

The History Center in Tompkins County Presents "History at Home!"

# The Ithaca Kitty

a.k.a Tabby Cat or the Arnold Tabby

## Who was Caesar Grimalkin?

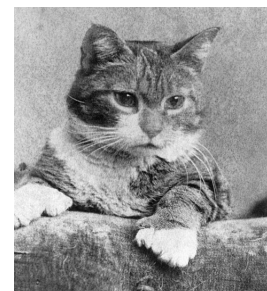
Caesar Grimalkin was a gray polydactyl cat with seven toes on each of his front paws, who lived in Ithaca New York in the late 1800's. His owner Celia Mattison Smith invented a brand new toy design made to look like him that she named the "Tabby Cat." She first designed the toy for her baby daughter Madge who was born in 1888. She enlisted the help of her sister-in-law Charity Smith, an accomplished local artist, to paint the toy to look like Caesar. Celia and Charity sent their design to the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the "Tabby Cat" was officially patented on July 5th and October 4th 1892. Arnold Print Works in Massachusetts bought the pattern and sold the Tabby Cat print to toy shops and department stores across the United States, and even in Europe and South America! The Tabby Cat was such popular toy it was displayed at the Worlds Fair in Chicago in 1893 along with four toy Tabby Kittens that Celia and Charity designed and patented in the fall of 1892.

Learn more about Caesar Grimalkin and the famous Ithaca Kitty toy at [www.thehistorycenter.net/ithaca-kitty](http://www.thehistorycenter.net/ithaca-kitty)

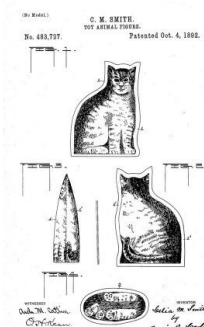
The Ithaca Kitty toy, based on the real cat Caesar Grimalkin, was originally designed with Caesar's polydactyl feet, but then Celia and Charity made a new painting that only showed 5 toes on each paw before they patented the design. In 2017, The History Center worked with a local artist to make a new version of the Ithaca Kitty toy with paws just like Caesar!



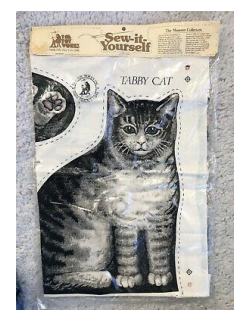
Ithaca Kitty Toy Re-design circa. 2017



The History Center in Tompkins County, Hinckley Family Collection, Portrait of Caesar Grimalkin, Howes Photography Studio Unknown, V-63-9-8.2, #23



The History Center in Tompkins County, Smith Collection, Tabby Cat Patent, October 4th 1892, V-2-3-12, #1



Tabby Cat Sew Your Own Kit, circa 1970



Seven Toed Polydactyl Cat Pawprint

Contact [community@thehistorycenter.net](mailto:community@thehistorycenter.net) with any questions. Visit [www.thehistorycenter.net/learn](http://www.thehistorycenter.net/learn) for more History at Home activities.

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