Westinghouse Electric Corporation Catalogs

For more than 100 years, Western Pennsylvania was home to the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Founded in 1886 to build electrical equipment for the new alternating electric current, Westinghouse Electric went on to manufacture everything from toasters to nuclear power plants, electric trolleys to jet engines. Pictured here is one of the earliest company catalogs, published in 1892. These elegant, gold-leafed catalogs advertised the first electrical apparatuses, mostly generators, switchboards, lamps, and motors, although this one features an early novelty item: an electrical cigar lighter.

The phenomenal growth of alternating current devices can be seen by comparing this 60-page catalog to the 1920 edition running 1,444 pages. New equipment included electric fans, irons, and ranges available to the public. Note the rounded, prong-less alternating current plug of the stylish 1920 Westinghouse Whirlwind 8-inch fan pictured here.

The Westinghouse Electric Corporation Collection in the History Center's Library & Archives contains many other treasures from Westinghouse in Western Pennsylvania. Processing of this valuable collection was made possible through a generous grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

The 8-inch Whirlwind offered one-speed only in 1920.

The Library & Archives collects materials related to the history and culture of Western Pennsylvania. The L&A is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, or visit the Historic Pittsburgh website at http://digital.library.pitt.edu/pittsburgh for the online catalog and other useful tools.
The 1892 Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company catalog with gold leaf. History Center Archives, MSS 424.A05.18.