

BELK COLLECTION, 1968, 2010

(Small Collections—Business Box 2) 2 folders

ABSTRACT

Belk, Inc., is an American department store chain founded in Monroe, North Carolina, in 1888 by William Henry Belk. Comprising over three hundred fashion department stores in sixteen Southern states, Belk, Inc. is the nation's largest privately owned mainline department store company. In 2010, Belk launched its new logo and tagline “Modern. Southern. Style.” It continues to be led by members of the Belk family, and celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2013.

This collection includes documents and an ephemera item.

ACCESS

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PREFERRED CITATION

Cite as: Belk Collection, 1968, 2010, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

ACQUISITION

Processed by Hannah Cox, 2016.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Belk began on May 29, 1888, when William Henry Belk opened a small bargain store called “New York Racket,” in Monroe, North Carolina. He introduced several innovative ideas for the time, including buying large quantities of goods for cash, and selling them at a low mark-up; clearly labeling prices with no haggling; and the return of goods allowed if customers were unsatisfied. The company’s initial slogan was “Cheap Goods Sell Themselves.”

In 1891, Dr. John M. Belk, brother of William, left the medical profession and became a partner. The company then became known as the Belk Brothers Company. Two years later, the brothers opened a second store, this one in Chester, South Carolina, followed by a third the following year, in Union, South Carolina. The Charlotte store opened in 1895, and became the company’s base of operations when William Henry left the Monroe store. John Belk continued to manage the Monroe store until his death in 1928, with William Henry managing all Belk stores until his death in 1952. William’s sons John

M. and Thomas M. led the company afterward, until their deaths in 1997 and 2007 respectively. Belk continues to be led by family members Thomas M. Belk, Jr., John R., Belk, and H.W. McKay Belk, sons of Thomas M. Belk.

Belk, Inc. was formed in May 1998 when the 112 separate Belk corporations merged into one company. In 2002, all merchandising and marketing functions were consolidated in the company's corporate offices in Charlotte. Throughout the early 2000s, the company acquired a number of department stores in southern and Midwestern states, rebranded them with the Belk name, and expanded their offerings greatly. In 2008, the company redesigned the Belk.com website, and showcased their vastly expanded assortment of goods. In February 2009, the company consolidated its divisions into three locations: Atlanta, Georgia, Raleigh, North Carolina, and Birmingham, Alabama. In 2010, Belk launched their new logo and tagline of "Modern. Southern. Style." The company then celebrated its 125th anniversary celebration in 2013.

REFERENCES

Belk, Inc. *About Us*, 2015.

http://www.belk.com/AST/Misc/Belk_Stores/About_Us/Who_We_Are.jsp

Belk Newsline Vine. *Belk, Inc. Fact Sheet & History*. <http://tinyurl.com/jrgzidl>

RELATED MATERIALS

Belk Family. (CALL NUMBER: NCR VERTICAL FILES)

Belk, John. (CALL NUMBER: NCR VERTICAL FILES)

Belk, William Henry, Sr. & Mary Irwin Belk. (CALL NUMBER: NCR VERTICAL FILES)

Blythe, LeGette. *William Henry Belk, Merchant of the South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958. (CALL NUMBER: NCR B B455w b6 1958)

Covington, Howard E. Jr., *Belk, Inc.: The Company and the Family that Built It*. Charlotte: Belk, Inc., 2002. (CALL NUMBER: NCR 381.141)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Belk Collection is a small collection formerly from the Ephemera Collection. It consists of advertisements, including envelopes containing merchandise information and order forms, and a small shopping bag. The collection dates from 1968 with the ephemera item from 2010, but includes undated materials as well.

SERIES LIST

CONTENTS	BOX	FOLDER
Advertisements		
Advertisement for City Scene fashions for shifting seasons, washable and wrinkle-resistant shifts, with an order form on the back, undated.	2	1
Envelope containing notice regarding changes in delivery service, and order forms for Jerrie Lurie dress and children's undergarments, August 1968.	2	1
Envelope containing a return envelope, and ad and order forms for Clenhaven suits for women, Sally Schrank nightgowns for little girls, International Silver Company trays, and Heiress panties for women, October 1968.	2	1
Order form for women's knits by Ann Colby and invitation to advance sale of fall and winter lines in July at Belk's Fabric Center, undated.	2	1
Ephemera		
Shopping bag from Belk at Southpark Mall in Charlotte, North Carolina, 2010.	2	2