

**Charles E. Tuttle Co.  
Card File, 1940-1960s?  
Doc 645-647**

## **Introduction**

This collection contains a portion of the card file that was used for inventory control by Charles E. Tuttle Co., an antiquarian book seller in Rutland, Vermont, probably in the 1940s through the 1960s. The file was donated to the Vermont Historical Society by DeWolfe and Wood in 2007 (ms. acc. no. 2007.15). It is stored in three document storage boxes and occupies three linear feet of shelf space.

## **Agency Note**

Charles E. Tuttle Co., a used and antiquarian bookshop in Rutland, Vermont, was founded in the 1830s by George Tuttle. It was in the same family until 1993 when Charles E. Tuttle, Jr., died. The Tuttle family traced their publishing and printing heritage to George A. Tuttle & Co., founded in 1832 in Rutland. The company grew and Charles E. Tuttle, Sr., a member of the third generation of Rutland Tuttlés, became a dealer of antiquarian books and supplier to special collections libraries around the country. His son, Charles., Jr., established the Tokyo branch of his father's company in 1948 and built a reputation as the premier publisher of books about Japan. The Tuttle family also owned a publishing company, a law book company, and a stationery company. In 1979, the bookshop was spun off of the publishing company and was known as Tuttle Antiquarian Books.

The Tuttle bookshop, first located on Center Street and then on South Main Street, in Rutland was considered one of the oldest bookshops in the United States, a premier bookseller of Americana and genealogies. It was one of the first booksellers to issue catalogs on Black Americana.

In 2001, the book store was purchased by two long-time employees who in the summer of 2006 sold the company to DeWolfe and Wood of Alfred, Maine. DeWolfe and Wood then dispersed the inventory. When the store closed in June 2006, the *Rutland Herald* reported, "A Rutland institution for 174 years, Tuttle Antiquarian Books closed its doors last month — a victim of technology."

## **Scope and Content**

The Tuttle's card file was used to control inventory and retrieve books for patrons. Unlike most bookstores that encourage browsing, the Tuttle staff would retrieve books for customers based on the information found in the card catalog. According to a long-time employee, the catalog was divided into 200 subject areas.

When the 32-drawer card file came to the Vermont Historical Society the drawers and their contents were badly shuffled and mixed up. Large groups of cards within the

drawers were out of order and the drawers themselves were in no discernable order. As far as we could tell the file was originally in one alphabetical sequence of subject categories. The staff of the Vermont Historical Society began to shift groups of cards around to create one logical alphabetical sequence. We stopped after filling ten archival file boxes and discarded the remaining cards.

This collection represents the beginning of the alphabet of the Tuttle card file, from “Abbott” through “English Authors.” In between there are many categories of cards including, for example, “Classic;” “Clemons;” “Cleveland, Grover;” “Clocks;” “Clubs;” “Coast Survey;” “Cody, W. F.,” and “Coffee.”

This collection has been saved as an example of how a book store inventory was maintained in the middle of the twentieth century before the use of computers. It is not clear if the file ever represented what was in the store at any given time or the accumulation of book titles that went through the store. There was no indication of when this card file was in use but our best guess is the 1940s through the 1960s. Since the companies’ printed catalogs present a more complete picture of what was being sold at specific points in time, only a portion of the card file was maintained as an artifact of an earlier era in bookselling history.

### **Related Collections**

The Vermont Historical Society maintains a collection of printed catalogs from the Tuttle companies. Consult the online catalog for complete holdings. There are also posters and flyers from the company in the broadside collection. Many of the books that the Vermont Historical Society purchased in the beginning of the twentieth century were purchased through Tuttle, so the institution’s own archives contain many references to this well-established book dealer.

### **Inventory**

- Doc 645.1 Abbott – American Revolution
  - .2 Antiques – Arctic
  - .3 Arizona – Belle Lettres
  - .4 Bibles – Biography (Foreign)
- Doc 646.1 Biography (Sermons) – Brown
  - .2 Brownings – Catholic
  - .3 Cemeteries – Civil War (Slavery)
- Doc 647.1 Civil War (Slavery) – Connecticut
  - .2 Constitution – Drama
  - .3 English Authors

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July 2011  
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