Manuscript Finding Aid

Title: The Fairfield Store Records
Collection #: Ms B71
Dates: 1921-1995
Size of Collection: 12 boxes
Accession Number: L96.22 (L96 Jul 50)
Donor: Stanley Manasevit
Restrictions: None
Processed by: Barbara Austen
Date: July 1996

Biographical/ historical note:

The Fairfield Department Store started as a small retail establishment on the Post Road, in the heart of Fairfield. It was founded in 1921 by brothers Samuel and Isadore Manasevit. The original store primarily carried men’s wear and work-related apparel to meet the needs of the population, the majority of whom worked in factories. In the late 1920s, the owners added stores in East Haven, Stratford, Westport and South Norwalk and also operated a wholesale business in Bridgeport.

Isadore’s son, Frank, and Samuel’s son, Stanley, officially entered the business in 1947, just after the store’s expansion in 1947. In the mid-fifties, they assumed control from their fathers. In 1956, the cousins expanded the store, making it the first two-story building in Fairfield. Success in Fairfield led to the eventually closing of the branch stores; Stanley and Frank concentrated on the main store.

In 1966, the owners changed the name of the store to simply “The Fairfield Store.” Two
years later, the store expanded into the former Woolworth’s building and the owners
renovated the exterior, for which they received a Chamber of Commerce citation. By
1979 the store included the old Center Drug building on the corner of Reef and Post
Roads. As the population changed to include more white collar workers who commuted
into New York City, Stanley and Frank reflected their customer’s needs in the style of
clothing available. The store carried shoes, cosmetics, clothing for the entire family,
lingerie, shoes, and giftware.

Stanley’s son, Bruce, entered the business in 1983 while Frank’s daughter,
Deren, joined in 1988. Competition from discount stores forced the Fairfield Store to
close July 1996.

Through its 75 years of operation, the store was known for its personal service and the
longevity of its sales staff; many stayed for 20-30 years, helping generations of the same
families.

Scope and content note:

The collection primarily consists of advertising and promotional materials created and
collected by the management of the Fairfield Store. Promotional materials are organized
chronologically in Series A and include a scrapbook with memorabilia from the official
reopening of the store in 1956, photographs, press releases, prize entries and winners’
lists, speech texts, expense records, and correspondence. One of the store’s most
successful promotions was “Freddie the Frog” whose images and memorabilia are
found in this series and among the photographs. A number of the promotions were designed by
Mary Felix Associates, such as the “Tree Promotion” of 1974, part of a community
project in Fairfield. Also in this series are a sample of direct mail promotions sent to
regular customers. Additional direct mail promotions are interfiled with newspaper
advertisements after 1991.

Series B encompasses newspaper and magazine articles ranging in date from 1958-1983,
about the store and its founders, Stanley and Frank Manasevit. The topics covered
include historical sketches, reminiscences, community projects and promotions, awards,
and renovations. The original articles were photocopied onto acid-free paper and then
retained.

Series C consists of newspaper advertisements, including the oldest extant ad from 1932.
Between 1958-1995 (only 1981 is missing), copies of advertisements were saved in
three-ring binders in chronological order. The pages have been removed from the binders
but remain in their original order. Interfiled among the advertisements after 1991 are
direct mail promotional materials, most with notations about the date and the number
mailed. At the end of the series is a folder with a transparency of the store front that was
copied to make it look like a sketch, and original watercolors. Both images were used in
advertisements.

Assorted marketing materials are organized in Series D. These encompass clothing and
shoe labels, sample logos and signatures, advertising statistics, geographic distribution
statistics of the store’s charge card holders, a sample of a customer invoice, mailing
labels and postcards, an advertising blotter, and marketing research information. Assorted
administrative items in Series E include an employee newsletter, a blueline of a fixture
plan for the store, blank invoices and a letter with the letterhead of Manasevit Brothers,
newspaper advertisements from the South Norwalk Department Store, and awards
presented to the store by the United Way, the Advertising Club of Fairfield County, the
Fairfield Chamber of Commerce, and the Boy Scouts. The majority of the awards were
framed. These were removed from their frames for easier storage, and the frames
retained. Several publications produced or used by the Fairfield Economic Development
Commission, on which Stanley Manasevit served for several years, are found at the end
of this series.

Photographs, both professional and amateur, documenting the store’s interior and exterior
changes, special events, and holiday displays from 1942-1993, are arranged in
chronological order in Series F. Many of these photographs were used in advertising and
promotions and will be found in reprinted form in Series A, B and C. Of interest is a
photograph album that Stanley Manasevit reportedly carried with him to show potential
suppliers the quality of the store. Photographs of a purely historical interest document the
facade and some of the staff at Hartman Hardware on the Post Road, and images taken by
Stanley when Larry’s Diner was moved from the Post Road to its present site.

Samples of boxes, bags, printing plates, and a costume for Freddie the Frog were also
received with the collection and are now part of the museum, accession number
1996.31.1-16.

| Series A. | Promotions, 1956-1993. | Box 1 |
| Series D. | Marketing materials, 1956-1993 | Box 9 |
| Series E. | Administrative records, ca. 1955-1995 | Box 10 |
| Series F. | Photographs, 1921, 1948-1993. | Box 11-12 |
THE FAIRFIELD STORE (FAIRFIELD, CONN.)
Records, 1921-1995

Box 1
Series A. Promotions, 1956-1993

Folder 1. Scrapbook of official reopening, November 1956
Folder 2. Fashion Show, April 1971
Folder 3. Freddie the Frog, March 1972
Folder 4. Spring 1972
Folder 5. Recipe contest, August 1982
Folder 6. Freddie’s contest, February 1973
Folder 7-12. Tree promotion, Spring 1974
Folder 13. Hanes $500 Winner, June 1975
Folder 14. Freddie’s historical contest, Spring 1976
Folder 15. Fashion show, September 1976
Folder 16. Open House, 1977
Folder 18. Charity Day 1992/93
Folder 19. Direct mail promotions, n.d.

Box 2
Series B. Newspaper and magazine articles, 1958-1983

Folder 1-6. Articles, 1958-1983 (copies and originals)

Series C. Newspaper advertisements, 1932, 1956-1995

Folder 3. 1958
Folder 4. 1959
Folder 5. 1960

Box 3

Folder 6. 1961
Folder 7. 1962
Folder 8. 1963
Folder 9. 1964
Folder 10. 1965
Box 4
Series C. (cont.)
  Folder 11.  1966
  Folder 12.  1967
  Folder 13.  1968
  Folder 14.  1969

Box 5
  Folder 15.  1970
  Folder 16.  1971
  Folder 17.  1972
  Folder 18.  1973
  Folder 19.  1974
  Folder 20.  1975
  Folder 21.  1976

Box 6
  Folder 22.  1977
  Folder 23.  1978
  Folder 24.  1979
  Folder 25.  1980
  Folder 26.  1982

Box 7
  Folder 27.  1983
  Folder 28.  1984
  Folder 29.  1985
  Folder 30.  1986
  Folder 31.  1987
  Folder 32.  1988

Box 8
  Folder 33.  1989
  Folder 34.  1990
  Folder 35.  1991
  Folder 36.  1992
Box 8 (cont.)
Series C. (cont.)
  Folder 37.  1993
  Folder 38.  1994

Box 9
  Folder 39.  1995
  Folder 40.  Original artwork for advertisements, 1970, ca. 1993

Series D. Marketing Materials, 1956-1993
  Folder 5.  Advertising statistics, 1974-1975
  Folder 6.  Geographic distribution of charge card customers, 1974-75
  Folder 7.  Customer invoice, 1958
  Folder 8.  Mailing labels and postcards, ca. 1990

Series E. Administrative Records, ca. 1955-1995
  Folder 1.  Manasevit Brothers letterhead, ca. 1955
  Folder 2.  Advertisements from South Norwalk Department Store, n.d.
  Folder 3.  Fixture layout, 1967
  Folder 5-6.  Advertising awards, 1962, 1967

Box 10
  Folder 7-8.  Community service awards, 1971-1986
  Folder 9.  Employee newsletter, 1995
THE FAIRFIELD STORE (FAIRFIELD, CONN.)
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Box 11-12
Series F. Photographs, 1921, 1948-1993
   Folder 1-22. Store interior and exterior, 1921, 1948-1987
   Folder 24-40. Store interior and exterior, 1988-1993
   Folder 41. Photograph album, ca. 1990
   Folder 42. Hartman Hardware, ca. 1950
   Folder 43. Larry’s Diner being moved from Post Road, 1986
   Folder 44. Train wreck on Post Road (?), n.d.
   Folder 45. Copies of photographs in Fairfield Historical Society collections
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Records, 1921-1995

Subject headings:

Advertising--Conn.--Fairfield--clothing and dress
Clothing trade--Conn.--Fairfield
Photographs
Retail trade--Conn.--Fairfield
Stores, retail--Conn.—Fairfield

Economic Development Commission (Fairfield, Conn.)
The Fairfield Department Store
Manasevit, Frank
Manasevit, Stanley
Mary Felix Associates (Norwalk, Conn.)