

THE WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

REGISTER: Emeralds Unlimited, Inc. Records

MS NO.: 4915

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Date: February 1, 2002

Emeralds Unlimited, Inc. (1973-1995) was established to provide imported goods from Ireland, to promote Irish culture, and support Irish American events in the Cleveland, Ohio area. The owners, Joan Dillon Flynn, and Dee Keating, who served as vice president, opened the first Irish import store in Ohio, which was located in the Flats, on Old River Road, called Emerald in the Flats. Flynn and Keating embarked on this business venture to introduce an authentic Irish store in a geographical area that had been settled by the early Irish immigrants to Cleveland, Ohio. Emerald in the Flats officially opened on October 13, 1973.

Emeralds Unlimited Inc. was the first import business to participate in the Irish Cultural Festival at the Berea Fairgrounds in Cleveland. A second store was opened in Akron by Flynn's son, John Flynn. It ceased operations one year later, when John Flynn moved out of state. *Emeralds Unlimited Inc.* imported Irish stone and turf jewelry, sweaters, woolens, crystal, and art work. Bernadette O'Brien, native of Dublin and costume designer for the Cleveland Play House handmade "bainin" skirts and purses for the store. Natives of Brooklyn, New York, of Irish parents, Joan Dillon Flynn and her husband Ed moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 1958. Emeralds Unlimited Inc. in total consisted of eight stores, including one located in Lakewood and another in Euclid. The operation ceased in 1995.

The Emeralds Unlimited Inc. Records (1979-1993), consist of a catalog, history of the company, and newspaper clippings.

The collection is arranged alphabetically by document type, and then chronologically.

This collection is of value to researchers studying the history of Irish American businesses in Cleveland, Ohio. The records contain Irish recipes, information pertaining to St. Brigid, the Flats, and the histories behind Irish jewelry pieces, including the Claddagh Ring and Irish clothing. The collection includes genealogical data pertaining to the Flynn family. Those interested in traditional Irish clothing created by an Irish woman will find the information pertaining to Bernadette O'Brien's work to be useful.

All photographs have been removed to the photograph collection.

Provenance: Joan Dillon Flynn, 2000.

Number of Containers: 1 Oversize Folders: Oversize Volumes:

Size: 0.03 linear feet / 0.0093 linear meters

Restrictions: None.

Container

- Folder 1: Catalog, Emeralds Unlimited Inc. undated.
- Folder 2: History, Emerald Unlimited, Inc., undated.
- Folder 3: Newspaper clippings, *Catholic Universe Bulletin*,
March 16, 1979; *Euclid Sun Journal*, 1993;
unidentified, undated;