Series 3: The Clapper, 1976 - 1985, undated	7
Series 4: Scribe Ett, 1981, 1984, undated	8
Series 5: Eversharp Pen Company, undated	9
Series 6: Various Products, 1985, undated	10
Series 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1989 - 2004, undated	11
Series 8: Audiovisual Materials, 1979 - 2005, undated	12

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Joseph Pedott Papers
Date:	circa 1976-2005, 2008
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0898
Creator:	Joseph Enterprises, Inc. (San Francisco, California) Pedott, Joseph, 1932-2023 (Creator)
Extent:	2 Cubic feet (3 boxes)
Language:	Collection is in English. Some business correspondence in Mandarin; some packaging in French and German.
Summary:	Papers relating to products developed and marketed by Joseph Enterprises, Inc., including the Chia Pet and the Clapper. The collection includes internal business documentation including correspondence, design drawings, and photographs. Print advertising and packaging samples as well as audiovisual materials make up an important part of the collection. The video collection includes commercials for the Chia and Clapper products as well as clips of product mentions in popular entertainment. In addition, there are two recorded oral history interviews with Joseph Pedott.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Joseph Pedott, 2005.

Related Materials

Materials in the National Museum of American History

The Division of Culture and the Arts (now Division of Cultural and Community Life) holds artifacts related to this collection (Accession # 2005.3116) that include:

1. Chia Pet Handmade Clay Decorative Planter with Chia Seeds, Chia pet dog
2. Chia Pet Handmade Clay Decorative Planter with Chia Seeds, Chia pet ram
3. Chia Pet Handmade Clay Decorative Planter with Chia Seeds, Chia pet bull
4. Chia Pet Handmade Clay Decorative Planter with Chia Seeds, Chia-saurus
5. Chia Pet Handmade Clay Decorative Planter with Chia Seeds, Chia *Shrek* character
6. Handmade Clay Decorative Planter with Chia Seeds, Donkey from *Shrek*
7. Chia Pet Handmade Clay Decorative Planter with Chia Seeds, Jerry Garcia Chia
8. Bigmouth: A portable, plastic garbage bag holder
- 9A. CD Mobile antenna with packaging

- 9B. CB Mobile monitor with box
- 10. Video recorder with packaging
- 11. Metal detector with packaging
- 12. Pen set with frame and packaging
- 13. Light switch with box
- 14. Light switch with packaging
- 15. Jar lid opener with box
- 16. Tapeless measure with packaging
- 17A. Pen, engraving
- 17B. Pen, engraving with packaging
- 17C. Pen, engraving with packaging
- 17D. Pen, engraving with packaging
- 18A. Knife, Pumpkin cutter
- 18B. Knife, Pumpkin cutter
- 18C. Knife, Pumpkin cutter
- 18D. Knife, Pumpkin cutter
- 18E. Knife with packaging
- 18F. Pumpkin cutter with packaging

Processing Information

Processed by Cassandra A. Schmitt, February 2007; supervised by Alison Oswald and Wendy Shay, archivists.

Preferred Citation

Joseph Pedott Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

Conditions Governing Use

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

Biographical / Historical

Joseph Pedott (1932-2023) was born April 14, 1932 in Chicago. He attended the University of Illinois, where he and friend Daryl Peters, began the advertising company, Pedott & Peters. They successfully began producing commercials for automotive and retail companies and made a large amount of money by the time they reached the age of twenty-one. After making a bad business investment the partners focused on completing college. They began building up the company upon graduation.

Pedott and Peters worked together for several years before deciding to dissolve the partnership. Pedott then began working for R. Jack Scott, a Chicago advertising agency. Pedott worked for Scott for just over two years and during that time, out-performed those with more experience in the advertising field. Pedott left Chicago for San Francisco in 1956. He worked briefly at a small firm on commission before forming his own agency, Joseph Pedott Advertising & Marketing. Pedott's firm was innovative in advertising techniques. The company was the first to use "dealer tagging," a technique used at the ends of television commercials. During the last five seconds of the commercial consumers would learn where the advertised item could be purchased.

While attending a Chicago house wares show Pedott noticed the Chia Pet. He spoke with the product owner and learned that while the product was selling well, the owner was losing money on every Chia sold. Pedott bought the name and concept and reworked the manufacturing of the product after a trip to Mexico to witness first hand how the Chias were made. Later pedott moved Chia manufacturing to China. Pedott created a new company, Joseph Enterprises, Inc., (JEI) to manufacture the Chias. Joseph Pedott Advertising ran the advertising campaigns for all of JEI's products while continuing to work for non JEI clients.

After improving the quality of the product, the "new" Chia arrived on the market in 1982 and quickly expanded throughout the country, sold largely at drugstores. Today, the Chia Pet has large name recognition among the American public and continues to be a popular gift, especially at Christmas time. The line has expanded beyond the original ram and bull shapes to include a variety of animals (pig, elephant, kitten, dinosaur, etc.) as well as famous cultural icons such as Jerry Garcia, Bugs Bunny and various Looney Tunes characters, and Homer and Bart Simpson. In addition, the Chia Herb Garden entered the market in the mid-1990s.

Pedott's other success, the Clapper, came about through the advertising campaign for the Great American Turn On. Pedott discovered that the original product did not work properly and felt the owners were cheating their customers. JEI bought the product, including the patent, and reworked the electrical wiring to ensure that the company was selling a high quality product. As with the Chia Pet, The Clapper and its advertising, like the Chia, are familiar to a large number of Americans.

Note: Material for this section was taken from Joe Pedott Oral History Interview Abstract, September 20, 2004, Joseph Pedott Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents the Chia Pet, the Clapper, and other products of Joseph Enterprises, Inc. Other materials include packaging and advertising campaigns by Joseph Pedott Advertising & Marketing for other companies. While fragmentary and limited in extent, these materials illustrate the progress of Joe Pedott's career from a one-man advertising agency to a modest scale, enduring marketing business. The papers include early advertising work for small local clients and for a national client (Eversharp/Parker Pen) and well as early television for a variety of retail products. There is little on unsuccessful products, often just a few advertisements. The materials are complemented by the oral history interviews.

Arrangement

Collection organized into eight series.

Series 1: Oral History Interviews, September 2004, April 2008

Series 2: Chia Pet, 1981-2005, undated

Series 3: The Clapper, 1976-1985, undated

Series 4: Scribe Ett, 1981, 1984, undated

Series 5: Eversharp Pen Company, undated

Series 6: Various Products, 1985, undated

Series 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1989-2004, undated

Series 8: Audiovisual Materials, 1979-2005, undated

Subseries 8.1, Commercials, 1979-2005

Subseries 8.2, Promotions, 1996-2001

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Marketing
- Novelties
- Popular culture
- Toys

Types of Materials:

- Advertisements
- Audiotapes
- Design drawings
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Packaging
- Photographs -- 1950-2000

Container Listing

Series 1: Oral History Interview, April 2008, 2004 September

Scope and Contents: Series 1, Oral History Interviews, September 2004 and April 2008, were conducted with Joseph Pedott by John Fleckner, NMAH archivist. The 2004 interview discusses his life and business career in Chicago and San Francisco and the development of the Chia Pet and other products. The 2008 interview focuses on the move of Chia Pet manufacturing to China and Pedott's ongoing relationship with its manufacturer. He also discusses marketing strategies and changes brought about by drug store consolidation and the emergence of big box stores. There is a detailed abstract for the first interview and a transcript for the second.

Box 1, Folder 17 [Oral history transcript, 2004 September](#)

Box 1, Folder 17 [Oral history transcript, 2008 April 16](#)

Box 3, Cassette OTC
898.1 Oral history (archival original), 2004 September
1 Cassette tape

Box 3 Oral history (archival original), 2008 April
1 Cassette tape

Box 4, Cassette RTC
898.1 Oral history (reference copy), 2004 September
1 Cassette tape

Box 4 Oral history (reference copy), 2008 April
1 Electronic discs (CD)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Chia Pet, 1981 - 2005, undated

Scope and Contents: This series contains photographs, packaging, label copy and advertising for the Chia Pet, Chia Head, and Chia Cat. Some ads feature the Chia Shrek, Chia Donkey and Chia Garfield. The photographs document the manufacture of clay Chia Pets in Mexico.

Box 1, Folder 1	Chia Pet, manufacture, undated
Box 2, Folder 1	Chia Pet, packaging and advertising, circa 1980s
Box 1, Folder 2	Chia Pet, advertising, 1992, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: The Clapper, 1976 - 1985, undated

Scope and Contents: This series contains correspondence, legal documents, advertising, packaging and blueprints related to the manufacture and marketing of the clapper. The correspondence is arranged chronologically and details the finances and manufacture of the Clapper. The majority of correspondence addresses parts/components and the associated drawings from the Taiwan Electronics Mfg. Corporation and the Taiwan William Computer Mfg. Corporation. There is some correspondence with Pedott's attorney about trademark issues surrounding the Clapper. The legal documents pertain to a 1984 breach of contract between Joseph Enterprises, Inc., and Real Time Technology Ltd., regarding the timely supply of a sonic control switch for the Clapper. The advertising materials contain a 1988 script for video and audio spots and the photographs depict the Clapper's many uses.

Box 1, Folder 3	The Clapper, business correspondence, 1984 February-April
Box 1, Folder 4	The Clapper, business correspondence, 1984 May
Box 1, Folder 5	The Clapper, business correspondence, 1984 June
Box 1, Folder 6	The Clapper, business correspondence, 1984 July
Box 1, Folder 7	The Clapper, business correspondence, 1984 August
Box 1, Folder 8	The Clapper, business correspondence, 1984 September-October
Box 1, Folder 9	The Clapper, manufacture, 1976 - 1985, undated
Box 1, Folder 10	The Clapper, legal documents, 1985
Box 1, Folder 11	The Clapper, advertising, 1988, 2002
Box 1, Folder 12	The Clapper, photographs, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	The Clapper, packaging and advertising, circa 1980s
Box 2, Folder 8	The Clapper, blueprints, 1984

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Scribe Ett, 1981, 1984, undated

Scope and Contents: This series documents an engraving pen that identifies and decorates metal, plastic, leather and wood. The documentation consists of advertisements, product literature, and contact sheets for a thirty-second commercial spot.

Box 1, Folder 14 Scribe Ett, advertising, 1981, undated

Box 1, Folder 13 Scribe Ett, packaging, 1984, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Eversharp Pen Company, undated

Scope and Contents: This series contains advertising materials in the form of storyboards for two Eversharp Pen Company products, the "Tip-Wic" pen and fishing lures.

Box 2, Folder 3	Eversharp, advertising--pen, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Eversharp, advertising--fishing lures, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Various Products, 1985, undated

Scope and Contents: This series contains black-and-white photographs, correspondence, drawings, and packaging for the Garden Weasel™ (a Braucke product of Germany), the Cordwheel (a product of ReMAR, Inc.), the Pumpkin Light and Pumpkin Kutter, a champagne maker kit, hair dryer, coffee maker, blender, mixer, and crock pot.

Box 2, Folder 5 Various products, packaging--Garden Weasel, undated

Box 2, Folder 6 Various products, packaging--Cordwheel, undated

Box 2, Folder 7 Various products, packaging--Pumpkin Light, undated

Box 1, Folder 15 Various products, advertising, 1985, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1989 - 2004, undated

Box 1, Folder 16

Scope and Contents: This series consists mostly of photocopied newspaper clippings about the Chia Pet and Clapper.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 8: Audiovisual Materials, 1979 - 2005, undated

Scope and Contents: This series consists of BetaCam SP, 3/4" U-Matic, 1/2" VHS, and film documenting commercials and promotional spots featuring Joseph Enterprises, Inc., products. Special emphasis is on the Chia Pet and the Clapper.

Subseries 8.1: Commercials, 1979 - 2005

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Box 3, Item OV 898.2;
Box 4, Item RV 898.2</p> | <p>Early Joseph Enterprises, Inc., television commercials, 2005 April 5
Notes: Original: 1/2" VHS
Total Running Time: 16:36</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Old Spots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garden Weasel with Jerry Baker, black-and-white Hot iron cleaner, black-and-white Quickie, an automatic sponge mop, black-and-white Quickie, black-and-white Sheer Magic, black-and-white Entry Alert, black-and-white Lumi-tronic by Lumiscope- for checking high blood pressure, black-and-white Flontron- electric bug zapper, black-and-white ENM Tapeless measure, black-and-white ENM Stud Finder, color 2. Garden Weasel with Jim Martindale, color 3. 2nd one 1990 February 23 4. Chia Pet- The Pottery that Grows, color, 1990 February 23, with demonstration and narration, "good friend and an adventure in growing" 5. The Clapper, color, 1989 February 28, with narration and song 6. The Clapper, color, 1989 December 28, with narration and song 7. Great American Turn On, color, 1979 November 12, with narration |
| <p>Box 3, Item OV 898.3;
Box 4, Item RV 898.3</p> | <p>Old Chia spots, 1989 - 2000
Notes: Original: 1/2" VHS
Contains a variety of Chia and Clapper television commercials</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Two Chia tree commercials 2. Chia pet commercials 3. 1 original Chia commercial with demonstration 4. At 5:40 Clapper commercials 5. 1992, Smart Clapper, color commercial |

4. 1992 Chia Garden, color commercial
 5. 1996 Chia, color commercial
 6. 1996 "Archeologist" Chia, color commercial
 7. Same
 8. 1996 Mt. Chiamore, color commercial
 9. 1995 Chia Herb garden, color commercial
 10. same
 11. 1996 Smart clapper color commercial
 12. same
- Then On loops beginning with the "Archeologist" commercial

<p>Box 3, Item OV 898.4; Box 4, Item RV 898.4</p>	<p>Early Joseph Enterprises, Inc., television commercials, "Classic" Chia Pet, 2005 May 11 Notes:</p>	<p>Original: ½" VHS Total Running time: 05:45</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. early Chia Pet commercial, colored, with narration and demonstration 2. 1998 with narration, searching for the perfect gift, with song, contains Chia heads and pets, "treasure of a gift" 3. 1996, especially for Chia heads, with narration and song 4. 1900, focused marketing towards children, with narration and song 5. 2002, Scooby Doo and Looney Tunes characters, with narration and song 6. 2004
---	---	--

<p>Box 3, Item OV 898.5</p>	<p>Early Joseph Enterprises, Inc., television commercials, "Classic" Clapper, 2005 May 11 Notes:</p>	<p>Total Running Time: 03:31</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. color, narrated 2. 1989, color with narration and song 3. 1996, Smart Clapper 4. with narration and new song
-----------------------------	--	---

Subseries 8.2: Promotions, 1996 - 2001

<p>Box 4, Item RV 898.6</p>	<p>"Displays Chia Herb Garden after Promo Prizes on Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy", 1996 Notes:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Jeopardy</i>, 1995, Chia pet sponsor 2. <i>Jeopardy</i>, 1995 Chia herb garden sponsor 3. <i>Wheel of Fortune</i>, Chia herb garden sponsor
-----------------------------	---	---

4. *Wheel of Fortune*, Chia pet sponsor

Box 3, Item OV 898.7	Joseph Enterprises, Inc., 1999 promotional tape, 1999 January 8
Notes:	Original: ½" VHS
	Total Running Time: 08:20
	A promotional tape highlighting the mention and use of the Chia Pet, the Clapper, and Joe Pedott in popular commercials, television shows, talk shows, movies, and comedy. The list below includes the origins of all the clips. The order of clips on the tape is not the same as the listing. Clips are mixed and intermingled throughout the tape. There is a montage of clapper scenes at the end of the video.
	Clips are included from:
	1. The <i>Today Show</i> - Katie Couric, references Clapper
	2. Energizer Bunny Commercial, references Clapper
	3. <i>Jeopardy</i> , references Chia
	4. Jeff Foxworthy, references Clapper
	5. Maury Povich, references Chia and Clapper
	6. <i>Frasier</i> , references Clapper
	7. <i>Tonite Show</i> - Jay Leno, references Chia
	8. <i>Tonite Show</i> - Johnny Carson, references Chia
	9. <i>Ellen</i> , references Chia
	10. <i>Murphy Brown</i> , references Chia
	11. <i>Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood</i>
	12. Beck's Beer Commercial, references Chia
	13. <i>Big Comfy Couch</i> - kids show
	14. Eddie Murphy Movie
	15. <i>Saturday Night Live</i> , references Chia
	16. <i>Guys Like Us</i> , references Chia
	17. <i>Married with Children</i> , references Chia
	18. Ford Commercial, references Chia
	19. <i>The Pretender</i> , references Chia
	20. <i>In Living Color</i> , references Chia
Box 4, Item RV 898.7-1	Joseph Enterprises, Inc., 1999 promotional tape, 1999 January 8
Notes:	Total Running Time; 08:20
	Same description as above, OV 898.7
Box 4, Item RV 898.7-2	Joseph Enterprises, Inc., 1999 promotional tape, 1999 January 8
Notes:	Total Running Time: 45:46, repeats after 08:20

Same description as OV 898.7, except will continue to loop for 60 minutes

- Box 4, Item RV 898.8; Joseph Enterprises product mentions, 2001
Box 3, Item OV 898.8 Notes: Original: ½" VHS
- Total Running Time: 19:00, on 60 minute loop
- Clips of commercials, product mentions in popular television, movies, talk, and comedy shows.
1. *Saturday Night Live (SNL) Jeopardy* skit, references Clapper
 2. *Weirdest TV Products- #5 The Clapper*, 1995
 3. *Weirdest TV Products- # 1 Chia Pet*, 1995
 4. *I've Got a Secret* with guest Joe Pedott
 5. Spot for Chia merchandise including hats, sweatshirts, cups, and watches
 6. *Saturday Night Live* Chia solution for male pattern baldness
 7. *Becks Beer Television Commercial*, references Clapper
 8. *The Pretender*, references Chia
 9. *Murphy Brown*, references Chia
 10. Ford car television commercial, references Chia
 11. *Ellen Show*, references Chia
 12. *Today Show- Katie Couric*, references Clapper
 13. *Eddie Murphy Movie*, references Clapper
 14. John Lithgow clip, references Clapper
 15. *Saturday Night Live* Chia solution for male pattern baldness
 16. *Saturday Night Live* skit, references Clapper
 17. *Married with Children*, references Clapper
 18. Clapper Christmas television commercial
 19. Energizer Bunny television commercial, reference Clapper
 20. Mr. Rogers, references Clapper
 21. Suspicious Chia gift, suspense/crime show
 22. *Conan O'Brian*, references Mr. T. Chia pet
 23. TV sitcom, references "Chia chest" [invention by characters in the scene]
 24. *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, references Clapper
 25. Cheesy Pet, "pour on cheese, you won't believe your eyes," references Chia

- Box 4, Item RV 898.9; Joseph Pedott advertising, 2000 October 7
Box 3, Item OV 898.9 Notes: Original: BetaCam SP
- Total Running Time: 00:60

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gift Chia Pet commercial 2. Chia Looney Tunes commercial
Box 4, Item RV 898.10;	Joseph Pedott advertising, demo, 2000 August 9	Notes: Original: BetaCam SP
Box 3, Item OV 898.10		1. Chia Pet and Clapper
Box 4, Item RV 898.11;	Joseph Pedott Enterprises, "Chia Spots", 1996 September 3	Notes: Original: ¾" Umatic
Box 3, Item OV 898.11		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Archaeologist, 60 seconds 2. Archaeologist, 30 seconds 3. Mt. Chiamore, no pet, 30 seconds 4. Holiday Gift, 60 seconds 5. Holiday Gift, 30 seconds
Box 3, Item OV 898.12	Joseph Pedott advertising and marketing, 1992 October 11	Notes: Original: 1" videotape
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Smart Clapper, 60 seconds 2. The Smart Clapper, 30 seconds 3. Kids Chia Herb Garden, 30 seconds 4. Chia Herb Garden, 30 seconds 5. Chia Herb Garden, 60 seconds
Box 3, Item OV 898.13	Joseph Pedott advertising, Tradeway sales, 1992 November 16	Notes: Original: 1" videotape
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chia Pet, 30 seconds 2. Chia Pet, 30 seconds 3. Herb Garden, 30 seconds 4. Herb Garden 30 seconds
Reel AC0898- OF0001-1-4	Sta-Rite Sprinkler	4 Motion picture films (16mm workprint, masking tape splices)
	Notes:	Demonstration of Sta-Rite, an in-ground sprinkler system.
Map-folder 1	Oversize materials	

[Return to Table of Contents](#)