CALDWELL VANRIPER, INC. COLLECTION, 1909-2010

Collection Information

Historical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Nicole Poletika
December 1, 2011

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 9 manuscript boxes, 2 oversize manuscript boxes, 4 flat files, 1 photograph box, 2 color photograph folders, 3 OVA photograph folders, 1 bound volume, 4 OVA graphic folders, 2 OVB graphic folders, 1 OVC graphic folder, 1 acetate negative box, 3 slide bins, 1 8x10 acetate negative folder, 1 color negative, 1 120 mm. acetate negative folder, 7 artifacts, 6 printed items

COLLECTION DATES: 1909-2010

PROVENANCE: Caldwell VanRiper, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana, August, 2011

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2011.0195

NOTES:
Advertising agency Caldwell VanRiper, Inc. was founded in 1910 as the Publicity Corporation by Merle Sidener and Guernsey Van Riper. Born in Crawfordsville, Ind., 7 August 1874, Sidener attended preparatory school at Butler College and became the City Editor of The Indianapolis Star. In 1905, Sidener called Van Riper, who grew up in Anderson, Indiana and wrote for the Louisville Courier-Journal, with a job offer at the Indianapolis Star. Van Riper accepted the offer and the two had their initial meeting that year, establishing the Publicity Corporation in Indianapolis 22 July 1909. The Publicity Corporation opened for business 20 February 1910 at Room 607 Majestic Building on Pennsylvania Street, where the men handled their first account for The National Paving Brick Manufacturers’ Association (1910–1911). Sidener was responsible for business decisions and Van Riper for the agency’s editorial and creative aspects. The men established the policy that they would “accept only employment in which we could take pride and satisfaction and be pretty sure to get paid” (It Happened Like This, 4).

In the 1910s, the Publicity Corporation, which became the Publicity Counsel in 1914 and the Sidener-Van Riper Advertising Company (SVR) in 1915, published a monthly magazine for the Commercial Club called “Forward!: The Magazine for Indianapolis and counted Eclipse Machine Company (1912–1929) and Indiana Dental College (1917–1920) among their initial clients. Their first full-page advertisement, which increased the agency’s notoriety, ran in the Saturday Evening Post for Kokomo Rubber Company’s rubber tires in 1916. Howard Caldwell, newly discharged from the U.S. Navy, joined the agency 26 April 1919 as a copywriter. Caldwell obtained a liberal arts degree from Butler College and gained industry experience while working in the advertising department at Haynes Automobile Company at Kokomo. In 1922 Caldwell left Sidener-Van Riper with SVR employee, Ellis J. Baker, to establish his own agency known as The Howard Caldwell Company, which became the Caldwell-Baker Company 10 February 1923.

Sidener-Van Riper continued to grow as an agency, taking on national clients, and by 1935 published its first color advertisement for the destination city Hollywood-by-the-Sea, Florida. SVR handled the accounts of Valvoline Oil Company and American Thermos Bottle Company and won national awards from the National Advertising Agency Network in 1957 for their innovative campaigns for Mayflower Transit and The Indiana National
Bank (1942-1948). SVR relied on its characteristic inventiveness to retain business during World War II, creating newspaper advertisements that promoted the sale of war bonds and civilian defense. The Hamilton Manufacturing Corporation in Columbus, later known as Cosco, became a client of Caldwell-Baker in 1948 and one of the consolidated company’s long-standing clients. By this time, SVR had “helped define the ‘agency’ concept in the area” (Katterjohn), attributing its success to sound policies, dedicated staff, and good judgment. Sidener and Van Riper helped found the American Association of Advertising Agencies and Sidener developed the concept that led to Better Business Bureau.

On 31 December 1954 SVR made the decision to partner with the equally successful Howard, Larkin & Co., which had reorganized in 1948 when Storey Larkin, former Indianapolis Star and News employee, joined the firm. The two firms consolidated 1 January 1955 as Caldwell, Larkin & Sidener-Van Riper, Inc., making Howard Caldwell president. The agency developed the philosophy that they would use “the right creative capacities and exploring minds, and that we will never rest in search of a better way” (Agency Philosophy). 1960 marked the 50th Anniversary of Caldwell, Larkin & Sidener-Van Riper, Inc., ushering in a successful decade, which included clients like the American United Life Insurance Company and The Indianapolis Star and News. Caldwell, also president of (NAAN), received the Printers Ink Silver Medal for his contributions to the advertising industry in 1963. He stepped down as president in February of the following year to become chairman of the board, appointing Ed Van Riper as president.

Ed Van Riper changed the agency’s name again to Caldwell-Van Riper, Inc. (CVR) in 1967 to “simplify matters by shortening it to include only living principals” (Katterjohn). Hired as the agency’s first public relations director in 1957, Frank J. Wemhoff became president of CVR in 1970, maintaining the agency’s early policies of prioritizing clients and emphasizing creativity of ads. CVR expanded in the 1970s, opening offices in Fort Wayne, Evansville and a small office in South Bend for the company’s McDonalds accounts. By 1981, CVR was recognized as “one of the Midwest’s largest and Indiana’s oldest agencies” (Katterjohn), celebrating its 75th anniversary and diversity of clients in 1985 with an art contest to honor the city of Indianapolis.

Sources:


Van Riper, Guernsey. *It Happened Like This... The Life Story of Sidener and Van Riper, Inc.* (Indianapolis, IN: Caldwell, Larkin and Sidener-Van Riper, Inc., 1959)
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Series 1 includes company documents, organized chronologically, that detail the various mergers of both SVR and Caldwell-Baker, such as preliminary merger notes and Joint Agreement of Consolidation. Also included are articles examining the company’s history and the genealogy of the agency’s leaders.

Series 2 contains financial and business documents, such as stockholder information, Caldwell-Larkin’s company bulletin, staff organization and earnings, and agency philosophy. Memorandums spanning from 1950 to 1985 provide information about prospective ad campaigns, staff changes, and office protocol. Several company scrapbooks are included, which document the agency’s involvement with ad clubs, industry awards, client campaigns and company moves. Also in the series is the *Networker*, which includes an organizational chart, client list, time sheet, operating procedures and an example of the advertising process.

Series 3 includes documents specific to Sidener, Van Riper, Howard Caldwell, and Virginia Caldwell (Howard’s daughter), rather than the company as a whole. Within the series are correspondence, press releases regarding individual’s awards and death, photographs, clippings, and certificates honoring their work.

Series 4 is organized according to each client and reflects the diversity of CVR clients and the breadth of formats used to advertise for them. The series contains client lists from both before and after the 1955 merger. Documents for clients include campaign plans, ad samples, advertisements, client publications, financial estimates for ad campaigns, oversized posters, photographs, one artifact and prospective client materials.

Series 5 contains any item presented or published by CVR for the public, rather than for the agency. This includes presentations to both clients and advertising institutions, articles published by CVR staff, and Van Riper’s various published books/pamphlets related to company history and advertising techniques. Additionally, the series contains drafts, memos, and clippings related to Van Riper’s publications.

Series 6 includes materials related to CVR’s self-promotion, rather than materials related to the promotion of clients. Promotional materials, primarily paper advertisements, are available for Sidener Van Riper Inc. Advertising, Caldwell Larkin & Sidener Van Riper Inc., and CVR, ranging from the 1940s to the 1980s. The agency undertook a promotional campaign in which they sent letters to potential clients that contained success stories and advertisements compiled for other clients. These agency promotion letters are provided here and divided into letters from 1949 and 1950. Several sliding wooden display boxes promoting CVR with captions like “We provide sex” reflect the agency’s unique marketing techniques. A mock-up and final ad for CVR’s family tree, which visually illustrates the company mergers, is also included.
Series 7 contains clippings, articles and press releases that publicize the activities of CVR, written both by CVR and local media outlets. Miscellaneous clippings from 1926 to 1961 are condensed into one folder and clippings related specifically to CVR awards and the 1970 company move to Indiana National Bank are separated into their own folders and have corresponding photographs. The series also contains memos related to the activities of the agency’s Publicity Division from 1955 to 1961. The rest of the series is comprised of press releases, organized by year, regarding staff changes, awards, clients, the appointment of Frank Wemhoff and a separate sketch of Wemhoff.

Series 8 represents the agency’s various anniversaries, celebrations, holiday parties and open houses. The series is organized according to anniversary year and agency, such as the 20th Anniversary of Sidener and Van Riper & Keeling. Commemorative documents include photographs, signed posters, scrapbooks, congratulatory notes, and clippings. In 1985, for their 75th anniversary, CVR initiated an art contest for a poster celebrating the city of Indianapolis. This series contains the contest registration packet, slide images of poster submissions, and clippings about the competition and its winners. Also included with the 75th anniversary section is a guestbook and several mounted wall displays of CVR ads and company documents from the 1910s to the 1980s.

Series 9: includes materials related to various ad agencies and the ad industry in general. The series contains advertisements, both conventional in size and oversized, that can likely be attributed to CVR, but cannot be confirmed. There is a scrapbook of articles related to advertising. Also within the series are the National Industrial Advertisers Association (N.I.A.A.) membership card, publication, and report, as well as the Indiana Association of Industrial Advertisers (I.A.I.A.) meeting program, membership list and 1939 Advertising Age. There are photographs and negatives of Howard Caldwell, presumed to be images of him at the 1939 and 1940 I.A.I.A conference and golf outing, as some of these correspond with images of the outing in Advertising Age.

Series 10: is a miscellaneous series which contains items that could not be identified or did not fit into another series. Items include photographs, slides, negatives, newspapers and printed materials.
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Caldwell, Larkin and Co. merger, memos and press, By-Laws, 1948

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Financial History of Caldwell, Larkin and Co., handwritten, ca. 1948

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Joint Agreement of Consolidation and Minutes of Special Meeting of Caldwell, Larkin & Company, 16 Dec. 1954

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Howard Caldwell Company proposed advertising program for J.F. Peck & Co., 1922

Caldwell-Baker board and stockholder meetings, proposed stock adjustment, ca. 1925–36

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Artifacts: 2011.0195

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Series 8: CVR Anniversaries and Celebrations

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/

2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.

3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.

4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 1024).

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