

Finding Aid to the Corky Steiner Kenner History Collection, 1947-1960, 2015

Summary Information

Title: Corky Steiner Kenner history collection

Creator: Corky Steiner and Joseph L. Steiner (primary)

ID: 115.4174

Date: 1947-2015 (inclusive); 1956-1960 (bulk)

Extent: 0.75 linear feet

Language: The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract: The Corky Steiner Kenner history collection is a compilation of advertisements, instruction manuals, ledgers, financial reports, business letters, journal articles, photographs, DVDs, and other documentation relating to Kenner Products during the 1950s and 1960s.

Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
One Manhattan Square
Rochester, New York 14607
585.263.2700
library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Corky Steiner Kenner history collection was donated to The Strong in October 2015 as a gift from Corky Steiner. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 115.4174. The materials were received from Corky Steiner, son of Kenner co-founder and Easy-Bake Oven co-creator Joseph L. Steiner, in one box, along with a donation of Kenner trade catalogs and sell sheets.

Preferred citation for publication: Corky Steiner Kenner history collection, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

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Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Steiner, Albert
- Steiner, Joseph L.
- Steiner, Philip
- Steiner, Robert L.

Corporate Names

- Kenner Products

Subjects

- Battery Motor Play Drill (Toy)
- Beat the Buzz (Toy)
- Blow Launch Space Missile (Toy)
- Blow-a-Plane (Toy)
- Bouncy Bear (Toy)
- Bridge & Turnpike Building Set (Toy)
- Candy Lipstick (Toy)
- Color-Go-Round (Toy)
- Crib Chums (Toy)
- Documentary films
- Fairy-Go-Round (Toy)
- Fisherman's Luck (Toy)
- Fountain Brush Painting Set (Toy)
- Girder & Panel Building Set (Toy)
- Glitter Float Pals (Toy)
- Glitter Floats (Toy)
- Kenner Products
- King-Size Bobbles (Toy)
- Nursery Birds (Toy)
- Nursery Butterflies (Toy)
- Nursery Picture Plaques (Toy)
- Play Tubes (Toy)
- Play Wig (Toy)
- Pogo Seat (Toy)
- Presto Paints (Toy)
- Sleeping Beauty (Toy)
- Snoot Flute (Toy)
- Sparkle Paints (Toy)
- Toy industry
- Toymakers
- Toys--History
- Turn-a-Tune (Toy)
- Zilly Zoo (Toy)

Historical Note

Kenner Products was an American toy company founded in 1947 in Cincinnati, Ohio, by brothers Albert, Philip, and Joseph L. Steiner. (The "Kenner" name came from the street where the original corporate offices were located.) Kenner famously produced the Easy-Bake Oven, Baby Alive, Spirograph, Sit 'n' Spin, Blythe, Stretch Armstrong, and numerous licensed action figures—including the original line of Star Wars action figures and play sets during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Kenner changed hands several times in the 20th century. In 1967, General Mills further diversified its toy holdings by purchasing Kenner. (A year later, General Mills also bought Parker Brothers.) In 1985, General Mills spun off both its Kenner and Parker toy divisions to form Kenner Parker Toys, Inc.—which Tonka then acquired two years later. Tonka reconstituted Kenner Products as a branch of its company. In 1991, Hasbro purchased Tonka, including the Kenner division. Hasbro assumed Kenner’s product lines when it closed the Cincinnati offices of Kenner in 2000.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Corky Steiner Kenner history collection includes advertisements, instruction manuals, ledgers, financial reports, business letters, journal articles, photographs, DVDs, and other documentation relating to Kenner toys during the 1950s and 1960s. A sizeable portion of this collection is advertisements. The bulk of the materials are dated between 1956 and 1960. Joseph L. Steiner compiled these scrapbooks and portfolios while at Kenner. Corky Steiner, son of Joseph L. Steiner, also added Kenner history DVDs (created in 2015) to the collection.

The Corky Steiner Kenner History Collection is arranged into four series. The materials are housed in two archival document boxes.

Related Materials

Several Kenner toys, including the Easy-Bake Oven and Star Wars action figures, have been inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame. The Strong holds more than 2,000 Kenner-produced toys in its collections. The Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play houses dozens of Kenner Products trade catalogs in the library stacks.

System of Arrangement

- Series I: Product-specific advertisements, c. 1956-1960
- Series II: Scrapbooks, 1949-1959
- Series III: Financial papers, 1956-c. 1960
- Series IV: Audiovisual media, 2015

Contents List

Series I: Product-specific advertisements, c. 1956-1960

Scope and Content Note: This series holds a variety of items such as photographs, advertisements, and instructions. All items have been sorted by their relevance to each specific Kenner product.

Box 1

- Folder 4 Kenner's product-specific advertisements, 1958-1960
- Folder 5 Kenner's product-specific advertisements, 1958-1960

Box 2

- Folder 1 Oversized items, n.d. [c. 1956-1960]

Series II: Scrapbooks, 1949-1959

Scope and Content Note: This series contains scrapbooks compiled by Joseph L. Steiner while at Kenner. They include advertisements, photographs, catalogs, magazine articles/covers, instructions, sales reports, ledgers, newspaper article clippings, and inter-company correspondence.

Box 1

- Folder 1 Joseph Steiner scrapbook I, 1949-1959
- Folder 2 Joseph Steiner scrapbook II, 1957-1959

Series III: Financial papers, 1956-c. 1960

Scope and Content Note: This series holds a portfolio comprising mainly financial records and sales reports of Kenner Products. Also included are planning books, product demonstration information, forms, and some advertisements and photographs that relate to specific instructions and demonstrations.

Box 1

- Folder 3 Joseph Steiner financial portfolio, 1956-1958

Box 2

- Folder 1 Oversized items, n.d. [c. 1956-1960]

Series IV: Audiovisual media, 2015

Scope and Content Note: This series houses a set of the three-part *Kenner Toy Story*, a documentary film on the history of Kenner Products, as well as two individual discs containing copies of parts I and II, respectively.

Box 1

- Folder 6 Kenner Toy History, 2015