J. WALTER THOMPSON:
Advertising America
**Introduction**

100 years of advertising, consumer and cultural history.

---

**Overview**

The J. Walter Thompson Company Archives stand alone as the most complete and informative record of the history of modern advertising.

The fascinating records of this pioneering agency document the research and creative processes behind the creation of advertisements, including many of the world’s biggest and best-known brands. The records also offer an evolving insider account of life within an advertising agency throughout the twentieth century, documenting changes such as the growing role of women in the industry.

As part of our suite of collections in *American Consumer Culture*, this digital resource charts the changing nature of advertising over the course of the twentieth century. Material reflects the society with which advertisements interact, and reveal the influence that advertising has over culture.

The collection is global in its scope. Advertising in the United States is a major focus, but the archives also cover J. Walter Thompson offices across the world including the United Kingdom, Italy, the Philippines, Spain and more.

**Source Archive**

Content is held at the John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, a specialist repository for primary sources relating to the history of advertising, marketing, and sales. It provides the most comprehensive archive of industry history available anywhere in the world.

---

**1878**

James Walter Thompson bought the Carlton & Smith Agency and established the J. Walter Thompson Company.

**1899**

J. Walter Thompson opened an office in London, becoming the first international ad agency, and continued to expand globally.

**1920**

JWT was the first advertising agency to write copy based on scientifically researched information, pioneering development of consumer demographic and other research data.

**1933**

JWT pioneered the medium of radio with radio soap operas and other kinds of entertainment programming.

---

**1890**

J. Walter Thompson pioneered the development of a creative department, hiring writers and artists to create ads for the clients he was selling space to.

**1908**

Helen Lansdowne was hired as a copywriter, but she would later become the advertising industry’s first female creative director.

**1930**

JWT acquired the Kodak account.
### Brand Case Studies

The collection features nine full account files of major J. Walter Thompson clients, giving an unprecedented insight into the research, creative and decision-making process:

- Kellogg
- Kodak
- Kraft
- Oscar Mayer
- Pan American World Airways
- R.T. French
- Scott Paper Company
- United States Marine Corps
- White Castle Restaurants

### Material Types

- Creative briefs
- Market research and reports
- Staff newsletters
- Print advertisements
- Memoranda and correspondence
- Staff meeting minutes
- Annual reports
- Client lists
- Commercial schedules
- Writings and speeches

“This collection serves a wide field of scholarly needs and provides a structured and convenient introduction to the study of modern consumerism.”

David Blanke
Professor of History,
Texas A&M University Corpus Christi
**Key Themes**

*J. Walter Thompson: Advertising America* has broad interdisciplinary appeal, providing unique documentation for a range of academic subject areas, including:

- Cultural History
- Consumer Culture
- Advertising and Marketing
- Business
- Media and Communications
- Social History
- Gender Studies

**Highlights**

- **Market research** into a range of products with reports such as *Cigarettes: Their Role and Function*
- Insights into the **creation of advertisements for a multitude of brands**, from conception to final publication
- How advertising helped influence the **development of television**
- Advertising’s **interactions with gender and gender roles** through print advertisements, briefs and publications
- How advertising professionals **reflect on their work**, its influence and what it means
- A look at JWT **company culture** through staff newsletters
- Advertisers **predicting the future** in *J.W. Trends*

**American Consumer Culture**

Broaden your research with cross-searchable access to the suite of collections held in our *American Consumer Culture* product. Collections include:

- *J. Walter Thompson: Advertising America*
- *Market Research and American Business*
- *Trade Catalogues and the American Home*