

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the Albany Hardware and Iron Company Records 1797-1986

Collection Summary

Collection Title: Albany Hardware and Iron Company Records

Call Number: MG 139

Creator: Donald Eberle

Inclusive Dates: 1797-1986

Bulk Dates: 1891, 1920s-1930s, 1963-1966

Abstract: This collection contains the records of the Albany Hardware and Iron Co., a wholesale hardware distributor in Albany, NY. The collection contains administrative records, photographs, catalogs, and scrapbooks. It contains many newspapers ads and articles on the company and the men who ran it.

Quantity: 9 boxes

Administrative Information

Custodial History: All items are the gift of Donald and Ann Eberle of Voorheesville, NY in April of 2001. Mr. Eberle was secretary of Albany Hardware at the time of the dissolution and sale of the company.

Preferred Citation: Albany Hardware and Iron Company Records, MG 139, Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

Acquisition Information:

Accession #: LIB.2001.321

Accession Date: April 21, 2001

Processing Information:

Processing By/Date: Heather Harrington, November 2003 and Sarah Deen-Clingan, February 2004.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: None

Restrictions on Use: None

Index Term

Persons

Baker, W.I

Hill, Samuel

Dearstyne, W.C

Eberle, Donald

Dunscomb, Jasper K.

Organizations

Albany Hardware and Iron Company; Spencer Stafford Co.;

Subjects

Real property-- Real estate; Advertising-- retail trade; Hardware stores-- specialty stores

Places

New York-- Albany

Document Types

Correspondence; Newspaper; photographs; scrapbooks;

Titles

Good Hardware;

Biography/History of the Albany Hardware and Iron Company

The Albany Hardware and Iron Company can be traced back to the year 1797. Samuel Hill received a land grant in the 1790s on 39-43 State Street, the first home of the Albany Hardware and Iron Company. This was the location of its retail division. Mr. Hill called his business *The Sign of the Golden Hinge*. The Store passed down to different owners over the years, the Pruyn family, then Maurice Viele. Eventually, in 1913, the company consolidated to form Albany Hardware and Iron Company. The Company had a long history of promoting from within. Many of the Board and higher positions were filled from employees moving up in the

Albany Hardware and Iron Company Records

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company. A warehouse facility was located on Dallius Street, but eventually, with growing demand for products, in the 1926, a new site was found, near the river, at Broadway and Arch Streets. Today, it is the home of U-HAUL. Beginning in the 1950s, discount stores came into fashion, and changed the way business was done. Soon, there was no room for wholesale businesses, as retailers were now buying from co-ops. This forced the shutdown of the retail division of Albany Hardware and Iron Co. at 41 State Street in 1960. The next five years yielded losses. There seemed to be no end in sight. In 1966, a special meeting of the Stockholders voted for dissolution of the company. In 1967, the properties and bills were settled. The donor, Don Eberle, the company's last secretary and board member, was put in charge of liquidating assets.

Scope and Contents of the Records

There are four series in this collection: The Administrative Files, Photographs, Catalogs, and Scrapbooks. The records cover the history of the business from its incorporation in 1891 until its sale and dissolution in 1967. The records consist of stock certificates; board meeting minutes, correspondence with stockholders, catalogs, advertisements, photographs and scrapbooks. The scrapbooks contain newspaper articles, correspondence and photographs. There are also some documents that tell of the local events, in photographs and in programs. Through these records, the lives of some its past presidents are revealed. Newspaper biographies reveal the hiring policy of promoting from within. In this collection, documentation on the rental, building and expanding of a parking lot on Dallius Street is provided. There is much documentation on the building and opening of the new warehouse location on Broadway and Arch Streets.

The earliest piece in the collection is a photographic reprint of a bill of sale from Samuel Hill in 1797. The newest item is a newspaper article from 1986 describing events that had been covered in the past by that newspaper, in this case, the Albany Hardware and Iron Co. Most of the material falls into one of three ranges: 1891, stocks, newspapers, scrapbooks, some administrative files; 1920s-1930s, most of the photographs seem to date to this period; and 1963-66, proxies, real estate, board meetings, and other administrative files relating the dissolution of the company.

Organization of the Records

The Collection is organized into four series:

Administrative Files: Series one. It contains files relating to the legal and business aspects of Albany Hardware and Iron Co. This series contains the by-laws, incorporation papers, stock certificates, board meeting minutes, correspondence, proxy voting and newspaper ads not found in the scrapbooks. This series details how the business was run. A folder containing newspaper ads from 1895, 1927, and unknown are is not in box 1 because it is oversized so it is found in box 7.

Photographs and Drawings: Series two. It contains photographs and drawings of the business and its customers and employees. The pictures are in different sizes and from different time periods. Most of the pictures are from the 1920s-1930s. One folder contains photographs removed from old picture frames. These frames were thrown away due to their poor quality and condition. There is also a drawing done in pencil of the new warehouse building. Other categories include warehouse photos, retail store photos, board and employee pictures, and different Albany events.

Catalogs: Series three. It contains seven catalogs from the Albany Hardware and Iron Co. Two catalogs are identical, save for the inscribed name on the fronts. One belonged to Wm. I. Baker; the other belonged to Jasper K. Dunscomb. There is also a Toy catalog, and a copy of a newsmagazine/catalog published by Albany Hardware and Iron Co. A wholesale catalog and a hardware supplies catalog are included. Finally, this series also houses William Dearstyne's Warehouse Data Notebook, which contains handwritten notes on warehouse stock.

Scrapbooks: Series four. It contains three different scrapbooks. One, W.I. Baker's Scrapbook, is in three boxes; one of these boxes is oversized and is shared with the records from series one. The oversized material has the page number it was taken from labeled on the back. All three are labeled as part of this collection and this series. The other two scrapbooks each have their own box. In each case, the items from the inside front and back covers were removed to acid free folders placed in each box. Also, newspaper articles and ads were preservation photocopied whenever possible. The original newspaper clippings are in the inside cover of the oversize scrapbook. One scrapbook is a book marked *Invoices*. This contains news clippings, correspondence and other miscellaneous papers. The third scrapbook is unnamed. This contains material largely relating to the opening and building of the new warehouse building on Broadway and Arch Streets in the 1920s.

Preservation Notes

Newspaper articles and clippings were photocopied onto acid free paper whenever possible, omitting those that were too big, glued into scrapbooks, or were too fragile for use on the copier. The W.I Baker scrapbook contents were taken out of the book and put into acid free folders. Some of the newspaper clipping originals were copied then thrown away since those were to be destroyed to save. The contents of the book were put into the acid free folders according to page number. The items in the scrapbooks are left largely as they are found, with few exceptions. The papers will remain glued or stapled or stuck in the pages of the books. Some fragile documents have been sleeved for their protection. The photographs have been sleeved or placed between acid free sheets. The photographs in the picture frames have been removed from the frames and placed in acid free folders in series 2. All staples, pins and fasteners have been removed from the documents. Everything is placed in acid free folder and boxes.

Related Material

Painting, entitled “Albany Hardware and Iron Company” by Hughson Hawley, watercolor on paper, July 1924. This item is in the curatorial collection. The accession number is **2001.15**

Term Paper, entitled, “Albany Hardware and Iron Company 1924 Watercolor” by Terry Pritchard, dated March 26, 2003. Gives history of Company and painting, as well as curatorial care of the painting. It is in the control file in box 1.

Catalog—1933 Wholesale Catalog is part of the general collection. The call number is: **683.085 Alb** This appears to be an identical copy of the catalog in series 3, box 3. This edition is in better condition.

Catalog—1909 Hardware and Supplies Catalog is part of the library’s collection. The call number is: **683.085 Alb** This appears to be an identical copy of the catalog in series 3, box 4. This edition is in better condition.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
1	1	Certificates of Incorporation, 1891
1	2	Stock Certificates, 1891
1	3	List of Stockholders, 1891
1	4	Misc. Stockholder Information, 1891
1	5	By-Laws, no date
1	6	Blank Letterhead
1	7	Correspondence and Press Releases, 1946-1965
1	8	Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, 1964-66
1	9	Information on Note Taking, no date
1	10	Waiver of Directors Meeting (blank) 1964
1	11	Correspondence with Dudley Patterson, 1965-66
1	12	Correspondence with Addison and Juliette Clark, 1959-1965
1	13	Correspondence with Ruth Flanagan, 1959-62
1	14	Correspondence with Susanna Deal, 1959-1964
1	15	Proxies for Annual Meeting of Stockholders, 1966
1	16	Dissolution Meeting Proxy Votes, 1966
1	17	Proxies for Division of Assets Meeting, 1967
1	18	Advertisements and Newspaper Articles, 1959, 1960, 1986
1	19	New Warehouse Plans and Survey, 1920s
1	20	Warehouse Real Estate Ad, late 1960s
1	21	Dallius Street Real Estate and Rentals, 1901-17, 1957-63
1	22	Port of Albany Dedication, 1932

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
7	1	Newspaper Ads, 1895, 1927, no date
1	23	Presidents and Board Members Photographs, no date
1	24	New Warehouse Building Invitation Photographs, 1920s
1	25	New Warehouse Building and Construction Photographs, 1920s
2	1	Warehouse photographs, c. 1930s
2	2	Retail Store photographs, c. 1920-1930s
2	3	Photographs removed from frames, no date
2	4	Albany Event Photographs, c. 1920s-1930s
7	2	Photographs of Employees and Board Members, c. 1920s
7	3	Photographs of Warehouse and Retail Store, c. 1920s-1930s
7	4	Drawing of New Warehouse Building, no date
7	5	Photographic Reprints of Receipts of Samuel Hill and Spencer Stafford Co., 1797, 1806, 1822
7	6	Photographs of Albany Waterfront, 1966
2	5	Good Hardware, 1922
2	6	W.C. Dearstyne's Warehouse Data Notebook, 1923
2	7	Wm. I. Baker's Automobile and Shop Catalog, A-9, no date
2	8	Jasper K. Dunscomb's Automobile and Shop Catalog, A-9, no date
2	9	Toy Catalog, 1953
3	--	Wholesale Catalog, c. 1933
4	--	Hardware and Supplies Catalog, 1909
5	--	<i>Invoices</i> Scrapbook
5	1	Front Cover Material
5	2	Back Cover Material
6	--	Unnamed Scrapbook
6	1	Front Cover Material
6	2	Back Cover Material
7	7	W.I. Baker's Scrapbook oversized material
8	1	W.I. Baker's Scrap book, loose material
8	2	W.I. Baker's Scrap book, page 1
8	3	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 2 and 3
8	4	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 4 and 5
8	5	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 6 and 7
8	6	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 8 and 9
8	7	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 10 and 11
8	8	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 12 and 13
8	9	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 15
8	10	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 16
8	11	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 17
8	12	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 18 and 19
8	13	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 20 and 21
8	14	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 22 and 23
8	15	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 24 and 25

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
8	16	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 26 and 27
8	17	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 28 and 29
8	18	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 30 and 31
8	19	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 32 and 33
8	20	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 36 and 37
8	21	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 38 and 39
8	22	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 38 and 39
8	23	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 40 and 41
8	24	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 42 and 43
9	1	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 44 and 45
9	2	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 46 and 47
9	3	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 48 and 49
9	4	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 50 and 51
9	5	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 52 and 53
9	6	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 56 and 57
9	7	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 58 and 59
9	8	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 60 and 61
9	9	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 62 and 63
9	10	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 66 and 67
9	11	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 68 and 69
9	12	W. I. Baker's Scrap book, page 70 and 71