

Collection #  
SC 3546

**SMITH AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL COMPANY  
CORRESPONDENCE, 1945**

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF  
COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder

COLLECTION  
DATES: 1945

PROVENANCE: Donated by Alan Goodman

RESTRICTIONS: None

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HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION  
NUMBER: 2007.0004

NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Smith Agricultural Chemical Company was founded by Marshall Alexander Smith and his three brothers in 1894. The company manufactured agricultural chemicals and other industrial compounds at two plants, one located in Columbus, Ohio, and one in Indianapolis, Indiana. The primary products were fertilizers, plant and animal food nutrients, commercial sulphuric acid, and battery acid.

During World War II, the company utilized prisoner-of-war labor. Much of the country throughout the war faced problems with labor shortages as more men were drafted into the military. However, extra labor was still required to produce the large amounts of food, clothing, supplies and munitions needed for the war effort. Labor shortages and increased demand were heavily felt by agricultural industries in the United States.

In 1942, the United States government began creating POW camps near major work sites across the country so that prisoner labor could be used to fill the shortages. One of these camps was Camp Atterbury, located in Indiana to house Italian POWs. The Italian prisoners were hired out to local farms and agricultural businesses until Italy became a cobelligerent after its surrender in 1943. In 1944, German POWs replaced the Italians as more prison work camps were established to provide labor throughout Indiana. Their labor was used through the fall of 1945 and into 1946 until the soldiers were repatriated after the end of the war.

### Sources:

Annette Scherber, "Corn, Tomatoes, & POWs: Hoosier Agriculture during World War II," Indiana History Blog (blog) November 17, 2016, <https://blog.history.in.gov/tag/pows/>

"Biography of Marshall A. Smith." Franklin County, Ohio Biographies. Accessed November 29, 2018. <http://www.onlinebiographies.info/oh/frank/smith-ma.htm>

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection consists of three letters dated 1945 relating to the Smith Agricultural Chemical Company plant in Indianapolis, Indiana. The first letter is from the International Harvester Company and concerns accounting forms. The second and third letters are from T.M. Hepler, a contracting officer working with the Fifth Service Command of the Army Service Forces in Fort Hayes, Ohio. The letters are copies and concern the use of war prisoner labor.

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Smith Agricultural Chemical Company letters, 1945

CONTAINER

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