KINGAN & COMPANY COLLECTION, 1868–1966

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 4 manuscript boxes, 1 bound volume, 1 lantern slide box, 1 box of ink blotters, 1 OVA graphics box, 1 OVC graphics box, 1 OVC graphics folder, 1 photograph folder, 1 printed item, 1 framed lithograph

COLLECTION DATES: 1868–1966

PROVENANCE: Gift of Robert Kingan, July 2016

RESTRICTIONS: Lantern slides may be viewed only with the assistance of library staff.

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:


ACCESSION NUMBER: 2016.0174

NOTES:
HISTORICAL SKETCH

Kegan & Company traced its corporate lineage to Belfast, Ireland, in 1845, where the brothers Samuel, Thomas, and James Kegan established their first slaughterhouse. The Kegan brothers expanded their meat packing business to the United States in 1851. After their slaughterhouses in Brooklyn, New York, and Cincinnati, Ohio, burned, the brothers moved the business west to Indianapolis in 1862. According to the Indianapolis Star in 1914, Samuel Kegan declared "the good white hog from Johnson County, Indiana, was what first attracted our attention to [Indianapolis]."

By the company's centennial in 1945, the plant covered 27 acres at Maryland and Blackford Streets, employed 3,000 workers, and occupied both sides of the White River. Consolidation in the meat packing business resulted in Kegan's purchase by the Hygrade Food Products Corporation in 1952. Continued sharp competition in the field resulted in Hygrade's closure of the Kegan plant in 1966. A series of fires between 1967 and 1969 destroyed the vacant facility, and the grounds are now occupied by White River State Park.

Sources:


**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Kingan & Company Collection captures the significance of the company through a variety of manuscript, visual, printed, and graphic forms between 1868 and 1966. The collection is divided into five series according to physical types and formats, and then chronologically within each series.

Series 1 contains Kingan company procedures manuals, identified for the sake of organization as Product Instruction Books A through F, and then by several company-named manuals. Each instruction manual details a number of meat products and meat by-products and the information necessary to transform raw materials into a finished item. The Job Rates and Job Descriptions for Productions Gangs manuals preserve valuable data regarding how many workers were required to complete each task, how much they were paid, and the amount of time required for each task. Of interest are the higher wages paid to male employees, and gendered job classifications where only men or women were assigned to certain tasks. Names associated with the manuals are Earl J. Schwallie, an engineer, Harry F. Staub, a manager, and Edward Scheidenhelm, a company vice president.

Series 2 contains miscellaneous company records, including billheads, receipts, and a small amount of correspondence. A ledger attributed to Mary Jane (Kingan) Reid provides a great amount of detail into Kingan investments in stocks and bonds between 1868 and 1897.

Series 3 contains a wide variety of company advertising material from the 1880s to the 1960s. Ink blotters, trade cards, and magazine advertisements illustrates how Kingan spread the word about its products and encouraged their use, including a circa 1940 cardstock Kingan's Reliable Ham display designed by New York package designer Arthur S. Allen (http://publications.newberry.org/digitalexhibitions/items/show/1198. Accessed June 27, 2017).

Series 4 contains company publications, focusing mainly on cookbooks and pocket reference books distributed to customers.

Series 5 contains postcards featuring various Kingan subjects, photographs of a company baseball player, and glass lantern slides from 1938 that provide rare interior views of the plant showing workers performing tasks elaborated in the product manuals found in Series 1.
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Series 1: Company Procedures

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Kingan's Reliable Tasti-Cooked Ham, cardboard advertising cutout, circa 1940

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Artifact Collection: 2016.0174

Hercules stamp and ink pad, for Kingan Division, Hygrade Food Products Corporation, circa 1960  
Artifact Collection: 2016.0174

Kingan & Company, steel and celluloid pocket knives, advertising livestock buyers in Richmond, Va., Storm Lake, Iowa, and Indianapolis, Ind., circa 1940 [3 knives]  
Artifact Collection: 2016.0174

Kingan & Company, Kingan's Reliable branded match book cover, steel and celluloid, circa 1930  
Artifact Collection: 2016.0174

Kingan's Ham & Bacon, wood pencils advertising the company's 100th anniversary, 1945 [6 pencils]  
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Kegan recipe pamphlets, n.d.–1941 [4 pamphlets]

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Kegan's Reliable Meat Recipe Book, 1946

Kegan Folks: A Magazine For and About Kegan Employees, August, 1952


1956 Indiana State Fair, Official Program Compliments of Kegan's

1957 Indiana State Fair, Official Program Compliments of Kegan's

Series 5: Visual Materials

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Glass lantern slides of production processes at the Kegan plant in Indianapolis, 1938. Images depict workers packing products and operating machinery. The smokehouses are the only exterior view. Slides produced by the Kansas City Public Schools Department of Visual Instruction [8 lantern slides]

Kegan & Company postcards, circa 1905–1950. Exterior views of the plant (one aerial), several views of the Kegan parade float and horse team, in addition to various promotional advertising cards [15 postcards]

CONTAINER

Lantern Slides: Box1

Box 4, Folder 13
Fred Cato, baseball player for Kingan's Reliables, 1947

"Hop" Howard, baseball player for Eagles Lodge 211, 1947

"Kingan & Co."
Framed lithograph in the trompe l'oeil style showing a ham and side of bacon hanging on a wall and a Kingan's newspaper ad held to the wall by a knife. The ad mentions an "Old German Proverb" to promote the quality of Kingan pork products, based on newspaper ads that appeared in the 1891 Indianapolis Journal.