

**REGISTER OF THE J.P. STEVENS AND COMPANY, INCORPORATED  
(1813-1989)**

**RECORDS, 1879-1989**

**Mss 135, 62.65 cu. ft.**

## REGISTER OF THE J.P. STEVENS AND COMPANY, INC., 1813-1989

Mss 135, 62.65 cu. ft., including: 126 ledgers, 24 boxes, 2 reels of motion picture film, 8 video tapes, 1 reel of microfilm, 4 scrapbooks, 65 oversize boxes and 4 oversize folders.

### INTRODUCTION

The J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Records consist of six different accessions. Three accessions came from Ron Copsey, Director of Public Relations (89-220, 89-228, 89-230). The others (89-244, 89-250, 89-251) came from a records storage company, Smith Dray Line & Storage Co., Inc. The records were solicited and collected 1987-1989 by Michael Kohl and Bryan F. McKown with the help of a grant from the J.E. Serrine Foundation.

One of the two later accessions (89-251) includes materials from Cheney Brothers Co., Lamitex Fabrics Corp., H.B. Claflin Corp., J. Forstmann and Co., Garfield Warehouse and Terminal Co. and The Economic Advisory Corporation. J. Forstmann and Co. was taken over by J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., in 1957. Both the Economic Advisory Corp. and the Garfield Warehouse and Terminal Co. were subsidiaries of J. Forstmann and Co. All the Forstmann and Forstmann related materials have been separated and can be found in the J. Forstmann and Co. Records. Cheney Brothers, Inc., Lamitex Fabrics Corp., and H.B. Claflin Corp. materials have been kept with the J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Records. Both Cheney Brothers, Inc., and Lamitex Fabrics Corp., were owned by Stevens.

The records were arranged and described by Anne Ward with the assistance of Lori Robinson and Dorrie Wood. Additional material was processed by Michael Kohl with the assistance of Brian Ford. Ellen Krupar provided research assistance. The arrangement and description of the records was made possible by The South Carolina Textile Records Research Grant from National Historical Publications and Records Commission with matching funds from the J.E. Serrine foundation. There are no restrictions on the use of the collection.

### SCOPE AND CONTENT

The J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Records span 110 years from 1879-1989, with

the bulk of the materials falling within the 1930s to the 1960s. The majority of the records are financial ledgers documenting the monthly flow of assets of the company. There are also stockholders reports (1946-1987) and yearly financial statements (1946-1947, 1949-1959, 1961-1987). The records also contain a sizable amount of public relations materials including photographs, news releases and news clippings (1940-1989).

The records have been placed into four series: Administrative, Financial, Public Relations and Subsidiaries. Except for the photographs in the Public Relations Series, most of the records have been kept in their original order. The ledgers in the financial series are in six different subseries: General Ledgers, Journals, Cashbooks (Cash Disbursements,) Cashbooks (Cash Received,) Cashbooks (Received and Disbursed) and Account Sales. The numbering of the volumes reflects the original order and starts anew with each subseries. Scrapbooks 1-5 have been microfilmed. Those scrapbooks containing photographs (1-2, part of 3, and 6) have been retained. The approximately three hundred photographs and negatives in the Public Relations Series are divided among four categories: Buildings, Events, Portraits and Products/Advertising. The bound records are include in the container list.

The records are strong in financial information and recent public relations information about the company. Overall the records document the financial growth and diversity of the company. The more recent records document corporate public relations. Except for the 1946 reorganization (2 volumes) and the 1988 takeover (.75 cubic foot and 8 video tapes), the collection does not document administrative decisions or changes within the company. The American Textile Museum in Andover Massachusetts has some administrative records from Stevens.

## **CORPORATE HISTORY**

J.P. Stevens and Co. was founded in 1813 in North Andover, Massachusetts by Captain Nathaniel Stevens and later incorporated on New Years Eve of 1923. The company started in a converted grist mill producing woolen broadcloth in 1813. When the company was taken over and divided up in 1989 by Odyssey Partners, West Point-Pepperel Inc., and Bibb Co., it had mills from Maine to Georgia making everything from cotton and woolen yarns and

fabrics to carpets and synthetics. At the time of the 1989 takeover Stevens also owned two subsidiaries: Stevens Aviation and Stevens Graphics.

The 175 years between 1813 and 1989 saw many changes for J.P. Stevens and Company, Incorporated, including several name changes. The company started as Nathaniel Stevens and was changed to Nathaniel Stevens and Son in 1850, when Moses T. Stevens became a partner. Captain Nathaniel Stevens gave up active management of the company in 1860 and he later died in 1865. In 1885 the name of the company changed to M.T. Stevens & Sons. The company later incorporated in 1901 and changed its name to M.T. Stevens & Sons Company. In 1883, John P. Stevens (nephew of Moses T.) went to work for the commission house of Faulkner, Page & Company. In 1899, he formed a partnership commission house to sell the products of M.T. Stevens & Sons and A.D. Gleason. The company was named J.P. Stevens and Co., and later incorporated in 1923.

By 1903, J.P. Stevens and Co. was the selling agent for the woolen mills owned by M.T. Stevens and Sons Co. located in Andover (Marland Mills, est. 1820) & North Andover, MA (Stevens and Osgood Mills, est. 1813, inc. 1901) and Franklin, N.H. (Franklin Mills, est. ca. 1863, leased by Moses T. Stevens beginning 1871) and the woolen mill owned by Stevens and Co. located in Haverhill, MA (Pentucket Mills, est. 1830, bought by Nathaniel Stevens in 1855), The Nevins Co. of Boston, MA was the selling agent for the Stevens Linen Works (est. 1846, completed 1867) in Webster, MA. Except for the linen works and the Osgood Mills, all the mills produced woolen dress goods and dyed and finished their own fabrics. Along with dress goods, individual mills produced flannels, broadcloths and carriage cloths. The linen works produced linen crash toweling, while the Osgood Mills made worsted yarns.

In 1918, M.T. Stevens & Sons added mills in Peacedale, RI (Peace Dale Mills est. 1801, completed 1848.) By 1930, the company had added mills located in Dracut, MA (Merrimack Woolen Mills, Inc. 1902). Both these mills made woolen dress goods and dyed and finished their own fabrics. Also by 1930, the Pentucket Mills in Haverhill, MA were under the ownership of M.T. Stevens and Sons Co.

The Hockanum Mills Company was bought in 1934 and five woolen mills in Rockville, CT were added to M.T. Stevens & Sons. In 1935, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., became a Delaware corporation when it merged with the Milton Corporation. J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., was the continuing corporation.

In 1946, J.P. Stevens and Co. Inc. merged with M.T. Stevens and Sons Co.

and Slater-Carter-Stevens, Inc. The resulting corporation continued under the name of J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. The shares of stock owned by Slater-Carter-Stevens, Inc. in the Carter Fabrics Corp., of Greensboro, N.C. and Slater Manufacturing Co., of Slater, S.C. would become the property of J.P. Stevens and Co., Incorporated. In addition, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. bought out cotton and rayon yarn and cloth mills in Virginia and North and South Carolina: Aragon-Baldwin Mills, Dunean Mills, Piedmont Manufacturing Co., Republic Cotton Mills, Victor-Monaghan Co., Wallace Manufacturing Co., Inc. and Watts Mills. These corporations and mills along with M.T. Stevens and Sons Co. became subsidiary corporations of J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc.

According to Ron Copsey, Director of Public Relations (1981-1988) for J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., when J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., moved south in 1946 it acquired 29 new mills and became a publicly owned corporation.

By 1947, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. had acquired woolen mills in Gleasondale, MA (Originally Stowe Woolen Mills, est. 1813, Inc. 1915.) In 1956, the company bought the Worumbo plant in Lisbon Falls, ME. In 1957, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., acquired The Forstmann Woolen Company located in Passaic, N.J. By 1960, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. had 50 plants in 41 locations and offices in New York, N.Y., Greenville, S.C. and Greensboro, N.C.

In 1975, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. had 82 textile plants in Alabama, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. The main offices remained in New York City, with administrative offices in Greenville, S.C. The company also owned two subsidiaries: Stevens Aviation and Stevens Graphics. The textile plants produced cotton, wool and synthetic yarns and fabrics (woven, nonwoven and knitted) and products such as towels, carpets, hosiery, glass fabrics and sheets.

In 1989, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. was taken over by Odyssey Partners, Inc., West Point-Pepperel, Inc., and Bibb Co. During the takeover, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. was divided up and parts went to both the two corporations and the company. Also at this time the JPS Textile Group, Inc. was formed. Under this corporation were five other corporations: JPS Automotive Products Corp., JPS Carpet Corp., JPS Converter and Yarn Corp., JPS Industrial Fabrics Corp. and JPS Elastomerics Corp.

## **SUBSIDIARY CORPORATE HISTORIES**

### **Aragon-Baldwin Cotton Mills**

The Aragon-Baldwin Cotton Mills were incorporated in 1924. In 1929, bunting, broadcloth, sheetings, shade and print cloths were produced at the mills in Chester, Rock Hill and Whitmire, S.C. In 1946 J.P. Stevens and Co. bought all the common stock and issued Stevens common voting stock to Aragon-Baldwin stockholders. By 1974, the Aragon-Baldwin Mills were making broad and spun man made fibers. The Whitmire mill became part of West Point-Pepperel in the 1989 takeover.

### **Carter Fabrics Corporation**

Carter Fabrics Corporation was formed in 1937 by W.J. Carter. The shares of Carter Fabrics Corporation owned by Slater-Carter-Stevens, Inc., were taken over by J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. Before and after the 1946 takeover, Carter Fabrics, Inc. produced acetate and rayon fabrics. After the takeover, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. continued as agents for the Greensboro, N.C. based corporation.

### **Cheney Brothers Inc.**

The Cheney Brothers silk mills were established in 1838 and incorporated in 1854. The Company produced silks, satins, dress goods, plushes, velvets, printed silks, pongees, ribbons, spun silk yarns and fabrics, organzines and trams. The mills dyed and finished their own goods. In 1946, the mills produced broad and jacquard fabrics of silk, rayon, nylon, acetate, cotton and wool.

In March of 1956, Cheney Brothers declared bankruptcy and by June of the same year had sold all operating assets used in manufacturing fabrics to LaFrance Industries, Inc. Along with the operating assets Cheney Brothers sold the rights to its products, names and labels. By June of 1956 Cheney had also sold the principle assets of its subsidiary, Pioneer Parachute Co., Inc., to Reliance Manufacturing Co., and real estate property to the Connecticut Power Co.

Also in March of 1956, Cheney Brothers reincorporated and changed its name to Manchester Properties, Inc. In October of 1956, Manchester Properties, Inc., underwent a forced merger with Statom Corp. with Statom Corp. being the

continuing corporation. In April of 1957, J.P. Stevens being the sole owner of Statom Corp. dissolved the company.

### **Cleveland Cloth Mills**

The Cleveland Cloth Mills of Shelby, N.C. were established in 1925. The mills produced cotton and silk dress goods in 1929. The mills were taken over by J.P. Stevens and Co.; Inc., in 1946 and continued to produce cotton and silk dress goods. There is no record of the mills in 1974.

### **Dunean Mills**

Dunean Mills were incorporated in 1911. The Greenville, S.C. based mills produced cotton broadcloths, organdies, voiles, madras, and piques, as well as cotton waste and yarn. By 1974 the mill was producing woven and spun man made fabrics. J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., was an agent for the Dunean Mills and acquired the mills in 1946. In the 1989 takeover of J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., the Dunean Plant became part of the JPS Industrial Fabrics Corp.

### **Industrial Cotton Mills, Inc.**

This firm was incorporated in Rock Hill in 1921 with a capitalization of \$1,491,200. By 1927, it was producing denims on approximately 20,000 spindles. Its workforce increase to 750 employees working over 29,000 spindles in the 1940s. J.P. Stevens served as its selling agent in the 1940s and acquired the firm in 1946.

### **Lamitex Fabrics, Inc.**

Lamitex Fabrics was incorporated in April of 1950. Its purpose was to research, develop, manufacture and sell all kinds and forms of wrapping and packaging for foods and other merchandise. When the company was formed, J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., owned 153 shares and Lamitex Products, Inc., owned 147. The venture was unsuccessful and in 1953, the company was dissolved.

### **Piedmont Manufacturing Co.**

The mills were completed in 1874 and the company was incorporated the same year. They produced yarn and brown shirting, sheetings and drills and did no dyeing. The Piedmont, S.C. company was taken over by J.P. Stevens in 1946 and by 1974, the mills produced corduroys, jeans, twills and drills. Mill number one burned in 1983.

### **Republic Cotton Mills, Inc.**

The Great Falls, S.C. based mills were incorporated in 1919. The mills produced print cloths and cotton and silk mixed goods. The Republic Cotton Mills were taken over in 1946 by J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. By 1974 the mills were producing toweling, terry cloth, blended corduroys and twills. It is not clear what happened to the mills in the 1989 takeover.

### **Slater Manufacturing Co., Inc.**

The shares of Slater Manufacturing Co., Inc. owned by Slater-Carter-Stevens, Inc., were taken over by J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. in 1946. The Slater, S.C. based company produced cotton and rayon fabrics in its one mill both before and immediately after the 1946 reorganization. By 1974, the Slater, S.C. Plant was producing glass fabrics. After the 1989 takeover of J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., the Slater Plant became part of the JPS Industrial Fabrics Corp.

### **Victor-Monaghan, Inc.**

Victor-Monaghan was incorporated in 1917 and produced fancy shirtings, skirtings, shade cloths and quilts. The mills, located in Arlington, Greenville, Greer and Walhalla, S.C., were taken over in 1946 by J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. By 1974, the mills were producing man made synthetic fabrics. After the takeover of J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. in 1989, the Monaghan Plant in Greenville S.C. became part of the JPS Converter and Yarn Corp. <sup>also known as</sup> (Apalache)

### **Wallace Manufacturing Co., Inc.**



The Jonesville, S.C. mill was incorporated in 1923. The mill produced sheetings on narrow looms in 1930. J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. took over the Wallace Manufacturing Company in 1946. By 1974 the mill was producing both cotton and blended fabrics. It is unclear what happened to the plant during the 1989 takeover.

### **Watts Mills**

The Laurens, S.C. mills were incorporated in 1903 and produced fine sheetings, broadcloths, handkerchief cloths and poplins. In 1946 the Watts Mills were taken over in the J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc. reorganization. By 1974, the plants were producing synthetic fabrics. After the 1989 takeover and breakup of J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., the plants became part of the JPS Converter and Yarn Corp.

### **WORKS CONSULTED**

Andrews, Mildred Gwinn. *The Men and the Mills*. Macon: Mercer University Press, c1987.

Davison Publishing Co. *Davison's Textile Blue Book*. Ridgewood: Davison Publishing Co., 1930, 1947, 1955, 1959, 1960, 1964, 1965, 1974, 1975, 1985.

Dockham Publishing Co. *Dockham's American Report & Directory*. Ridgewood: Dockham Publishing Co., 1903.

Knowlton, Evelyn H. *Pepperel's Progress: history of a cotton textile company 1844-1945*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948.

Lanier, Joseph L. *The First Seventy-Five Years of West Point Manufacturing Company 1880-1955*. New York: The Newcomen Society in North America, 1955.

National Register Publishing Co. *Corporate Affiliations*. Skokie: National Register Publishing Co., 1986.

Young, Marjorie W., ed. *Textile Leaders of the South*. Anderson: James R.

Young, c1963.

### **Works Within the J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Records**

Cheney Brothers, Inc., Minutes: 1936-1957. MSS 135. J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Records, 1879-1989. Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson University, Clemson, S.C. 29634-3001.

J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Reorganization vols. 1 and 2. MSS 135. J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Records, 1879-1989. Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson University, Clemson, S.C. 29634-3001.

Lamitex Fabrics, Inc., Minutes: 1950-1953. MSS 135. J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc., Records, 1879-1989. Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson University, Clemson, S.C. 29634-3001.

### **SELF DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTAINER LISTS**

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERIES**

The administrative series covers the years 1936-1987 and consists of annual reports, General Electric test cloth specifications (1937-1939,) the 1946 J.P. Stevens reorganization (2 vols.) a J.P.S. phone book and an operating and procedure manual which gives the outline and timetable of company reports.

#### **FINANCIAL SERIES**

The financial series contains materials dating from 1899-1984. The bulk of the records are dated from 1933-1956. The series contains wage ledgers and rolls; financial statements; tax returns; journals, general ledgers and cashbooks; capital, common and preferred stock; proposed debentures; account sales; J.P.Stevens sales record; mill recapitalization and employee stock purchases.

#### **PUBLIC RELATIONS SERIES**

The public relations series contains materials produced by or for J.P. Stevens for public relations purposes. The records cover the years 1940-1989 and include newspaper clippings, videos, films, color and black and white photographs, color and black and white negatives of varying sizes, color slides and transparencies, news releases (internal and external), memorabilia from events, scrapbooks containing clippings, invitations, letters and photographs and 150th Anniversary materials. The majority of the videos, news clippings and releases document the takeover of J.P. Stevens by West Point-Pepperel and the subsequent takeover of West Point-Pepperel by Farley, Inc. The video tapes contain copyrighted material from upper S.C. television stations. There are also materials on the 1974 takeover of two Springs mills by J.P. Stevens. The photographs document Stevens executives, company and community events and the mill buildings and machinery.

### **SUBSIDIARY SERIES**

These materials are documents produced by companies which are subsidiaries of J.P. Stevens. Records of companies before they became subsidiaries of J.P. Stevens have been pulled and placed in separate collections (These companies include J. Forstmann Co. and its subsidiaries.) Records in this series include: financial statements, stockholders meeting materials, stockholders' and directors' minutes, tax forms, cashbooks, general ledgers, stock, a label sample book, copies of charters and by-laws, and merger and liquidation documents. The records date from 1879-1955.