

## Banister Shoe Company Collection

1890-1935, 2016



Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center  
The Newark Public Library  
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**Location:** Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center (Offsite)

**Size:** .42 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

**Format:** Textual materials

**Processed:** Beth Zak-Cohen, 2016

**Time Period:** 1890-1935,2016

**Call Number:** MG Nwk Banister (Offsite)

**Access policy:** Open for research

### Restrictions on Access

#### Use Restrictions

Researchers wishing to publish reproduce, or reprint materials from this collection must obtain permission.

#### Preferred Citation

Banister Shoe Company Collection, the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center, Newark Public Library.

#### Abstract

This collection consists of records from the James A. Banister Shoe Company of Newark, NJ from 1890-1935, as well as research on the company from 2016.

#### Scope and Content:

This collection documents about 45 years of the Banister Shoe Company, mostly in Newark. The core of the collection are the 15 shoe catalogues, all in good condition, which are an invaluable look into shoe sales and industry from the 1890s to the 1930s. Also of interest are the advertising materials for merchants, which show how Banister convinced various stores and merchants to sell their shoes. Miscellaneous material includes a catalog of Banister shoes from Chicago's Marshall Fields, a store constitution, a stock list, and magazine ads. Rounding out the collection are several historical photographs. The last folder includes research by the donor on the collection, from 2016. Material types in the collection include booklets, leaflets, photocopies, catalogs, and photographs.

#### Provenance:

Gift of the Newark History Society. The collection was acquired by the Newark History Society after being deaccessioned by the Weymouth Historical Society in Weymouth, MA.

**Processing Notes:**

Non-Newark material was not included in the donation. Most material was kept in donated order, as arranged by Timothy J. Crist. Photographs were separated to Box 1, Folder 13. Non-Banister material was removed [see "Separated Materials"]. Since an item list already existed, by Timothy J. Crist, finding aid was organized at item level. Original item list, with Crist's notes can be found in Box 1, Folder 14. Items in folder 10 were repaired by Marie Amaral using starch paste.

**Historical Note:**

Contributing author: Timothy J. Crist

The Banister Shoe Company existed in Newark from 1844 until 1934, when it moved out of Newark after a sale to Stetson Shoe Company.

The history of the company begins in 1844, when Isaac Banister began manufacturing shoes in Newark. In 1851, his son James A. joined his father in the business, Banister & Son. They opened a shop at 252 Washington Street, with an output of 60 pairs of shoes daily. Like his father, James was considered an expert cutter. By 1856, the business name was "James A. Banister & Company", though it changed several times in the next few years.

In 1865, James A. Banister formed a partnership with Lyman S. Tichenor, conducting business as Banister & Tichenor at 218 and 220 Market Street. By 1874, they employed 200 people with a weekly payroll of \$2,800, and annual production value of \$300,000.

After Tichenor's death in 1881, Banister continued as a sole proprietor and the company name was changed to James A. Banister Co. In 1884, a fire destroyed the Market Street factory, which was rebuilt on the same site in three months. In 1888, Banister built a new 4-story brick factory, 280 feet long with a frontage of 35 feet, at 185-187 Washington St. In 1892, James A. Banister formed a stock company, James A. Banister Shoes, with capital of \$100,000.

James A. Banister was active in civic, religious, and commercial enterprises in Newark. He was a Director of the YMCA from 1890; Vice President in 1894; and President from 1895 to 1906. He was a vestryman at the Roseville M.E. Church, a member of the Board of Trade, and a director of the Fairmount Cemetery Association. He was also a director of the National Newark Banking Co., Howard Savings Institution, and the American Insurance Company.

Banister shoes took the grand prizes at the Vienna, New Orleans, Chicago, Paris, Buffalo, St. Louis, and Portland expositions.

James A. Banister died on February 4, 1906 and his sons succeeded him in the business. At the time of the death of James A. Banister, the Banister Shoe Company had an output of 1200 pairs daily and employed 500 people.

James B. Banister was president of the company from 1906-1924. In 1915, the company built a new factory along the Morris Canal at 370-386 Orange Street, at the corner of First Street. This archive includes two copies of a photo taken in August 1915 during the construction of the building.

When James B. retired, Arthur C. Banister took over as company president. A few of the items in this collection have the initials "A.C.B." on them, presumably Arthur C. Banister. In 1928, Frederick E. Young became president of the company.

The exact date of the company's dissolution and sale to Stetson is unclear. The 1930 *Princeton Alumni Weekly* notes the "voluntary dissolution" of the James A. Bannister Company. However, the 1935 Banister shoe catalogue states that the company operated in Newark until May 1, 1934. A National Historic Register application for the factory site gives the formal dissolution date of the company as 1935. It is clear that by 1935 the company was operating in South Weymouth, Massachusetts and had left Newark.

Banister Shoes continued to be created and marketed (outside of Newark) until the early 1970s. The Orange Street factory building, used by Banister Shoes, is still standing today. It has long been vacant but, as of summer 2016, renovations appear to be underway.

**Series Descriptions:**

**Series 1 Store Catalogues**

This series contains catalogues of Banister shoes spanning the period 1890-1930s. Most are published by the Stock Department and showcase available shoe styles. Folders are in chronological order.

**Series 2 Other Materials**

This series contains advertising folders, price lists, photographs and miscellaneous items from Banister Shoe Company. It also contains copies of written material, gathered in 2016, on the Banister Shoe Company and Banister family. Folders are in alphabetical order by type of material (folder title), and then chronological.

**Access points:**

**Subject Names**

Banister, James A. (1831-1906)  
Banister, James B. (1860-1943)  
Banister, Arthur C. (1869-?)  
Banister, Isaac (1803-1885)  
Young, Frederick E.

**Subject Organizations**

James A. Banister Company  
Stetson Shoe Company

**Subject Topics**

Shoe Industry – New Jersey – Newark

**Subject Places**

Newark, N.J.  
South Weymouth, M.A.

**Document Types**

Black-and-white photographs  
Booklets  
Folders (containers)  
Leaflets (printed material)  
Photocopies  
Trade catalogs

**Bibliography**

Books at the Newark Public Library with information on the Banister Company and family include:

- Ford, William F. "The industrial interests of Newark, N. J."
- Gasser, Charles Albert. "Men of Newark".
- Leary, Peter J. "Newark N.J., Illustrated".
- Newark, N.J. Industrial Directories.

**Separated Materials**

The following non-Banister materials were moved to MG Nwk Misc I to J [Industry] in folder labelled "Leather Industry":

- Leather sample swatches, not related to Banister Shoes, but two with Newark interest--Dreher Leather Manufacturing Corporation, 42 Garden Street, Newark, NJ 07105, undated but 1970s? (sample card with 7 samples of "lining pigskins")
- Dreher, spring and summer 1971 (samples of "men's brushed pig"; 14 samples in different colors)
- Unidentified piece of leather labelled "Lizard Poly Calf Black"

The following item was donated, upon suggestion of the Newark History Society, to the United States Golf Association Museum:

- Lotus, Ltd. "Veldtschrem Waterproof" golf shoe catalogue, Stafford, England (undated, but 1920s)

**Container List:**

<b><u>Series 1 – Shoe Catalogues</u></b>				
<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Shoe Catalogues	"James A. Banister, Manufacturer of The Finest Grades of Boots, Shoes and Slippers For Men and Boys, Exclusively for the Retail Trade" [booklet]	1890
1	1	Shoe Catalogues	"The Mark of the Best Shoe" [booklet]	c. 1901-1904
1	1	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister's Gold Medal Shoes" [booklet]	1910
1	2	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister Shoes in Stock" [booklet, 4 copies]	c. 1915-1925
1	3	Shoe Catalogues	"Styles for Spring and Summer 1924" [booklet, 2 copies]	Spring/Summer 1924
1	3	Shoe Catalogues	"Styles for Fall and Winter 1924-1925" [booklet, 2 copies]	Fall/Winter 1924-1925
1	3	Shoe Catalogues	"Styles for Spring and Summer 1925" [booklet, 2 copies]	Spring/Summer 1925
1	4	Shoe Catalogues	"Styles for Spring and Summer 1926" [booklet, 4 copies]	Spring/Summer 1926
1	5	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister Shoes, Stock Department: In Stock for Immediate Shipment from the House of Banister" [booklet]	1927
1	5	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister Shoes in Stock" [booklet, 2 copies]	August 17, 1928
1	6	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister Shoes in Stock" [booklet]	1929
1	6	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister Shoes in Stock" [booklet, 2 copies]	Fall 1929

1	7	Shoe Catalogues	"Your Stock of Banister Shoes in Newark" [booklet, 3 copies]	1930
1	8	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister Shoes, Since 1845 the Choice of a Gentleman" [folder]	1931
1	8	Shoe Catalogues	"Banister [Trademark] Establ'd 1845" [booklet]	1935
<b>Series 2 – Other Material</b>				
<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	9	Advertisements for Merchants	"Reaching the Shoe Market of 1924 Through the House of Banister" [booklet]	c. 1924
1	9	Advertisements for Merchants	"Between 9 and 12 One Friday Morning" [leaflet]	Undated
1	10	Advertisements for Merchants	"It must be a good store" [leaflet]	c. 1925
1	10	Advertisements for Merchants	"The Banister Shoe" [leaflet]	c. 1925
1	10	Advertisements for Merchants	"Why not kill three birds with one stone" [leaflet]	c. 1925
1	10	Advertisements for Merchants	"For those with eyes to see" [leaflet]	c. 1925
1	10	Advertisements for Merchants	"The Market for a High Grade Shoe" [leaflet]	c. 1925
1	10	Advertisements for Merchants	"He that lieth down with dogs" (2 copies) [leaflet]	c. 1925
1	11	Advertisements for Merchants	"Banister" [folder, 2 copies]	1929
1	12	Miscellaneous	"Marshall Field presents a selection of new smart shoes for men by Banister" [booklet]	Undated
1	12	Miscellaneous	"The Constitution of the United States distributed by James A. Banister Co." [booklet]	Undated
1	12	Miscellaneous	Page from <i>The Illustrated Footwear and Fashion</i> advertising Banister shoe	Oct 15, 1910
1	12	Miscellaneous	Page from <i>The Illustrated Footwear and Fashion</i> advertising Banister boot	Nov 1, 1910
1	12	Miscellaneous	"Guiding More Customers to Your Store" by the James A. Banister company, Library of Congress copyright card	Sept 1928
1	12	Miscellaneous	James A. Banister Company stock Price List	September 1, 1930
1	13	Photographs	Photograph of unidentified man	Undated
1	13	Photographs	Two copies, both mounted, of a photograph of the construction of the Banister shoe factory at Orange Street and First Street, along the Morris Canal "Compliments of Tomkins Brothers (A Corporation) Wholesale Masons Materials, Main Office, 48-94 Passaic Street, Newark, N.J."	1915
1	13	Photographs	Photo of window display of Banister shoes at Saks on 34th Street in NYC	1930
1	14	Written Materials	Item list by Timothy J. Crist	2016
1	14	Written Materials	Research on the Banister Shoe Company, by Timothy J. Crist	April 27, 2016