

MSS. Collection #239

News Weaver Collection, 1962-1981. 1 box (10 folders), 20 items.

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g., 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#: Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

This collection consists of employee newsletters published and distributed by J.P. Stevens & Co., one of the largest firms in the American textile industry, as well as one of the oldest diversified textile companies. The monthly *News Weaver* served as a resource for connecting departments and sharing local and national company news while emphasizing the interests and activities of the company's Greensboro employees. It is filled with information about local functions and company activities in Greensboro, as well the significant advancements J.P. Stevens made within the textile industry between the 1960s and 1980s. Researchers interested in local businesses, the textile industry, or J.P. Stevens & Co. may find this collection useful.

Arrangement: This collection is organized in one series and arranged within the series by date. The series is **Printed Materials**, 1962-1981.

Provenance: This collection was donated by Charlotte M. Layton in December 2016 and assigned the accession number 2016.57.1. The newsletters belonged to her husband's uncle, Robert "Bob" McKendry Layton, who worked for J.P. Stevens & Co. for 37 years, retiring as a supervisor in the accounting department.

Processing: This collection was organized by Archivist Elise Allison, and the finding aid was completed by LIS Capstone Intern Mary Puppo in February 2025.

HISTORICAL NOTE

J.P. Stevens & Co. was founded in 1813 by Captain Nathaniel Stevens of North Andover, Massachusetts, when he purchased a gristmill and converted it to produce woolen broadcloth, commonly used in the production of garments. Peak production occurred during the 1960s with 82 textile plants producing cotton, wool, synthetic yarns, fabric, and ready to buy products such as towels, carpets, hosiery, and sheets. At the company's height, factories could be found in Alabama, Connecticut, California, Georgia, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, along with administrative offices in New York City, Greensboro, and Greenville, South Carolina.

The Greensboro J.P. Stevens plant originated from a 1946 merger with Carter Fabrics Corporation, which was founded in Greensboro in 1937 by Wilbert J. "Nick" and Harry C. Carter. Nick Carter built the factory with the most efficient processing of rayon and acetate fibers in mind. As a result, it was the first fully air-conditioned plant, ideal for manufacturing fabrics

from synthetic fibers. As part of J.P. Stevens, the factory and laboratory specialized in the research, development, and manufacture of synthetic materials, fabrics, and yarns such as rayon, nylon, fiberglass, acrylic, Orlon, Antron II, Dacron, and synthetic/wool blends, along with many other experimental synthetic and industrial fabrics. Under J.P. Stevens, the Greensboro plant, also known as the Carter plant, was among the leading producers of double-knit fabrics. Greensboro also became a major transport depot for the trucking and procurement departments. The administrative offices in Greensboro, located in the Starmount area off West Market Street, managed the accounting, engineering, data processing, industrial relations, and technical services work for various departments. The Trucking Department was formed with a single vehicle in September 1947, and its headquarters was eventually established off Highway 29 in Guilford County. The Computer Business Forms Department was located south of Greensboro, just off I-85, and was responsible for producing and printing documents, including the *News Weaver*.

The national management of J.P. Stevens & Co. came under scrutiny in 1976 with a national boycott organized by the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA). The slogan of the boycott, "Don't sleep with J.P. Stevens," was effective in drawing national attention to the TWUA's goals of improving working conditions and wages, ending racial discrimination, and organizing labor unions in Southern states. By 1988, the company was struggling under the weight of debts and the popularization of outsourcing textile work to cut labor costs. As a result, it was bought and split into three parts by West Point-Pepperell Inc. and Odyssey Partners. The 200,768 square-foot Greensboro factory on South Elm-Eugene Street was demolished in 2002, and the land now houses Greensboro Fire Station 11, the Police District 2 headquarters, and the city's Water Resources Department.

Historical Sources: The historical information about J.P. Stevens & Co. was obtained from the finding aid for the [J.P. Stevens and Company, Incorporated \(1813-1989\) Records](#), Mss. #135, at Clemson University, while details about the boycott were found in "[U.S. textile workers win campaign in South \(J.P. Stevens boycott\).](#)" by Anthony Phalen (Global Nonviolent Action Database, November 25, 2009). Information about the Greensboro plant was obtained from "[A Brief Survey of Textile Mills in Greensboro.](#)" by Meghan Coker (UNCG, 2014) and "[Knocking down history: Carter plant, once a giant in textiles, sees its last days.](#)" by Jim Schlosser (*News & Record*, April 9, 2002), as well as from the newsletters in the collection.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists exclusively of printed materials in the form of 20 years of newsletters arranged chronologically. The newsletters contain valuable information and context about the textile industry in Greensboro and at other J.P. Stevens facilities around the country. They also provide insights into the charitable work and activities of local employees. It is notable, but not surprising, that they omit any mention of the strikes and protests at J.P. Stevens factories or the national boycott of the company in 1976.

SERIES DESCRIPTION**1. Printed Materials. 10 folders (20 items). 1962-1981.**

The printed materials consist of local employee newsletters titled *News Weaver*. Published and distributed monthly by J.P. Stevens & Co., the newsletter served the Greensboro-based administrative office, Computer Business Forms, Forms Control, and local trucking departments. It was printed in house by the Computer Business Forms Department and edited by Margaret Foust, a member of the South Atlantic Council of Industrial Editors. The newsletters focus on significant national and local occurrences, as well as changes and successes within the company, and they served to build a stronger sense of community among Greensboro employees in departments at disparate locations across the city.

Recurring themes include national promotions, significant national sales, and research breakthroughs. Local topics range from promotions, retirements, and marriages to prayers, recipes, participation in community blood drives, and reminders to get the flu shot. Charitable one-time campaigns, such as sending bivvy bags to soldiers in Vietnam, are also detailed. Several issues highlight significant achievements on both the national and local levels, such as the successful deployment and landing of Project Gemini parachutes made from J.P. Stevens nylon in 1966 (1:3). Entry into the pulp and paper chemical business in 1973 provided the company with a new avenue for innovation (1:6). Local safety milestones for the Greensboro plant were documented in 1965, totaling 4,132,870-man hours worked accident free, a record for J.P. Stevens facilities known for being unsafe on the factory floor. The Greensboro location was declared the safest and an innovative model for textile factories (1:2). In 1967, the company sponsored the "Textiles in the Space Age" lecture about the use of science and technology to spur innovation in the textile industry (1:3), and an award was presented to the Greensboro administrative office for electrical energy reductions of 30% in 1977 (1:8). The newsletters also cover the company's participation in the International Hosiery Exposition in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1980 (1:10).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Printed Materials	-- Newsletters (1962-1963)
	2	"	-- Newsletters (1964-1965)
	3	"	-- Newsletters (1966-1967)
	4	"	-- Newsletters (1968-1969)
	5	"	-- Newsletters (1970-1971)
	6	"	-- Newsletters (1972-1973)
	7	"	-- Newsletters (1974-1975)
	8	"	-- Newsletters (1976-1977)
	9	"	-- Newsletters (1978-1979)
	10	"	-- Newsletters (1980-1981)