

McLean County Museum of History

Campbell Holton & Co. Collection

Processed by
Cala Laible
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	
RESTRICTIONS:	None
PROVENANCE:	Gift of Scrapbook containing office and promotional items as well as newspaper clippings from Jenny Forbes Draeger (granddaughter of Leo William Forbes, Sr., who was bookkeeper for Campbell Holton & Co.)
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

Over his long life, Campbell Holton witnessed monumental changes in his chosen profession — the buying and selling of groceries. Born right after the Civil War, he grew up at a time when many types of food were sold out of wooden barrels and bins and then scooped and weighed (or counted) by store clerks. Yet by the time Holton retired in the early 1950s, he was overseeing a business dependent on refrigeration, canning, and modern packaging.

He was born in 1866 in Vincennes, Ind., to T.T. Holton, a minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Ellen Margaret Campbell, a descendant of Alexander Campbell, a founder of the same denomination. The family moved to Lincoln, and at the age of 16 young Campbell began working for grocer C.E. Ross. In 1889, he married Adelaide May Blake of Clinton, and several years later the couple moved to Bloomington, with Holton finding work with wholesale grocer J.F. Humphrey.

By early 1908, he had established a wholesale house of his own. Campbell Holton & Co. operations were first located on the 100 block of East Front Street in downtown Bloomington, the site now occupied by a municipal parking garage. Brands most associated with Campbell Holton & Co. were Happy Hour, Camel, and Red Mill. Canned goods sold with the distinct lavender-colored Happy Hour label included applesauce, asparagus, blackberries, figs, pineapple, plums, raspberries, sweet potatoes, and salmon.

Scope

The collection includes a scrapbook of promotional items, as well as newspaper clippings from Campbell Holton & Co, mostly early twentieth century. The scrapbook was compiled by Leo Williams Forbes Sr., a bookkeeper for Campbell Holton. The collection also includes advertisements, photographs, newspaper clippings, and city directory listings.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: General

- 1.1 Donor agreement with Jenny Forbes Draiger, dated September 3, 2025.
- 1.2 Personal correspondence dated Aug 19, 2025, from Jenny Gorges Draeger that accompanied scrapbook.
- 1.3 Obituary of Leo W. Forbes, *Pantagraph*, Dec. 13, 1991.
- 1.4 Printout of Campbell Holton & Co listings in City Directory 1902-1966.

Folder 2: Newspaper Clippings (*Pantagraph* unless noted)

- 2.1 "Wholesale Grocery House Burns," November 4, 1911.
- 2.2 "City Becomes Important Coffee Roasting Center," October 16, 1932.

- 2.3 "Coffee Drinking Is Serious Business for Tasters Who Maintain Blends," (Photos) October 16, 1932.
- 2.4 "Grocery Firm Accord Signed," May 12, 1937.
- 2.5 "Happy Hour Banquet Held," November 30, 1937.
- 2.6 "Campbell Holton Co. Installing Freezing Rooms," May 11, 1945.
- 2.7 "Designs Food Packages," June 16, 1945.
- 2.8 "Campbell Holton Consolidates With St. Louis Grocery Firm," November 27, 1951.
- 2.9 "Holton Retirement End of Era," August 23, 1953.
- 2.10 "Holton Grocery Firm names Mull New President," May 25, 1954.
- 2.11 "Holton Co. Expands Business," June 3, 1954.
- 2.12 "Campbell Holton, Veteran Grocery Wholesaler, Dies," February 13, 1959.
- 2.13 "57-Year-Old Bloomington company Takes New Name," July 11, 1965.
- 2.14 "Coffee craze perks up downtown," May 31, 1998.

Folder 3: Advertisements (*Pantagraph* unless noted)

- 3.1 B.F. Hoopes (early coffee roaster), *Daily Leader*, March 4, 1878 (unrelated to Campbell Holton & Co.—of interest only as an early roaster).
- 3.2 "Happy Thought" Chocolates, November 26, 1904.
- 3.3 "Happy Hour," from YWCA theater program, May 18-19, 1920.
- 3.4 "What Are the Happy Hour Stores?" August 26, 1930.
- 3.5 "What Are the Happy Hour Stores," from 1930 Mclean County Centennial souvenir program.
- 3.6 Trinity High School yearbook, advertisement, 1929.
- 3.7 "Give your food budget A New Deal," March 4, 1933.
- 3.8 Full page ad for all Happy Hour, Camel, and Red Mill Foods to save labels, cartons and bottles to enter in the Pony Contest, Dec. 2, 1914.

Folder 4: Postcards and Photos

- 4.1 Storefront postcard, Campbell Holton & Co, East Front St, Bloomington, IL. No date.
- 4.2 Postcard of New Home of Happy Hour and Camel Foods, Campbell Holton & Co. No date.
- 4.3 Photograph of Campbell Holton, from 1942 *Aepix*, Bloomington High School yearbook.
- 4.4 "It Is Time to Look For Me" Campbell Holton & Co postcard. No date.
- 4.5 Goods Under the "Happy Hour" Brand postcard, 1908.

Folder 5: Company Correspondence

- 5.1 Cover letter that accompanied product line booklet, July 22, 1913, 1 pp.
- 5.2 Cover letter that accompanied booklet to consumer, price lists, etc., August 1, 1913. 1 pp. (2 copies)

Folder 6: Product Lists and Price Lists

- 6.1 "Happy Hour" "Camel" and "Red Mill" Food Products for Fall Delivery, Printed by Frank Miller, undated, 15 pp.
- 6.2 Retail Price List of "Happy Hour" "Camel" "Red Mill" Canned Foods, undated, 3 pp.
- 6.3 Atlanta Fair Premium List, 1908, 2 pp.
- 6.4 "The Story of Sauer Kraut", May 19, 1922, 4 pp.

- 6.5 Happy Hour Goods, The Best, product booklet, Feb 7, 1923.
- 6.6 Camel Brand Pure Foods, product booklet, Feb 18, 1920.
- 6.7 Wholesale Price List of "Happy Hour," "Camel," "Red Mill" Canned Foods, August 1, 1913.

Folder 7: Seasonal - Christmas Cheer & Greetings and Thanksgiving

- 7.1 Christmas Cheer Mailer, Holiday Selections, Dec. 30, 1923.
- 7.2 Greetings and Sincere Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Product List, November 25, 1914.
- 7.3 Christmas Suggestions Mailer, Holiday Selections, Dec. 5, 1925.
- 7.4 Holiday envelope stationery, Campbell Holton & Co, Dec. 9, 1909.
- 7.5 Thanksgiving seasonal merchandise, Campbell Holton & Co, Oct. 1, 1912, with letterhead attached.

Folder 8: Company Stationery Samples

- 8.1 Campbell Holton & Co. Letterhead, Jan. 17, 1916.
- 8.2 Campbell Holton & Co. Letterhead, Dec. 5, 1914.
- 8.3 Campbell Holton & Co. Envelope and Letterhead with Graphics, noted as Season of 1913.
- 8.4 The Happy Hour Want Book, blank notebook, Campbell Holton & Co., undated.
- 8.5 Letterhead with highlighted text to sell during National Canned Foods Week (March 31 to April 6, 1913).

Folder 9: Company Events

- 9.1 Program of 1st Annual Stunt Night at YMCA, May 25, 1923, 1 pp.

Folder 10: Product Labels

- 10.1 Happy Hour Brand Food Products (product label).

Folder 11: Miscellaneous

- 11.1 Happy Hour playing cards (2).
- 11.2 "Happy Hour" Chinese products recipe booklet, no date but likely 1930's.
- 11.3 Four Campbell Holton & Co sales tickets for grocery items from the Virgiel Brothers Collection, August 2, 1928.
- 11.4 "The Low Cost of Good Living" pamphlet from National Canned Foods Week, March 31, 1913. (2 copies)
- 11.5 "How to Co-Operate" pamphlet from National Canned Foods Week, April 1, 1913.

Folder 12: Trademarks

- 12.1 Certain Foods®. Reg 75,679. Registered November 2, 1909. Campbell Holton & Co.
- 12.2 Hour®. Reg 269,609. Registered Apr. 15, 1930. Campbell Holton & Co.
- 12.3 Camel®. Reg 579,273. Registered Sept. 1, 1953. Campbell Holton & Co.
- 12.4 Correspondence from Mason, Fenwick & Lawrence to Mr. C.B. Holton regarding the trademark "Camel" dated Sept. 2, 1953, 2 pp.
- 12.5 Happy Hour®. Reg 202,667. Registered September 20, 1924. Campbell Holton & Co.

- 12.6 Confirmation letter from US Patent Office for renewal of Trademark No. 102,410, registered Feb. 9, 1915, to Campbell Holton & Co. 1 pp.
- 12.7 Certain Named Foods®. Reg 102,410. Registered August 15, 1914. Campbell Holton & Co.
- 12.8 Confirmation letter from US Patent Office for renewal of Trademark No. 76,591, registered Feb. 1, 1910, to Campbell Holton & Co. 1 pp.
- 12.9 Canned Oysters, Prepared Mustard, Tea, and Olives®. Reg 76,591, Registered December 16, 1908. Campbell Holton & Co.
- 12.10 Certain Named Foods®. Reg 102,798. Registered August 15, 1914. Campbell Holton & Co.

Loose Scrapbook

Includes many examples of Campbell Holton & Co product graphics, newspaper clippings, stationery samples, correspondence, etc., as compiled by Leo W. Forbes, Sr. who was the bookkeeper for Campbell Holton & Co.