

Inventory of the

Smith Oil and Refining Company
Rockford, Illinois

Records

In the

Regional History Center

RC 48

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Gordon Smith donated the Smith Oil and Refining Company Records to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on October 31, 1978.

Property rights in the collection are held by the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to materials in the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 3.25
Number of containers: 3 + 16 volumes
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 48

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The records in the Smith Oil and Refining Company Records document the business activities of an independent oil company and its subsidiaries from 1918 to 1970.

The collection consists of two series: Smith Oil and Refining Company and Subsidiaries. Series one contains the parent company's articles of incorporation and amendments, bylaws, minutes (1918-1967), audit reports, and company publications. Oversized ledgers (1918-1949) and check registers are housed separately on the shelf. One oversized organizational chart of the company is housed in the map case under the collection name.

Series two includes partial records of six Smith Oil and Refining Company subsidiaries. The oversized ledgers of two other subsidiaries are housed separately on the shelf.

The records of the Smith Oil and Refining Company are fairly comprehensive except for the years 1911-1918. The records of the subsidiaries are, in most cases, incomplete.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In 1893 the C. G. Smith and Son Company was founded in Rockford to distribute paints, oils, and varnish. The transition to petroleum jobbing began early in the century when some of the few owners of horseless carriages in Rockford asked the Smiths to recommend oil for their cars. As the firm's sales of automobile oils and greases expanded, additional family members joined the operation. Finally, in 1911, the Smith family bought the horses, wagons, and tanks from William M. Lawton and founded the Smith Oil and Refining Company.

Smith Oil was incorporated in 1918 and continued to expand its operations to meet the new realities of the post-war era. The World War had brought to Rockford a growing metal working industry which increased the demand for such specialized petroleum products as cutting, lubricating, and core oils. Under the direction of the Industrial Oils Division Smith core

oils were distributed throughout the United States and Canada to many of the leaders of the industrial world including Ford, Chrysler, Buick, and Caterpillar.

In 1925, Stanton K. Smith, representing the third generation of the Smith family, joined the firm and established a service station and distribution system which covered northern Illinois, eastern Iowa, and southern Wisconsin. It was during this period that river terminals for petroleum products were established, first at Fulton and later at Peru, Illinois, to handle the products brought up the Mississippi by Smith Oil's towboats. The Smiths also established a home and industrial heating division and an auto and truck tire business which became the largest in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

As Smith Oil and Refining grew and diversified it encountered difficulties by the very fact of its success. The farther away from Rockford the Smiths pushed their retail service outlets, the less familiar was its name to the motoring public. Consequently, in 1946, Smith Oil entered into an agreement with Gulf Oil Corporation to distribute Gulf products and became the nation's largest independent reseller of Gulf Products. This relationship with Gulf continued until 1970 when the Smith family sold the business to Sun Oil Corporation.

SUBJECT TRACING

Automobiles
Oil Industries
Petroleum
Rockford (Ill.)
Smith Family
Smith Oil and Refining Company

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Series I. Smith Oil and Refining Company		
1	1-3	Minutes, 1918-1961
2	1	Minutes, 1962-1967
	2	Sales Record, 1927-1941
	3	Audit reports, 1929-1930, 1939-1940, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1962, 1964
	4-5	"Smithology," 1947, 1951-1953; "News and Views," 1955-1973
	6	"News and Views," 1974-1978; "Pro Talk," 1965-1966, 1968; "SOARC News," 1945; "Oil Drops," 1969-1970
Oversize	10 volumes	General ledgers, 1918-1949 (7); check registers, 1945-1951, 1956-1957 (3)
3	1	Miscellaneous material including memorial booklets, programs, news releases, historical articles
Oversize Drawer 3	14	Organizational chart with photos, n.d.
Series II. Subsidiaries		
	2	Smith Oil Transportation Company, articles of incorporation, stock ledger, minutes (1947-1957) Bill of sale, 1957
	3	Smith Oil Transportation Company, tow boat operations, 1951-1956
	4	14Smith Oil Transportation Company, audit reports, 1947, 1950-1951, 1955-1957; b/w photographic prints (10)
	5	Blackhawk Rubber Products Company, 1956-1959
	6	Smith Gas Service Incorporated, Audit report, 1960
	7	Smith Building Company; audit reports, 1946, 1950, 1955-1956, 1962-1963; Gas Company Lease, 1946
	8	Fulton Oil Terminal, Incorporated, audit report, 1947
	9	Hillcrest Village, Incorporated, audit reports, 1955, 1958-1960, 1962-1963
Oversize	5 volumes	Smith Oil of Wisconsin, general ledgers, 1934-1935, 1940-1946, 1949
Oversize	1 volume	M and J Building Corporation, general ledger, 1930-1935