

**Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc.**  
**Vermont Stock Offering Records & Annual Reports, 1983-1997**  
**MSA 835**

**Introduction**

This collection contains correspondence, documents, copies of applications, original artwork for publicity, and other papers relating to the Ben & Jerry's stock offering to Vermonters by Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc., in 1984. It also includes Ben & Jerry's annual reports for the period 1984-1997. The collection was donated to the Vermont Historical Society by Fred "Chico" Lager, former General Manager and Treasurer of the company, in 2018. It is housed in one archival flip top box and consumes .5 linear feet of shelf space.

**Institutional History**

Ben & Jerry's Homemade, founded in 1978 in an old Burlington gas station by Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, is the quintessential 1970s Vermont success story. Starting with a \$5 correspondence course in ice cream-making from Penn State and a \$12,000 investment (\$4,000 of it borrowed), the pair's business took off. By 1984 they needed to raise cash to build a manufacturing plant and discovered a little-known clause that allowed them to establish a Vermont-only public stock offering. The company became known internationally for their premium ice cream with innovative flavor combinations and clever names. In 2000 the company was sold to the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate Unilever. It operates globally as a fully-owned subsidiary of Unilever, with headquarters in South Burlington, Vermont, and its main factory in Waterbury, Vermont.

**Scope and Content**

This collection documents the 1984 public offering of stock in Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc., exclusively to Vermont residents. The first folder contains internal memos and correspondence with lawyers as they worked to figure out how to make this unique stock offering possible. The second folder contains official applications to the Vermont Department of Banking and Insurance to sell stock. The third folder contains original advertising artwork in the immediately recognizable Ben & Jerry's style announcing the stock offering and informational meetings. The fourth folder contains the final stock prospectus, dated May 1, 1984.

Finally, the collection contains a set of annual reports issued for the period 1984-1997. The reports document the growth of the company and its growing commitment to social causes. They also display the company's sense of humor. The 1995 annual report includes coloring book-style illustrations with a package of crayons attached to the back cover.

## Related Collections

The Leahy Library collections include bumper stickers and posters from Ben & Jerry's in addition to books and articles written about the company. Researchers should consult the library catalog and broadside collection subject headings to locate additional materials.

The VHS museum contains ice cream cartons, t-shirts, magnets, and other paraphernalia from Ben & Jerry's. The primary collection numbers are 1999.10.1a-b – 1999.10.64a-b, 1999.26.1a-b --- 1999.10.3a-b, 2004.58.55, 2009.45, 2010.11.28, 2010.15.4, and 2016.3.3

Additional records can be found at the company's own archives in South Burlington, Vermont.

## Inventory

- MSA 835:01 Correspondence and documents (many original) showing the sequence of events leading to the Vermont stock offering, 1984-1985.
- 02 Applications to Vermont Dept. of Banking and Insurance, registering the securities being offered and registering the company as a security dealer so that it could sell the stock, 1983-1984.
- 03 Advertising for informational meetings and announcing the offer, 1984
- 04 Final prospectus, 1984
- 05 Annual Reports for 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997

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