



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Hoopes Bro. & Darlington, Inc., Records

NMAH.AC.1578

Alison Oswald

2023

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Hoopes Bro. & Darlington, Inc., Records
Date:	1834-1978 (bulk 1920s-1930s)
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1578
Creator:	Hoopes Brother & Darlington, Inc. (Manufacturer)
Extent:	4.6 Cubic feet (15 boxes, 1 map folder)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Records document the activities of the Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington Company, manufacturers of wooden wheels in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Immediate source of acquisition unknown.

Provenance

Materials originally collected for the Museum of History and Technology, Division of Road Transportation. Collection transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Work and Industry in September 2022.

Related Materials

Materials at the Archives Center

Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Series Wagons, NMAH.AC.0060

Hagan Brothers Carriage and Wagonmakers records, NMAH.AC.1154

Samuel J. Meeks Carriage Works Records, NMAH.AC.1502

James Cunningham, Son and Company records, NMAH.AC.1193

Materials at Other Organizations

Hagley Museum and Library

The Hoopes Brothers & Darlington Inc. photograph collection (Accession 1969.099)

Collection consists of miscellaneous images from the company, largely dating between 1900 and 1948, as well as advertising material and letterheads. The photographs include images of the company's exhibit at the 1876 International Exposition in Philadelphia; an unidentified ca. 1890 trade show; their saw mill in Jackson, Mississippi, ca. 1910; various models of wooden wheels; two automobiles with wooden wheels; and views of the factory.

The Last Wheel Works: The Industrial Archaeology of a Wood Wheel Manufactory

16 mm film produced in 1975 and sponsored by the Smithsonian and the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation about the manufacturing process employed by Hoopes Brothers & Darlington, a wooden wheel producer located in West Chester, Pennsylvania. The film details each step required to fashion a 16-spoke carriage wheel from raw lumber. Directed by Peter H. Smith and Robert M. Vogel. Written by Pierce Atkins. Filmed by Albert J. Robinson and Frank T. Herzog. Post Production by John W. Hiller and Karen Loveland. Technical support by Robert A. Howard, John D. Milner, Julia F. Davis, and Don Berkebile. With financial support from the Raymond John Wean Foundation.

Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Thomas Hoopes Family Papers, 1876-1890

The bulk of the documents were written between 1876 and 1890, and addressed to Amanda Hoopes (unless otherwise indicated). Many of the letters were written by various members of the extended family, but a considerable amount of them were written by Thomas and sent to Amanda while she was residing in Elmira, New York. Also included are a collection of stamps and several blank postcards and envelopes.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, 2023.

Preferred Citation

Hoopes Bro. & Darlington, Inc., Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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Historical

Hoopes Bro. & Darlington Wheel Works of West Chester, Pennsylvania was founded in 1867 by William and Thomas Hoopes to manufacture wooden wheels for carriages, wagons, and later automobile and motor truck wheels. In 1868, their cousin Edward S. Darlington joined the company. The company also made baseball bats and skis.

Content Description

Records document the activities of the Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington Company in West Chester, Pennsylvania, a manufacturer of wooden spokes for wheels. Materials include photographs, blueprints, price lists, catalogs, patents, correspondence, articles, film scripts and other supplemental documentation for the film, "The Last Wheel Works: The Industrial Archaeology of a Wood Wheel Manufactory," and an oral history transcript with Thomas Hoopes, Jr.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into four series.

Series 1: Operational Records, 1885-1964

Series 2: Patent Materials, 1834-1936

Series 3: Drawings, 1867-1955

Series 4: The Last Wheel Works Film Project Records, 1968-1969, 1978

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Wagon wheels
- Wheels
- Woodworking
- Woodworking industries
- Woodworking machinery

Types of Materials:

- Articles
- Blueprints
- Catalogs
- Correspondence
- Patents
- Photographs
- Price lists

Names:

- Hoopes, Thomas, 1834-1925
- Hoopes, William, 1830-1917

Places:

- Pennsylvania -- West Chester

Container Listing

Series 1: Operational Records , 1885-1964

Box 1, Folder 1	Business cards, undated
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Box 1, Folder 5	Circular letters, surplus lists, discount sheets and catalog pages, 1931-1933
Box 1, Folder 6	Circular letters and information about wheels or tires, 1932-1934
Box 1, Folder 7	Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, style of hubs, undated
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Box 1, Folder 9	Eastern Wheel Makers' Association, 1894-1899, 1902 Notes: File contains Constitution and By-Laws (1899), membership list, and typescript and handwritten correspondence.
Box 1, Folder 10	Price Lists, 1885-1949 Notes: Includes a wide variety of ephemera for Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington products and a wholesale price list for baseball and softball bats (1949).
Box 2, Folder 1	Merchandising Survey, 1928-12-08
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Box 2, Folder 41	Costs and Estimates, 1930
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Map-folder 1	Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, Factory Building, Second Floor Plan, undated
Map-folder 1	Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, Factory Building, North Elevation, undated
Map-folder 1	Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, Shop H, Second North End Floor Plan, 1926-01
Map-folder 1	Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, Floor Plan of Layout of Machine Locations, Building H, undated
Map-folder 1	Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, Floor Plan of Layout of Hub and Spoke Room, Building B, First Floor, undated

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Series 4: The Last Wheel Works Film Project Records, 1968-1969, 1978

Scope and Contents: This series consists of documentation for the "The Last Wheel Works: The Industrial Archaeology of a Wood Wheel Manufactory," a 16mm film produced in 1975 and sponsored by the Smithsonian and the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation about the manufacturing process employed by Hoopes Brothers & Darlington, a wooden wheel producer located in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The materials consist of notes, project proposals, correspondence, film scripts, drawings of floor and site plans, sequence and work flow charts for the processes of making a wooden wheel, and photographs. The 16mm film is located at the Hagley Museum and Library.

Box 11, Folder 1	Correspondence about project, 1968-1978
Box 11, Folder 2	Hoopes, Bro. Project Proposal, 1968-1969
Box 11, Folder 3	Script Drafts, 1968
Box 11, Folder 4	Drawings of floor plans and machine parts by Robert Vogel, 1969
Box 11, Folder 5	Drawings of Automatic Spoke Lathe (copies), 1889
Box 11, Folder 6	Sequence and flow charts for wheel processors, 1969
Box 11, Folder 7	Wheel sequence, 1969
Box 11, Folder 8	Pencil Sketches of Wheel Elements, undated
Box 11, Folder 9	Wheel Making Process, 1969-10-30
Box 11, Folder 10	Wheel Making Process, undated
Box 11, Folder 11	Glossary of Terms, undated
Box 12, Folder 1	Robert Howard, Slide Lecture, 1969-10
Box 12, Folder 2	Hoopes Process, pre-edit version, 1969-10-30
Box 12, Folder 3	Thomas Hoopes, Jr., interview transcript, 1969 Notes: Oral history conducted by interviewers, John Scafidi and Allen Ryff.
Box 12, Folder 4	Site Investigation of Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, Wood Wheel Manufacturers, Society for Historical Archeology, 1970
Box 12, Folder 5	Project photographs, 1969

Box 12, Folder 6

Hoopes, Bro. & Darlington, photographs , 1966-06

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