

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞  
for Special Collections  
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ **The Harris Toy Company Collection** ◀  
**1838-1968, 2003, & 2005**

MSS-206

**Size:** 0.25 linear feet

**Provenance:** Materials were donated by Jackie Harris Doorn (great grandniece of Frank H. Harris, the founder of the Harris Toy Company) in 2005.

**Access:** Open

**Collection Summary:** Collection contains product catalogs, photographs (print and digital copies), and genealogical information on Franklin Harris.

**Subjects:** [Business and Commerce](#)

**Related Collections:**

**Copyright:** The literary rights to this collection are assumed to rest with the person(s) responsible for the production of the particular items within the collection, or with their heirs or assigns. Researchers bear full legal responsibility for the acquisition to publish from any part of said collection per *Title 17, United States Code*. The **Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections** may reserve the right to intervene as intermediary at its own discretion.

**Completed by:** Sara Mouch, June 17, 2009; last updated: October 2014.

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**Historical Sketch**

Franklin Harrison Harris established the Harris Toy Company, Manufacturers of Malleable Iron and Steel Toys, in 1887 at the intersection of Grand and Michigan Central Road streets in the Auburndale District of Toledo. It became one of the top manufacturers of cast iron toys which were famous for the characters of Gloomy Gus, Foxy Grandpa, and Happy Hooligan—all cartoon characters of the day—standing in various carts and wagons. Mr. Harris served as president of the Harris Toy Company until its sale to the Standard Steel Tube Company in 1907, at which time he stayed on as manager. Toy production ended in 1913.

Mr. Harris also founded and served as superintendent of the Harris Metal Wheel and Tricycle Company, which produced wagons, wheels, fire proof safes, the “Perry Pneumatic Saddle”, and electric automobiles.

The toys, trains, and wagons produced by both the toy company and the Harris Metal Wheel Company are sought after by collectors from all over the world.

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**Scope and Content Note**

This collection consists of six series that primarily document the products of the Harris Toy Company. **Series I, The Harris Metal Wheel Company**, includes a page from Frank Harris' other company's 1889 catalog, as well as a business directory of employees between 1889 and 1891, listing name, address, and job title. The materials in **Series II, The Harris Toy Company Documents**, consist of sample letterhead, patents, and photographs depicting the toy factory.

**Series III, Harris Novelty Toys**, provides the bulk of the collection with photographs of the toys that made this Toledo company so popular. Additional material includes the 1968 reprint of the 1903 catalog and photographs of children with Harris toys. **Series IV, The Standard Steel Tube Company**, documents the sale of the Harris Toy Company to Foster Jewell in 1907, at which time Harris continued to produce toys under the Standard Steel Tube moniker until 1913.

**Series V, Franklin H. Harris**, consists of various photographs of the Harris Toy Company proprietor as well as genealogical information compiled by Jackie Harris Doorn, Frank Harris' great grandniece. Finally, **Series VI, Research and Correspondence**, contains additional research material provided by Mrs. Doorn, email correspondence between the donor and various contributors to the collection, and a CD of many of the images and documents included in the collection.

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**Arrangement**

Box	Folder	Arrangement
1		<b>The Harris Metal Wheel Company, 1889-1891</b>
	1	Catalog page, 1889 Employee Directory, 1889-1891
		<b>The Harris Toy Company Documents, 1889-2003</b>
	2	Letterhead, 1899
	3	Factory Photos (includes walking tour maps), 1955-2003
	4	Patents, 1889
		<b>Harris Novelty Toys, 1903-n.d.</b>
	5	1903 Catalog, 1968 (reprint)
	6	Digital images of the toys (includes photo approvals), 1903-n.d. Children with Harris toys, n.d.
		<b>The Standard Steel Tube Company, 1907</b>
	7	Sale document, 1907
	8	Catalog pages, 1907 Factory image, 1907
		<b>Franklin H. Harris (1864-1931), n.d.-2005</b>
	9	Frank Harris photos, n.d.
	10	Harris Family Tree, 2005
		<b>Research and Correspondence, 2005</b>
	11	Research material, 2005
	12	Email correspondence, 2005
	13	CD of all images and documents (with printed inventory of the files)
	14	Inventory of book items, 2005