

Peter Gray Corp. Collection Finding Aid

Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Tel. (617) 349-4683
Fax. (617) 349-3116
E-Mail. histcomm@cambridgema.gov

Prepared by: Molly Alexander, Aurore Eaton, Gavin Kleespies

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Languages: English

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 began business under his own name. The firm became Peter Gray & Sons in 1900 when his sons George M. Gray and Mason H. Gray became members of the firm. Peter Gray died in 1906, and in 1907 the factory moved to the Kendall Square area of Cambridge. This same year his other two sons, James T. Gray and Peter Gray became members of the firm, which was then incorporated. By the end of the 19th century, the Peter Gray Company specialized in the production of railroad lanterns and other stamped metal products for railroad use, and by the 1920's it was the leading such manufacturer in New England. By 1930, the company had diversified, and served the diverse industries of Cambridge and Boston by producing specialty stampings for a wide variety of products such as hot water bottles, electric heater parts, tool boxes, traffic signals, safe boxes, etc. In the early 1960's the company was involved in the Industrial Readiness Plan, making parts for US Navy Terrier Missiles, and by the late 1960's was known as a sheet metal fabricator, working with the aircraft and atomic energy industries. In 1993 the company downsized and moved to Andover, Massachusetts. The company still exists, but no longer manufactures products for sale under its own name.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the business records of the Peter Gray Co. and its subsidiaries, Barbour Stockwell Co.; Grayton Industries, Inc.; National Products Corporation; and Peerless Manufacturing Corporation from 1894 until 1998. The Peter Gray Corporation was succeeded by the Tonon Group, Inc. by 1991, and by 1998 became a subsidiary of the Westwood Corporation. This collection contains business records, mostly financial, patents, and photographs of products. It is a great example of how a small family owned company grew and changed over a century. The Peter Gray Co. was important to the Cambridge community as an employer and an inventor and manufacturer

of a wide variety of products that made important contributions to the railroad, defense, and energy industries. The inventory for this collection is very detailed, and arranged alphabetically by company name, with sub-categories. The boxes are arranged differently.

Box List

Box 1 – Folder titles

History of Peter Gray / Kendall Square

Peter Gray Corporation – Third & Binney Street property – 1907-1909

Peter Gray Corporation – Misc. Correspondence – 1946-1998

Peter Gray Corporation – product info.

Peter Gray Corporation – appraisals – 1925, 1929, 1937, 1945

Price List, Stock Items, R.T. (three ring binder)

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.
Semaphore lantern specs.
New York Central Lines Railroads specifications
New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Co. specs.
Drawbridge lantern specs.

Box 2 – Folder titles

Signal Lights: A collectors reference to railroad signal lamps and highway warning devices by David Dreimiller, 1990. Spiral bound book.

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 - Folder Titles

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 – Folder Titles

Peter Gray Lanterns
Peter Gray Lanterns
Peter Gray Lanterns
Peter Gray – Lanterns
Peter Gray – Electric Lanterns

Box 5 – Folder Titles

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
 Seat for valve – Lovejoy Mfg. Co., Nov. 1926, PS and J Aug. 5- 1914, Peter
 Gray collection, glass neg. 7
 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
 Press for book binding, Ginn & Co., November 1926, Peter Gray and Co.,
 glass neg. 17
 “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 – Folder Titles

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 – Folder Titles

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

Box 8 – Folder Titles

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 – 2 of 5 – federal (1943-1951)
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 – tax documents – 5 of 5 – state (1936-1958)
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 – tax documents – 1950-1966
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 – Folder Titles

Illustrated Guide to Peter Gray Railroad Hardware by Joseph F. Farrell, Jr., 1994.

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 – 1 of 2 – business documents (1958-1969)
Peerless Manufacturing Corporation – 2 of 2 – business documents (1967-1969)
Peerless Manufacturing Corporation – correspondence and agreements (1955-1971)
Peerless Manufacturing Company – excise tax documents (1965-1967)
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

Provenance

Michael P. Kinchla of the National Products Corp gave this collection to the Cambridge Historical Commission in February 1998.

Related Sources

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

Illustrated Guide to Peter Gray Railroad Hardware by Joseph F. Farrell, Jr., c. 1994.

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

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