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Finding Aid for the

Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Co.
The Ypsi-Doodler

Collection # 057

July 2007 version

Abstract

The Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Co. Ypsi-Doodler Collection includes Volumes 1-3, incomplete, of The Ypsi-Doodler, a publication by and for the employees of the Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company. It appears to have been created to keep workers informed during the great changes experienced in the plants during war production; its tone is patriotic. The publication expressed their views, spotlighted their personalities and complimented their individual and group achievements. The first issue appeared in February 1944; it is unknown whether the publication continued beyond February 1946, the last issue of this collection. The Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Co. was a manufacturer of specialty reed furniture, in Ionia, Michigan.

Collection #: 57

Accession #: 87.000

Donor: Library purchase

Span dates: 1944-1946

Processor: Wendy K. Walker, December 1987; finding aid modified by Richard H. Harms, December 1996. Box Summary, Marcella Beck, August 31, 2000.

Size: 0.1 cu.ft.

Processing Note: Previously boxed with Col. 58, but separate 12/2/1999 rm.

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
1	"Ypsi-Doodler"	slim

History

The Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Co. originated in Ypsilanti, Michigan and moved to Ionia, Michigan in 1903 making specialty reed furniture in the state's factory building at the Michigan Reformatory using the prison labor pool. In 1911 the company started operations at its First outside plant in downtown Ionia with 150 men as an experiment to determine whether the plant could attract enough labor. The company had been told that Ionia could not support such a company due to lack of labor. The experiment proved successful and the company opened another plant in 1913, the largest in Ionia, shortly afterward, fire destroyed the Reformatory factory. The company prospered and soon had branch factories in Portland, Saranac, Lyons and Lowell, together employing 2,000 workers in Ionia County and building 1500 pieces per day.

The company enjoyed its most profitable years after World War I when it installed a specially designed machine to cut and trim reed and cane and began supplying other companies as well as making Furniture. In addition, the company added upholstered lines and controlled the manufacturing license on a special spring construction for furniture. Its Furniture was sold throughout the U. S. and in several South American countries. However, the company suffered during the Depression -- it sold the Lowell and Portland plants and abandoned the Saranac and Lyons plants.

As a result of World War II the company changed its product line to bus seats, automobile/truck bodies and canvas goods, discontinuing Furniture production in 1948. In 1953 the name changed to Ionia Manufacturing Co. and much later to Diversitech.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of three incomplete volumes of The Ypsi-Doodler, a publication by and for the employees of the Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Co., Ionia, Michigan, to express their views, spotlight their personalities and compliment their individual and group achievements. The first issue appeared in February 1944; it is unknown whether the publication continued beyond February 1946, the last issue of this collection. It appears to have been formed in order to keep workers informed during the great changes experienced in the plants during war production, and its tone is very patriotic.

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
		The Ypsi-Doodler
1	1	v. 1 - Feb-Dec 1944, not inclusive.
	2	v. 2 - Jan 1945, Mar-Dec 1945.
	3	v. 3 - Jan-Feb, 1946.