

**Albany Billiard Ball Company
Records, 1894-1944; bulk 1915-1944****SC22082**

QUANTITY: 7 boxes (ca. 3.0 cubic ft.)
ACCESS: Open to research
ACQUISITION: Purchased from Charles D. Valentino (dealer), July 1998
PROCESSED BY: Fred Bassett, Senior Librarian, Manuscripts & Special Collections, August 2009

Historical Note:

The Albany Billiard Ball Company was founded in 1868 by John Wesley Hyatt with assistance from Peter Kinnear and other investors. Manufacturing operations were originally set up in a machine shop owned by Kinnear that was situated in the south end of Albany, New York. Kinnear would later gain majority interest in the firm and steer it into a highly successful business. By the late 1960s, cheaper imported billiard balls flooded the domestic market and almost doomed the company. In September 1977, David M. Carey acquired the company and renamed it the Albany-Hyatt Billiard Ball Company. Employing new marketing principles and lowering production costs, its product became highly competitive again. At present the company is the only major billiard ball firm in the United States.

John Wesley Hyatt (1837-1920) was the inventor of the celluloid billiard ball. Celluloid, besides being the base of photographic film, was a substitute for ivory, long the prime substance in billiard ball manufacture. The Hyatt "composition" ball, with a celluloid base, dominated the sport until the 1960s.

A more thorough history of the company can be found in *Albany, Capitol City on the Hudson: An Illustrated History* by John J. McEneny ([Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1981]).

Scope and Content Note:

The records of the Albany Billiard Ball Company consist chiefly of account books detailing its finances. The cash journals detail the quantity and cost of goods sold to various firms and individuals. Costs and fees for shipping and handling are also noted. The journals of income and disbursements provide a more detailed record of administrative and production costs of the company as well as income derived from sales. Principle expenditures include labor, raw materials, maintenance of equipment and facilities, and taxes.

Some of the records relate to a special a unit or division within the firm that was known as the Niagara Insul-Bake Specialty Company. The nature of its operations is not really clear from the records other than it was engaged in the manufacturing of plastics.

These records also include time books that list the names of employees and the payment each received on a weekly basis from either salary or wages.

Altogether, the records of the Albany Billiard Ball Company offer a unique perspective on the economic and industrial history of the Albany area.

Related Records:

The Archives of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., includes 8 cubic feet of records of the Albany Billiard Ball Company. Its holdings consist of legal documents and patent records; memoranda and articles of association; bank books, balance sheets; profit and loss accounts; journals, ledgers, and cashbooks; time books and union contracts; photographs, and correspondence to and from the company, 1881-1973. The online finding aid to this record group is at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives/d8011.htm>

Container List:

Box	Volume	Description
1	1	Journal (receipts and expenditures), November 2, 1894-September 27, 1898 (400 p.; 35 cm.)
1	2	Monthly sales records, October 1915-October 1919 (300 p.; 36 cm.)
2	3	Journal (day book), January 2, 1919-December 31, 1920 (304 p.; 36 cm.)
2	4	Journal (day book), January 3, 1921- June 30, 1922 (300 p.; 36 cm.)
3	5	Cash book (journal), January 1, 1919-December 30, 1922 (225 leaves; 46 cm.)
4	6	Payroll (time book), Niagara Insul-Bake Company, January 4, 1928-March 15, 1933 (272 p.; 44 cm.)
5	7	Payroll (time book), Albany Billiard Ball Company, February 13, 1935-April 26, 1939
6	8	Journal (income/expenditures), January 1933-June 1939 [Niagara Insul-Bake Specialty Co.] (152 p.; 27 cm.)
6	9	Journal (income/expenditures), June 1939-June 1943 [Niagara Insul-Bake Specialty Co.] (152 p.; 27 cm.)
6	10	Record (journal) of orders, 1941 (300 p.; 27 cm.)
7	11	Albany Billiard Ball Company, General Journal, January 1933-June 1940 (part) (152 p.; 36 cm.)
7	12	Albany Billiard Ball Company, Cash Receipts and Disbursements, May 1942-December 1944 (152 p.; 36 cm.)
7	13	Niagara Insul-Bake Specialty Company, Cash book. March 1937-March 1940 (152 p.; 36 cm.)
7	14	Albany Billiard Ball Company, Invoice Register, April 1941-December 1944 (152 p.; 36 cm.)

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