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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: E. R. Beers Electric Company Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0232
Date: 1909-1938
Extent: 6.3 Cubic feet (6 boxes)
Source: Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Division of Beers, E.R.
Language: English.
Summary: The collection documents E.R. Beers's business records, his personal collection of Edison trivia, and correspondence between Beers and General Electric (1909-1922).

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Ownership and Custodial History
Transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, August 7, 1986.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Robert Ageton, 1989.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical Note

The Schuylkill Electric Construction & Supply Co., a small electrical operation in a very important period of time, 1909 to 1938, particularly for electrical appliances reflecting the conversion of gas lighting to incandescent lighting to decorative and arc lighting. At first there were two stores, one in Reading, Pennsylvania and one in Shenandoah, PA. The partnership was dissolved January 1911, resulting in the closing of the Reading, Pennsylvania store and the continued operation of the Shenandoah, Pennsylvania store. The Kauffman Electric Co., Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania was purchased in 1919 and named the E.R. Beers Electric Company.

Scope and Contents

This collection consisting of records of the Schuylkill Electric Construction & Supply Co. and the E.R. Beers Electric Co. and includes correspondance, advertisements, sales receipts, limited cash statements, and bids for electrical modifications. The bulk of the data is from the period from 1909 through the 1920's and mid 1930's. The collection contains advertisements that reflect the introduction of the electrical appliance to the home. Important transitions in the electrical industry are represented. For example, in July 1910 there is an acceptance by Lehigh Valley Railroad of rewiring of the Shenandoah Station according to "the rules and regulations of the Underwriter's Association" and agreement to furnish certificate of approval. Further, in February 1922 there the statement "Service for direct current motors is gradually being eliminated and will eventually be discontinued .... ."

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
Electric apparatus and appliances
Electrical engineering
Electrical equipment

Types of Materials:
Business records -- 20th century
Papers

Names:
E.R. Beers Electric Supply Company.
Edison, Thomas A. (Thomas Alva), 1847-1931
General Electric Company
Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Division of Schuylkill Construction and Supply Company.

Geographic Names:
Bloomsburg (Pa.)
Shenandoah (Pa.)
Series 1: Correspondence

This series contains specifications and bids for electrical work including telephone installations. Reference is made to the "Underwriters Association" in 1910. Price schedules for incandescent lamps are given for each year. The date the partnership was dissolved (January 1911) is reported in May 1911. Advertisements of household appliances show changes in design and cost. Price list of "Perfection Oils and Greases" (May 1912) and reference to carburetors for Ford Model T and Model 10 Buick using a mixture of kerosene and gasoline (June 1913) are included.

Balance sheets (cash statements) are first reported in 1915 as are references to Pennsylvania Workmen's Compensation reporting of accidents. Sales of electrical supplies by the E.R. Beers Electric Co. (Beers) to Schuylkill Electric Construction & Supply Co. (SEC & SC) appear. In March 1922 a comprehensive report to the Bureau of Statistics and Information is included.

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Box 1, Folder 6  Correspondence, 1909-06
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<td>Correspondence, 1925-02</td>
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<td>Box 3, Folder 46</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1928-05</td>
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<td>Box 3, Folder 47</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1929-06</td>
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<td>Box 5, Folder 29</td>
<td>Correspondence, G, 1919-1921</td>
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<td>Box 5, Folder 30</td>
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<td>Box 5, Folder 32</td>
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Series 2: Bills, Receipts, and Invoices

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<td>Box 5, Folder 22</td>
<td>Invoice, The Crescent Brass Manufacturing Co, 1917-1918</td>
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<td>Invoice, Dunlap Hardware Co, 1917-1918</td>
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<td>Box 5, Folder 22</td>
<td>Invoice, Thomas A. Edison, Inc, 1918</td>
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<td>Box 5, Folder 23</td>
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<td>Box 5, Folder 24</td>
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Series 3: Fixture Drawings, Edison materials, and photographs

This series contains lighting fixture drawings, some unidentified photographs, newspaper or magazine photographs of Edison, and a typewritten unsigned biography of Edison.

Box 5, Folder 25; Edison related materials, 1931
Box 6

Box 5, Folder 26-27; Fixture drawings, undated
Box 6

Photographs
Includes Walter P. Johnson (1933) and an unidentified man (undated).

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