

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

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Finding Aid for the  
Bos Leather Company. Records  
Collection # 079

September 2009 version

Abstract

The Bos Leather Company was formed in 1909 Grand Rapids, Michigan by Sidney (originally Sietse) J. Bos (1878-1941), a Dutch immigrant. Bos later brought his sons into the Company. They took over the operations in the 1930's, operating it until they sold it to Joseph and Robert Flood in 1979. The Floods closed the Company in 1981. The Bos Leather Company records document both the financial history of the firm, including inventory records from 1909 to 1967. Monthly sales records are included from the mid-1930's until 1967. A sample of trade publications and supplier's publications is included, though these are from national or international companies, not Grand Rapids firms. The Bos firm specialized in shoe making, but also manufactured a limited amount of other leather products, such as briefcases.

Collection #: 079

Accession #: 1986.201

Donor: Cornelius J. and J. Sidney Bos, 20 September 1979

Span dates: 1905-1967, n.d.

Processor: Richard H. Harms, July 1988. Box Summary, Marcella Beck, Sept.14,2000.

Inventory, Dee Henry, Nov. 2001; additional processing & finding aid update, R. Mayne, Dec. 15, 2001 to 2005.

Size: 2.17 linear ft. (26 inches)

Box Summary

| Box No.              | Description of Contents | Box Description |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <hr/>                |                         |                 |
| Box Inventory 9/2009 |                         |                 |
| 1                    | records                 | standard        |
| 2                    | records                 | standard        |
| 3                    | records                 | standard legal  |
| 4                    | records                 | standard legal  |
| 5                    | Trade Catalogs          | standard legal  |

Correct box/content specifications in finding aid below. [9/16/2000 rm]

Related Collections

Coll. 046 GRPL Trade Catalog Collection

## History

The Bos Leather Company was formed in 1909 by Sidney (originally Sietse) J. Bos (1878-1941), a Dutch immigrant. Bos worked as a sales agent for Hirth, Krause & Co., a leading Grand Rapids, Mich. shoe wholesaler, until he formed his own firm. The firm was first located at 744 Wealthy Ave., moved to 35 Ionia Ave in 1922 and finally to 21 Ottawa Ave. in 1940. In 1928 his son, Cornelius J. Bos (1905-1982) joined the firm as a sales manager. Later his other son, John Sidney Bos, also joined the firm. The two brothers took over control of the company during the 1930s. They continued the firm until 1979 when they sold it to Joseph and Robert Flood. The Floods closed the company in 1981.

## Scope and Content

The records consist of monthly sales records divided according to sales agent and product category. The data is summarized in the monthly sales tax reports and trail balances. The inventories provide a detailed listing of merchandise and equipment on hand at the end of each year. Both the sales reports and inventories are noteworthy for the long, unbroken runs.

The publications provide a sampling of information on several topics such as foot care and design, shoe making equipment and tools, and shoe making supplies. A noteworthy catalog in the supplies section is "Schafer's Black Beauty Harness" catalog of horse harnesses. This section also contains reports from national trade organizations. Finally this section contains the 1941 Encyclopedia of the Shoe and Leather Industry, which provides detailed insight into the leather and tanning industry as well as an indication of advertising in the industry

The firm specialized in shoe-making, but also manufactured a limited amount of other leather products, such as briefcases. The records chiefly document sales and inventory levels during the company life, 1909-1969. Never a large operation, the firm had annual sales of approximately \$120,00 during the 1960s.

Contents

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> | <u>Description</u>                           |
|------------|---------------|--|
|            |               | <b>Series I. Financial Records, 1909-67.</b> |
|            |               | Weekly Sales Reports                         |
| 1          | 1-19          | 1936-1954.                                   |
| 2          | 1-3           | 1955-1957.                                   |
| 2          | 4             | Trial Balances, 1936-1943.                   |
| 2          | 5-7           | Monthly Sales Tax Reports, 1940-1967.        |
|            |               | Inventories                                  |
| 3          | 1             | 1909-1912                                    |
| 3          | 2             | 1913-1916.                                   |
|            | vol. 1        | 1918-1923.                                   |
| 3          | 3             | 1924.  |
|            | vol. 2        | 1925-1929.                                   |
| 3          | 4             | 1930-1934.                                   |
| 4          | 1-5           | 1935-1956.                                   |

**Series II. Publications, 1905-33, n.d.**

- |   |        |   |
|---|--------|---|
| 4 | 2      | The Retail Shoe Dealer's Advertiser, vols. ii, xxv, xxvi, n.d.<br>Shoe Trade Journal, 1905.   |
| 4 | vol. 3 | Encyclopedia of the Shoe and Leather Industry, 1941.  |
| 5 | 1      | Foot Aids, n.d. (4 items, 12/15/2001) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foot Relief Manual / by Dr. Wm. M. Scholl. Chicago : Scholl Mfg. Co., n.d.</li><li>• Dr. Scholl's Foot Comfort Remedies and Sundries. ... 1940.</li><li>• Dr. Scholl's Foot Comfort Remedies and Arch Supports, Cat. #142, 1943.</li><li>• Nat. School of Orthopraxy of the Foot, St. Louis, 1930. Incl. Back page Certificate of Enrollment for John Sidney Bos, Mar. 1934 + Letter to J.S. Bos, Mar. 13, 1934 from Wizard Co. accompanying.</li></ul>   |
| 2 | 2      | Trade Catalogs, Machinery, including sewing & stitching machines (10 item, 12/15/2001) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• List of parts / Singer, No. 29-4</li><li>• Price list of machines/ Laing, Harrar &amp; Chamberlin. Philadelphia, 1939.</li><li>• Price list of Parts, Durkopp No. 3, Rotary Shuttle (2), n.d.</li><li>• Landis No. 12, Model F, Sticher, Instruction Book and Parts Catalog. St. Louis, 1950 (2)</li><li>• Tools – Shoe Findings, Leathers / Joseph Jones Co., n.d. (leather samples)</li><li>• Bradbury &amp; Co. A1 Repairing Machine / Dunlap Machinery Co., N.Y., ca. 1901?</li><li>• Instructions Gritzner Sole Sticher. Durlach, Germany. + “Guarantee” w image of Gritzner Machine Co.</li><li>• (German) Anleitung zum Gebrauche der Circular-Elastic-Schuhmacher-Nahmaschine n.d.</li><li>• Rolling Step Ladders for Stores / The bicycle Step Ladder Co., Chicago. Cat. No. 28, n.d.</li></ul> |
| 5 | 2.5    | Trade Catalogs, Machinery, G.R.<br>Directions for Operating the Perfecto, Shoe Repairing Machine / Ben Krause Co., G.R., importers & sole agents for the U.S. n.d. [Dickinson Bros. Illustrations]  |

- 5 3 Trade Catalogs, Machinery, 1938, 1950, n.d. (4 items, 12/15/2001)
- USMC (United Shoe Machinery Corp.) binder
  - Champion "5" Stitches
  - Champion "30" Stitches
  - Osborne Tools, Cat. No. 4. + yellow price sheets
- 5 4 Trade Catalogs, Supplies,(6 items, 12/15/2001)
- Shoe finders Supply Co. Price List ... 1927
  - Shoe finders Supply Co. Price List ... 1928
  - Shoe finders Supply Co. Price List ... 1930 [missing & cut pages, 11-18
  - Shoe Store Supplies for all the year round / P.H. Volk & Co., 1933 cat.
  - Star Heel Plate Co., Cat. No. 16
  - K.Kaplan Sons & Co., leather & shoe supplies. 1937.
- 5 4.5 Trade Catalogs, Supplies, G.R.  
Hirth-Krause Co., Tanners, G.R., Catalog 1923, Onderdonk Printing Co., G.R.
- 5 5 Trade Catalogs, Supplies, (5 items, 12/15/2001)
- USMC (United Shoe Machinery Corp. Shoe Factory Supplies for Shoe Repairing, n.d. [pg. 70 cut, + 2 loose items]
  - Hatters Supply House, Chicago. Catalog "O", 1948.
  - Schafer's Black Beauty Harness, Cat. No. 18, Decatur, In. n.d. + 2 Lamac's Shoe-Sole Preparer sheets w handwritten notes
  - Bedard Equipment, Minneapolis. + 1923 Price List
  - Bernard Shoe Repair Tools, Sargent & Co., n.d.
- 5 6 Trade Catalogs, Supplies, 1922-23, n.d. (1 items, 12/15/2001)  
Wholesale Leather and Shoe Store Supplies / Thompson Ehlers Co., Chicago, 1922-23
- 5 7 Dr. Hunt's Corn Remover / prepared by Am. Chemical Co., Urbana, Ohio. [broadside], n.d.
- 5 8 Afbeeldingenboek der Firma Friedr. Herder Abr. Sohn. Solingen, n.d. [hardbound trade catalog in German, for cutting tools]