



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the E. Murdock and Company Records

NMAH.AC.0268

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	E. Murdock and Company Records
Date:	1863-1954
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0268
Creator:	Murdock, E. (Woodware Manufacturing) (Author)
Extent:	0.33 Cubic feet (4 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Records document the activities of a woodware company between 1866 and 1954 and include various advertisements, price lists, and customer correspondence.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Margaret Urqhart, President, E. Murdock, Inc., January 15, 1987.

Provenance

This collection was transferred from the Warshaw Collection of Business Americana (AC0060), July 14, 1987.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Series: Woodenware (NMAH.AC.0060)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Alexandra Henry, 2017.

Preferred Citation

E. Murdock Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

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Biographical / Historical

The E. Murdock & Company was founded by Elisha Murdock in 1834. Murdock was from Winchendon, Massachusetts, a small town outside of Boston. He was the third child of Ephraim and Zibah Murdock. He was born on August 27, 1802.

Elisha Murdock's family had many industrial and educational pursuits. His father, a builder of sleighs, founded the first public high school in Winchendon, Massachusetts in 1843. Eventually his son Ephraim Murdock, Jr. established in 1887 a self-supporting high school in Winchendon named The Murdock School, was considered one of the best equipped high schools in Massachusetts and in 1961, the school became known as "The Murdock Junior High School.

Elisha worked in the manufacturing of tubs, pails, and other wood wares using machinery invented by his father. For 100 years, from 1831-1931, Winchendon was known as "The Home of Woodenware Manufacture."

In 1840, Murdock's first woodenware factory in Winchendon burned. In 1895, a second fire destroyed an even larger plant. After the 1895 fire, however, a new factory was erected and a variety of products were offered.

Murdock also established a plant in Boston, in the industrial area of Market Street. The Boston plant was listed in the city directory until 1882. In 1882, Elisha Murdock died and the company's leadership was handed over to William and Elisha Whitney.

From 1883-1929, little is recorded about E. Murdock & Company. In 1929, Murdock's Company, Keene Woodworking Company in New Hampshire and the West Swanzey plant, merged to form the New England Woodenware Corporation. However, the Winchendon unit was still supervised by Elisha and William Whitney, with 225 employees. According to Murdock's great-great-granddaughter Margaret Urquhart, the company moved from Massachusetts to New Hampshire in 1958, where it became a personal holding company with no employees. In 1951, the company stopped producing wooden artifacts and began producing boxes. In 1982, the company moved from Winchendon to Gardener, Massachusetts.

The Murdock family, through marriage, was related to the Whitney family. While the Whitneys produced woodworking machines, Murdock's company manufactured woodenware products for a century. Eventually, the Whitneys managed E. Murdock and Co. for over twenty years.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of correspondence from customers, catalogues, statements, and receipts from various shipping companies. Also included are price lists, bulletins, advertisements, and a census report. These papers indicate the kinds and the amounts of transactions that E. Murdock & Co. engaged in throughout most of its history.

The correspondence includes customers ranging from grocers, oil manufacturers and paper manufacturers to other woodenware manufacturers who ordered items from Murdock's companies. This series is arranged chronologically.

The monthly statements and receipts from Murdock's customers include shipment confirmations by freight companies.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into four series.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1866 June-1939 January

Series 2: Statements/receipts and shipment confirmations, 1863-1914

Series 3: Price lists and Catalogs, 1890-1928

Series 4: Miscellaneous, 1884-1954

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Box making
- Manufacturing
- Wood

Types of Materials:

- Business letters
- Business records
- Catalogs

Names:

- New England Woodenware Corporation
- Whitney, Elisha
- Whitney, William

Places:

- Massachusetts
- Massachusetts, Gardener
- Massachusetts, Winchendon
- New Hampshire

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1866 - 1880

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence, 1866 - 1872
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1866 - 1866
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1866 - 1890
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1880 - 1883
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1891-10 - 1891-10
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, 1891-11 - 1891-11
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, 1898 - 1939
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, 1863 - 1880

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Series 2: Statements and Receipts, 1863 - 1914

Box 1, Folder 8	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1863 - 1880
Box 1, Folder 9	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1891 - 1899
Box 2, Folder 1	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1865
Box 2, Folder 2	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1867 - 1871
Box 2, Folder 3	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1871
Box 2, Folder 4	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1871
Box 2, Folder 5	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1871 - 1880
Box 2, Folder 6	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1864 - 1891
Box 2, Folder 7	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1863 - 1893
Box 3, Folder 1	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1889
Box 3, Folder 2	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1889
Box 3, Folder 3	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1889
Box 3, Folder 4	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1891
Box 3, Folder 5	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1891
Box 3, Folder 6	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1891
Box 3, Folder 7	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1891
Box 4, Folder 1	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1881
Box 4, Folder 2	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1882
Box 4, Folder 3	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1883
Box 4, Folder 4	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1884
Box 4, Folder 5	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1890
Box 4, Folder 6	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1891

Box 4, Folder 7	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1891
Box 5, Folder 1	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations, 1897
Box 5, Folder 2	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations (agreements), 1889 - 1899
Box 5, Folder 3	Statements, Receipts, Confirmations (agreements), 1899 - 1914

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Series 3: Price Lists and Catalogs, 1890 - 1928

Box 5, Folder 4

Price Lists and Catalogs, 1890 - 1928

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Series 4: Miscellaneous, 1884 - 1954

Box 5, Folder 5

Miscellaneous, 1884 - 1954

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