



Guide to the Ephemera- Memorabilia-Artifacts Collection, 1962-2015

Descriptive Summary

Title: Ephemera-Memorabilia-Artifacts (EMA) Collection

Extent: 367 items

Repository: Columbia Archives
6310 Hillside Ct., Suite 100
Columbia, MD 21046

Abstract: The EMA Collection contains a variety of print ephemera, memorabilia and artifacts that have been donated by organizations and individuals in the community. It is a broad collection, weighted heavily around items created for Columbia birthday celebrations, items that promote village community associations and Columbia Association, and items that document the openings and other special events planned by village shopping centers and The Mall in Columbia. Items that arrived with the James W. Rouse Papers constitute another fairly large grouping within EMA. Personal items used by Rouse in everyday living and in his business life, as well as the awards and plaques that he received, are found here. The remaining EMA items document various businesses, political campaigns and organizations that have been formative in Columbia's development.

History Note

Technically speaking, the beginning of the Ephemera-Memorabilia-Artifacts (EMA) Collection preceded the creation of Columbia Archives. In fact, the first formal presentation of Columbia memorabilia became part of the groundswell that grew in the community to create an archives, a place dedicated to documenting Columbia's unique place in the history of planned communities. As the new town of Columbia prepared for its 15th birthday, community organizers planned the Columbia Forum '82, a community-wide event that was designed to inform residents about the origins of Columbia with the intended outcome that the community would come to understand the importance of their participation in shaping its future.

As part of the Columbia history lesson, Rebecca Orlinsky and a small contingent of assistants curated a memorabilia exhibit. This first exhibit took place on June 12, 1982, the Forum's Day of Work, and it included "early Columbia newspapers, photographs, posters, and commemorative T-shirts." Participants were impressed enough by the exhibit that forum evaluations noted the need to create a formal mechanism within the community that would be responsible for gathering documentation of Columbia's history while it was being created; the mechanism suggested was establishing an archives and museum. In the months that followed, grants were written by event organizers to continue the work of the Columbia Forum '82, and one of the follow-up priorities singled out was establishing an archives. In December 1983, Orlinsky was joined by Ruth McCullough and Barbara Slayton to become the founding members of Columbia Archives.

In its early days, the Archives actively made calls to the public for materials that would tell Columbia's history – "anything that spotlights any portion of the history and heritage of Columbia" – and memorabilia was always included in the call. In 1984, donations began to come in and included organizations' records, news clippings, and photographs, as well as some ephemera, memorabilia and artifacts. The newspapers, photographs and posters in the first memorabilia exhibit grew over time to warrant their own collections in Columbia Archives. The commemorative T-shirts that began the EMA Collection back in 1982 were joined by donations of programs, ticket stubs, plaques, political buttons, mugs, and shopping bags, to name but a few of the categories. More recently, the collection grew to include the personal artifacts of James W. Rouse, Columbia's visionary founder. Expectations are that 2017 will see increases in the EMA Collection as longtime residents share what they have collected over the years, and as new items are created to celebrate Columbia, Maryland's 50th birthday.

Sources:

Articles of Incorporation, 1983. Columbia Archives Records, Columbia Archives, Columbia, Maryland. RGXI. Series 2. Box 1.

Background on the Establishment of Columbia Archives, 1983. Columbia Archives Records, Columbia Archives, Columbia, Maryland. RGXI. Series 1. Box 1.

Columbia Archives brochure, 1983. Columbia Archives Records, Columbia Archives, Columbia, Maryland. RGXI. Series Printed Materials.

Columbia Foundation Project Evaluation, Columbia Forum, 1982. Columbia Forum Records, Columbia Archives, Columbia, Maryland. RGXXI. Box 3.

Correspondence, Gayle Saunier to Columbia Foundation Board Members, Jul. 15, 1982. Columbia Forum Records, Columbia Archives. RGXXI. Box 13. Folder Columbia Forum '82 Correspondence ["a permanent archives for Columbia is being sought"]

Scope and Content Note

This collection gathers together ephemera, memorabilia and artifacts donated to the Columbia Archives either as part of a larger collection or as individual items. As of October 2016, 367 items are cataloged in the Columbia Archives EMA Collection. Some items are historical artifacts, some items are promotional in nature, whether they were created to draw attention to one of the businesses, organizations or special events that were or continue to be a part of Columbia's community – all document Columbia's history. The collection is rich, varied and fun. It is as unique as it is broad-based as it is historical.

Ephemera, memorabilia and artifacts are popular items in an archives. They are accessible to all age groups. They can bring an exhibit to life. Their visual and tangible nature often lend themselves to storytelling – the viewer catches a glimpse of a way of life, or experiences a special event that happened in past years, or follows the businesses and organizations that enter a community over time to fill a need.

Although Columbia Archives' EMA Collection only captures individuals' daily lives in a very limited capacity, with the exception of James W. Rouse, it is strong on highlighting the special events that have occurred over the years and the comings and goings of businesses and organizations in the community. Columbia's history can be discovered in these items.

Perhaps the most recorded special event in Columbia's history is its city-wide birthday, beginning with its first one in June 1968. Every year since then, a committee comes together to throw Columbia a party, often with City Fairs, and always with cake. The EMA Collection has several of the items that were available for sale during birthday celebrations, including neckties, glassware and ashtrays, many displaying images of the People Tree, Columbia's iconic sculpture installed in 1967 and symbolic of its goal to create an environment that contributes to the growth of people. The piece by Pierre Du Fayet consists of 66 abstract human figures finished in gold leaf and connected at their feet with arms reaching to the sky, forming the crown of the tree atop the 35-foot sculpture. Its prevalence goes beyond birthday celebrations, with more than 50 cataloged EMA items displaying the People Tree image in some way.

Specific birthday celebrations captured in the EMA Collection include the 1st, 10th, 13th, 20th, 22nd, 25th, 30th, and 40th. The 20th birthday accounts for the most EMA items with buttons, ticket stubs, champagne and wine bottles, kites, a balloon, Frisbees, and commemorative envelopes with postmarks for the City Fair Station at Lake Kittamaquidi. Many of these items proclaim the birthday logo "20 Years Young," and some mark the celebration held at Merriweather Post Pavilion with "Hail Columbia." As a close second, the 25th birthday memorabilia has the buttons and commemorative envelopes, but also includes wine bottles and a visor declaring the Columbia Forum's birthday motto "Columbia Voyage Discovering Columbia's Tomorrows 1989-1992."

Columbia Association EMA items include buttons (some noting special celebrations), lapel pins from sister cities Cergy-Pontoise in France and Tres Cantos in Spain, a water bottle from

Columbia BikeAbout, golf balls and glassware from Hobbit's Glen Golf Club, neighborhood swim team memorabilia, a plaque given to the Children's Zoo, and a fare box from the original ColumBus transit system.

The villages of Columbia are well-represented in the EMA collection. Mugs and buttons are the most popular items from the village community associations, many sporting village logos, some noting special occasions. One mug is decorated with village names and logos for all but the last village, River Hill, on one side, and "Columbia, Md" and the People Tree on the other. There are a few unique items, like the bucket labeled "The Columbia Cup," a trophy given to the winner of inter-village competitions; or a puzzle that is an invitation to a volunteer party at Stonehouse, in Long Reach. Schools and interfaith centers were part of the original neighborhood and village plans. Buttons from Bryant Woods Elementary School and Harper's Choice Middle School, a symbolic token of a surplus budget for the Owen Brown Interfaith Center, and a paperweight marking the groundbreaking of St. Matthew House record that part of the plan in operation.

The commercial side of village life is found in the village centers. Mugs from opening day celebrations (Dorsey's Search, Harper's Choice, Hickory Ridge, Kings Contrivance, and River Hill), toys (Hickory Ridge yo-yos and a ball), novelties (a River Hill pom-pom animal), and shopping bags (Kings Contrivance and Wilde Lake) promote the entire village center. A few EMA items identify individual merchants who occupied the village centers – The Village Hardware (fly swatter) and The Last Chance Saloon (mugs) were once in Oakland Mills Village Center, and Ridings Village Liquors (coaster/business card holder) and Produce Galore (bag for coffee beans) were once in Wilde Lake Village Center.

Much activity – business or pleasure – takes place in Town Center by design, and can be found in the EMA Collection. Merriweather Post Pavilion memorabilia include buttons, ticket booklets and stubs from when the National Symphony Orchestra made it its summer home (including a concert featuring Van Cliburn), and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. The downtown retail hub, The Mall in Columbia, marked its opening in 1971 with a pyramid-shaped paperweight, special holiday events like the 2007 Santa Remembers Me™ with a silicone bracelet, and their 40th anniversary with champagne glasses and a shopping bag. Downtown restaurants – Clyde's, The Rusty Scupper, Sushi Sono, The Columbia Library (restaurant and night spot), The Magic Pan Crêperie, and Waterside – have buttons, matchbooks, glassware, a plate and an ashtray in the collection.

Merrill Lynch has a button. WLMD Radio 900 AM, once located in the mall, has the Frisbees it distributed for Columbia's 13th birthday celebration. Columbia Bank & Trust Company which started in Wilde Lake Village Center, later opening a branch in The Mall in Columbia, and later merged into Equitable Bank, has pens, a moneybag, a checkbook, a key ring, an ashtray, and perhaps most unique: a framed dollar bill inscribed noting the opening day of the mall. An ashtray, a lapel pin, a jar, a desk clock, paperweights, pen sets, pencils, and duck-shaped pencil sharpeners sport logos and labels from Columbia's first hotel, The Cross Keys Inn, and its later incarnation as the Columbia Inn (currently the Sheraton).

Two long time noncommercial institutions in downtown have objects in the collection. For Howard Community College, there are buttons, mugs, and pencils, some for the once-annual

Columbia Classic Grand Prix fundraiser, and Howard County General Hospital has buttons. Even recent events involved in the revitalization of Columbia's downtown are found in the collection: a pen used to sign the revitalization bills in 2010, and a garden trowel and silicone bracelet distributed by the Inner Arbor Trust to those attending the Chrysalis groundbreaking in 2015.

The EMA collection also contains items that capture the broad spectrum of life in Columbia. There are mugs, glassware, buttons, lapel pins, badges, bumper stickers, decals, hats, and other miscellany from community-based organizations that arose from residents interested in sports and recreation (Soccer Association of Columbia-Howard County, Columbia Gardeners, Columbia Volksmarch Club), the arts (Columbia Pro Cantare, Toby's Dinner Theatre, Columbia Festival of the Arts), health care (Family Life Center), local grant giving (Columbia Foundation), and local governance (Columbia Forum). There are copies of a board game "Columbia: The Next America Game" created in 1982 by several longtime residents. There are campaign buttons and bumper stickers from local elections, including the school board, some Howard County items from government, the public school system, the 2001 sesquicentennial celebration, and original baskets from Sewell's Orchards, which was in operation before Columbia was developed and lasted as Columbia grew around it until closing its doors in the 1980s.

The EMA Collection took a bit of a turn when items from James W. Rouse, Columbia's visionary founder, entered the Columbia Archives. Now a part of the collection purposely documents an individual in greater detail than before, and the geographic boundaries were extended beyond Columbia and Howard County. A handful of Rouse's personal items are cataloged to date — his ice skates, his fishing pole, a swan egg labeled Wilde Lake 1987, and two turtle shells. Parts of his business life can be glimpsed from the lens-less eyeglasses he kept in his desk for photo shoots, the whistle Nancy Allison, Rouse's assistant, would blow to get him back to his office for meetings, and the two shovels used for groundbreaking events — one for the expansion at Cherry Hill Mall in 1976, and one for The Rouse Company headquarters building on Lake Kittamaqundi in 1972.

The largest part of Rouse EMA cataloged to date are the plaques and gifts of recognition presented to him, covering a panoply of his business and civic activities and connections. Some items identify his close connection to Columbia throughout his life (a desk pen set from The Young Columbians, a permanent admission card to Merriweather Post Pavilion, a plaque from the residents marking Columbia's 10th birthday, and a plaque from Howard County Coalition for Black History for the 20th birthday). He received other plaques from professional associations, educational organizations, and a museum, many within Maryland, some further afield, but all recognizing his impact on the built environment and/or his concern for fellow human beings. The Maryland Press Club deemed him Man of the Year for 1980 as a "Developer, Innovator, Distinguished Citizen."

Processing Note

Not all of the ephemera, memorabilia and artifacts housed in the Columbia Archives have been cataloged, including most of those that are textile-based. Cataloged items are numbered,

photographed, and entered into a database. The Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) and the Library of Congress's Thesaurus of Graphic Materials II were consulted to develop a list of types of items that could be used to group the EMA Collection.

Digital images of the items are accompanied by brief titles and dates, and are available on the Columbia Archives website under the Ephemera-Memorabilia-Artifacts (EMA) Collection webpage. Items are grouped by the following types of EMA, arranged in alphabetical order by type, with a few caveats.

The types are: ashtrays, badges, bags, balls, balloons, banners, baskets, board games, bottles, bracelets, bumper stickers, business card holders, buttons (information artifacts), calendars, cans, checkbooks, coasters, cookbooks, corkscrews, decals, desk clocks, die, dish, drinking glasses, envelopes, fly swatters, Frisbees, garden trowels, golf balls, hats, jars, key rings, kites, lapel pins, matchbooks, medallions, models, mounted photographs, neckties, ornaments, padlocks, paperweights, pencil sharpeners, pie tins, pieces of money, plaques, pom-pom animals, printing plates, proclamations, programs, puzzles, rubber stamps, set of playing cards, shovels, signs, squeeze stress reduction objects, ticket booklets, tickets, ticket stubs, transportation systems equipment, trophies, water bottles, writing implements, and yo-yos. Although they are listed as plurals, some of the types have only one example in the collection.

The caveats concern items from James W. Rouse. Except for his plaques, Rouse's EMA items were classified first as artifacts or natural specimen (swan egg and turtle shells) before being assigned a type from the list above plus a few additions to cover items not in the general EMA Collection (i.e., eyeglasses, fishing poles, ice skates, and whistles). The artifact classified items appear at the beginning of the digital EMA images, and the natural specimen fall at the end. Rouse's plaques appear with all of the other plaques found in the EMA Collection.

As items are cataloged, digital images will be created and periodically the Columbia Archives will update the EMA Digital Collection.