**Peter Gray Corporation Collection**

Cambridge Historical Commission  
831 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**Dates** 1894-1998, 1920s-1966 (bulk)

**Extent** 15 linear feet

**Access** Collection is available for research; CHC rules of use apply


**Provenance and Collection Description**  
Michael P. Kinchla of the National Products Corporation gave this collection to the Cambridge Historical Commission in February 1998. The 43 editions of *The Graylite* were gifted to the Commission in October 2012 by Cynthia L. Jones in memory of her grandfather, Peter Gray & Sons company engineer Clarence Kelsea.

The collection is composed of the business records of the Peter Gray Company and Corporation and its subsidiaries from 1894 to 1998: Barbour Stockwell Co., Grayton Industries, Inc., National Products Corporation, and Peerless Manufacturing Corporation. Contents include financial records, patents, and photographs of products, and demonstrate the growth of a small family owned company over the course of a century. Peter Gray Co. was a prominent Cambridge employer, as well as an inventor and manufacturer of a wide variety of products that made important contributions to the railroad, defense, and energy industries.

**Historical Sketch**  
Peter Gray was born in Scotland in 1839. He apprenticed as a sheet metal worker and practiced his trade in London and New Brunswick before arriving in Boston in 1866. In 1878, he founded the Gray & Ripley Company with partner R.A. Ripley, located at 12 Marshall Street in Boston. Gray & Ripley manufactured lanterns, railroad and otherwise, other tinware as well. By 1900, the company was renamed to Peter Gray & Sons after Gray's son George M. joined the business in 1885, with son Mason H. following in 1894. The company relocated to 88 Union Street in Boston in 1903. Gray died in 1906, and by 1907, two additional sons, James T. and Peter had also joined the company. Peter Gray & Sons, Inc., now incorporated, purchased land at 3rd and Binney Streets in the Kendall Square area of Cambridge that same year, and in 1909 a multi-structure plant was built there. The company continued to make railroad lanterns in addition to a wide variety of sheet metal products for industrial machinery and household appliances; it was the leading manufacturer of stamped metal products for railroad use by the 1920s.
The company, now Peter Gray Corporation, expanded in 1930, and produced specialty stampings for a wide variety of products, including hot water bottles, electric heater parts, tool boxes, traffic signals and safe boxes, serving the diverse industries in Cambridge and Boston. From the early to mid-1960s it participated in the Industrial Readiness Program for the Department of Defense, manufacturing parts for United States Navy Terrier Missiles. At the close of the 1960s, Peter Gray Corporation was known as a sheet metal manufacturer, whose products were utilized in jet aircraft production, atomic energy, and medicine.

By 1983, the company included Peter Gray Corporation, Barbour Stockwell Co., National Products Corp., Amesbury Metal Products Corp., Erikson-Hedlund Stamponic Co., and Scientific Research Corp, and brought in sales of $3,000,000 per annum in metal stamping work. The company downsized in 1993, and moved operation to Andover, Massachusetts. The Binney Street building in Kendall Square was destroyed to widen the street. Peter Gray Corporation still operates in Andover, but no longer manufactures products for sale under its own name—the company was succeeded by the Tonon Group, Inc. in 1991, and in 1998 it became a subsidiary of the Westwood Corporation.

Subsidiaries of Peter Gray Corporation with Acquisition Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peerless Manufacturing Corporation</td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Products Corporation</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbour Stockwell Company (with 4 subsidiaries)</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanchard Instrument Company</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Hammer Company</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway Iron Foundry</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaudry &amp; Company</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayton Corporation</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arrangement Note**
The inventory for this collection is very detailed, and arranged alphabetically by company name, with sub-categories. The boxes are arranged per the folder list included below.

**Location Note**
This collection is stored in both the hallway closet (boxes 1, 2, 3, 8, 9) and the Commission Library (boxes 4-7).

**Folder List**

*Box 1*
History of Peter Gray / Kendall Square
Peter Gray Corporation – Third & Binney Street property – 1907-1909
Peter Gray Corporation – product info.
Peter Gray Corporation – appraisals – 1925, 1929, 1937, 1945
Price List, Stock Items, R.T. (three ring binder)
The Graylite, monthly issues date intermittently from 1919-1924
Bulletins (printed advertising circulars):

1 Jennings self-recording test
2 micro slide cabinet
3 platform or stable lantern
6 police bullseye lantern
7 conductor’s lantern
8 candy case cooler
10 new part catalogs
11 lift bridge lantern
13 feaster foot accelerator
16 sand hods
17 lantern testing
18 improved top draft for switch and signal lanterns
31 long time burners
33 marker and classification lanterns
34 oil cans – water coolers
35 acet. Sig. And Gray train order, recent lantern specialties
37 bridge, abutment, pole, and pier lantern
38 confectioners line
39 long time chimney burner
40 Williams lantern
41 sheet metal work
42-3 daylight electric signal lantern
42-4 (42-5) junior daylight electric lantern
43 locomotive cab lamps
44 standard tinware
45 electric water gauge lamp
46 fire proof wool containers
47 highway crossing light
48 Corado long time burner
49 Locomotive cab lamps
50 milk inspectors outfit
sheet metal specialties
metal display stands
humidifier flyers
American Railroad Association specs on lanterns
AT & T company – specifications
Beck with heater specs
Specs. Boston and Maine Railroad
Western Union specifications
Westinghouse specs., electric and manufacturing co.
Semaphone lantern specs.
New York Central Lines Railroads specifications
New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Co. specs.
Drawbridge lantern specs.
Box 2


Photographs of displays of products
Photographs of inside of factory
Photographs of outside of factory
Photographs of logos for printing

Numbered photographs (negatives):
- Peter Gray negatives 1-9 (1832)
- Peter Gray negatives 10-19 (1832)
- Peter Gray negatives 20-29 (1832)
- Peter Gray negatives 30-39 (1832)
- Peter Gray negatives 40-49 (1832)
- Peter Gray negatives 50-59 (1832)
- Peter Gray negatives not numbered (1832)

Photo orders / spec.
Peter Gray & Sons site plan by Roy R. Burnham. Dated 9/17/20

File cards – Peter Gray & Sons – products
Williams Lantern #2 of 4, for testing color perception
Williams Lantern #3 of 4, for testing color perception
Williams Lantern #4 of 4, for testing color perception
Bound book, leather cover, black and white photos of products

Box 3

Product photos:
- Peter Gray - photos A, B, C, D
- Peter Gray 2a, 2b (photos)
- Peter Gray photos 3a, b, and c
- Peter Gray photos 4a, 4b
- Peter Gray photos 6a, b, and c
- Peter Gray photos 7a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, and i
- Peter Gray photos 8e
- Peter Gray photos 9a, b, c, d, and e
- Peter Gray photos 10a, b, c, d, e, f, h, i, and j
- Peter Gray photos 11a, b, d, e, f, and g
- Peter Gray photos 12a, b, and c
- Peter Gray photos 13b, 13c
- Peter Gray photos 14a, b, c, d, e, f, g, i, j, and k
- Peter Gray photos 15
- Peter Gray photos 16c, d, g, h, and I
- Peter Gray photos 17a, b, c, d, h, i, j, k, l, n, o, p and s
- Peter Gray photos 18a, b, c, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n
- Peter Gray photos 19a, b, c, e, f, g, and h
- Peter Gray photos 20a, b, and c
- Peter Gray photos 21a, 21b
Peter Gray photos 22a, 22b
Peter Gray photos 23b, c, d, e, and f
Peter Gray photos 24a, b, c, d, e, f, g and h
Peter Gray photos 25h
Peter Gray photos 26a, 26b
Peter Gray photos 31b, c, d, e, f, g, h, and I
Peter Gray photos 32a, b, c, d and e
Peter Gray photos 33a, b and c
Peter Gray photos 34a, b, c, d, and g
Peter Gray photos 35a, b, c, and d
Peter Gray photos 36a, b, c, and d
Peter Gray photos 37a, b, e, g, and h

Box 4
Peter Gray Lanterns
Peter Gray Lanterns
Peter Gray Lanterns
Peter Gray – Lanterns
Peter Gray – Electric Lanterns

Box 5
One original page (?)
Photocopies of original envelopes for glass plates
Glass plate negatives:
  Sample creel (?) see photocopy, Feb. 7, 1927, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 1
  Table end protector (small), Feb. 5, 1927, Peter Gray collection, glass negative 2
  Diamond Union stamp, Wles (?) time clock case, Feb. 5, 1927, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 3
  Miniature electric locomotive NY, NH & HRR, Jan. 20, 1927, time 20 sec. Stop #32, cloudy day 2pm., Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 4
  Miniature electric locomotive NY, NH & HRR, Jan. 20, 1927, time 30 sec. Stop #32, cloudy day 2pm., Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 5
  Lantern cone, Nov. 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 6
  May 8, 1926, Federal Reserve Bank Box, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 8
  Document box, May 8, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 9
  Switch lantern (Maine Central), November 1926, DNG F2353, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 10A
  Switch lantern (Maine Central), November 1926, DNG F2353, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 10B
  Bank statement box (closed), Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 12
  Two Limophore lanterns with outside projector unit lens ring, lens, and joint, July 26, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 13
  Bank statement box (open), Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 14
Piercing die, American Bosch Magnet Corp., condenser supporting base, B/P FP-95348 & d4c, July 28, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 15
Table end protector (one piece design), American Electrical Works, Peter Gray and Sons, Drag. F-3431, US stop 64-12 sec., glass neg. 16
“L” Lamination die, 1926, Peter Gray, glass neg. 18
Table end protector (large), Feb. 5, 1927, “ice other neg.”, Peter Gray collection, neg. 19
“L” Lamination Die, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 20
Model storm warning lantern, 1926, Peter Gray and Sons Inc., glass neg. 21
Model storm warning lantern, 1926, Peter Gray and Sons Inc. (collection), glass neg. 22
Cremation urn, August 30, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 23
Base, American Bosch Corp., B/P FP-95959, Aug. 19, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 24
Punching Die, American Bosch Magnets Corp., B/P FP-95959, August 19, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 25
Base, American Bosch Magnet Corp., Aug. 19, 1926, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 26
Not labeled, railroad lantern, Peter Gray collection, glass neg. 27
Can for Disinfectant, NE Tel. & Tel. Co., July 26, 1926, DNG H-3067

Box 6
Oversize photographs and printed images, 72, different sizes, black and white; includes images of Peter Gray Corporation buildings, machinery, and products, and products of other companies; and one advertising broadsheet for Slater Valves.

Box 7
Oversize photographs, 35, different sizes, black and white; includes images of Peter Gray Corporation products.

Box 8
Barbour Stockwell Company – company history
Barbour Stockwell Company – financial reports
Barbour Stockwell Company – tax documents – 1 of 5 – federal (1928-1957)
Barbour Stockwell Company – tax documents – 3 of 5 – federal (1918-1945)
Barbour Stockwell Company – tax documents – 4 of 5 – state (1900-1934)
Barbour Stockwell Company – misc. documents
Barbour Stockwell Company – beandry – patents, etc.
Barbour Stockwell Company – Ephriam J. Scott patents
Barbour Stockwell Company – ice cream freezing machine
Barbour Stockwell Company – correspondence – 1990s
Blanchard Instrument Company
Daggett Chocolate Company
Grayton Industries, Inc. and Grayton Corporation
National Products Corporation – inventions – 1 of 2
National Products Corporation – inventions – 2 of 2
Bound book of Barbour Stockwell stock certificates (1935-)
Bound book of Barbour Stockwell stock certificates (1893-)
Bound book of Barbour Stockwell stock certificates (1924-)

Box 9
Spiral bound book.
Peter Gray Corporation – insurance documents – (1933-1941)
Peter Gray Corporation – Third Street Building
Peter Gray Corporation – Industrial Readiness Planning Program
Peter Gray Corporation – Binney Street Building
Peter Gray Corporation – building inspection drawings – 1939-1940
Peter Gray Corporation – misc. correspondence, building information, etc. – 1944-1957
Peter Gray – lantern patents – 1894
Peter Gray Corporation – Giblin-Erdon position indicator
Peerless Manufacturing Corporation – correspondence and agreements (1955-1971)
Peerless Manufacturing Company – inventions
Scientific Research Corporation

Additional Oversize Box
Peter Gray collection: “Original Appraisal of Peter Gray and Sons Inc. at East Cambridge, Mass.” 1920

Related Materials

History of Massachusetts Industries by Orra L. Stone, c.1930.


Cambridge Historical Commission. “Peter Gray Company” folder, filed under “Commerce and Industry”

Return to CHC Collections home:
http://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/researchaids/archivalcollections