Fisher, Bruce & Company Records, 1920s-1940
(.3 cubic feet; 1 flat box)

History:

Fisher, Bruce & Company, importers of china, earthenware, and glassware, were located on Market Street in Philadelphia. The firm dates back at least to the year 1880, when it was known as Atherholt, Fisher & Company, and was located at 519 Market Street. The principals in the firm were Thomas C. Atherholt, Samuel Fisher, and his son, Joseph G. A. Fisher. By 1885 the company's name had changed to Fisher, Son & Company. By 1889, after the addition of George H. Ruth to the firm, its name had changed to Fisher, Son & Ruth. The following year, probably following the death of Samuel Fisher, Worthington Bruce joined the firm, and its name was changed to Fisher, Bruce & Company. In the same year the firm relocated to 221 Market Street.

The company continued to prosper in its Market Street location, which extended back to Church Street. By 1930, the adjoining building at 219 Market Street was purchased. The ground floors of numbers 219-221 were used as a showroom and the company's offices were located upstairs. The company stayed in the Fisher family's hands for the remainder of its existence, with E. Monroe Fisher as President of the firm beginning in 1930. In the 1970s the company was sold and the business relocated to New Jersey.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection primarily contains catalog pages and pricelists for china, earthenware, and glassware imported from Belgium, Britain, France, and Italy, as well as some American ceramics. The catalog pages consist of color photographs of numbered ceramic items; the pricelists are separate pages keyed to the same numbers. These records, which date from 1939-1940, are arranged in separate folders by nationality.

The Belgian material consists of one catalog page of glassware. The British catalog pages depict Aynsley bone china (breakfast and tea sets), Grimwades earthenware, and "Toby" mugs of U.S. General McArthur and British General Wavell. The French catalog pages show "Quimper" design faience as well as other china and earthenware pieces. The Italian ceramics are primarily earthenware breakfast sets, bowls, baskets, vases, and donkey figures. There is also some Venetian glassware. The U.S. catalog pages show china breakfast sets and other tableware.

In addition, a photoprint in the collection shows the firm's building, ca. 1920s; a second photoprint shows a 1920s display of Pyrex ovenware in one of the building's display windows.

Provenance:

These records were donated to the Division of Domestic Life in February 1990 by Mr. Carl Gatter. His father, Herman L. Gatter, had been employed by Fisher, Bruce, for many years. The For more information contact the Archives Center at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270
records were transferred to the Archives Center in March 1990.

C. A. Orr, 1-24-92