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Northampton Cutlery Company Records

1869-1987

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Cutlery company located in Northampton, Massachusetts until its closing in 1987. Records document company operations and technology used in the cutlery manufacturing process, as well as details about employment of immigrant and working class families in the region. Includes administrative, legal, and financial records; correspondence; personnel and labor relations files; and production schedules and specifications.

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Background on Northampton Cutlery Company

The Northampton Cutlery Company was incorporated in 1871 with Judge Samuel L. Hinckley, its largest stockholder, as its first President. The property was purchased from J. H. Lyman and located along the Mill River in Northampton, Massachusetts on a site in which previous manufacturing plants had operated, beginning with Northampton Papermills (1836-1848), and subsequently Hampshire Flax & Hemp Company (1848-1850), Bay State Tool Manufacturing Company (1854-1858), Bay State Hardware Company (1858-1870), and Riverside Cutlery Company (1870-1871). Cutlery production began as a sideline venture for Bay State Tool during the Civil War, a time when 81% of cutlery produced in the United States was made in plants in Massachusetts and Connecticut. In 1885, a Knights of Labor Assembly of knife grinders was established in Northampton, considered by the Northampton Tercentenary Commission to be the first union of "real significance" in the town. The company closed in 1987.

Scope of collection

Records document company operations and technology used in the cutlery manufacturing process, as well as details about employment of immigrant and working class families in the region. Records include: company histories; by-laws; deeds; board of directors meeting minutes; stockholders' certificates and meeting minutes; correspondence; ledgers, cashbooks, price lists, and product catalogs; auditor's reports, annual operating statements and tax reports and returns; job surveys, reports, plans, and a wage study; payroll ledgers, lists of employees, employees' census sheets and factory notices; production schedules; records that document labor relations including negotiations, unemployment cases, and union communications and grievances; and machinery specifications, plot and sewer plans, a scrapbook, photographs, and samples.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into seventeen series:

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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

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Search terms

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Cutlery trade--Massachusetts.

Northampton (Mass.)--Economic conditions.

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