

# Guide to the Leopold Desk Company Records

## Identity Elements

**Reference Code:** MSC0209

**Name and Location of Repository:** University of Iowa Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, IA, 52242

**Title:** Leopold Desk Company Records

**Date:** 1886-1964

**Extent:** 1.75 linear feet

**Name of Creator:** Philip Zaborowski

**Administrative/Biographical History:** The Leopold Desk Company was an office furniture manufacturing firm which operated out of Burlington, Iowa, for 102 years before closing in 1990. The company was located at the 900 block of Osborn Street until 1972, when it moved to 2825 Mount Pleasant Street.

W. Rand was President, and Carl A. Leopold was Secretary, Treasurer, and Manager. According to a 1957 report, the company employed around 200 people and annually manufactured 30,000 desks, making about \$30M in sales.

The company was established as Northwestern Furniture Company in 1886. It went through multiple name changes: Rand-Leopold Desk Company in 1888, Leopold Desk Company in 1900, and Leopold Company in 1937. The company was acquired by Litton Industries in 1965 which merged with Lehigh of Yonkers, NY in 1980. Lehigh-Leopold was sold to Joyce International in 1984. The company folded operations on March 3, 1990.

Today, Leopold furniture models are available for purchase on a limited basis through Ebay and other online and antique vendors.

It is sometimes possible to date Leopold desks from the images that appear in the company catalogs. Special Collections staff, however, have no expertise whatsoever in estimating the possible fair market value of desks or other furniture; we're simply unable to offer any opinion. We suggest that you consult an antiques dealer or the manager of an antiques and collectibles mall.

John Roth of Burlington, Iowa has a web page devoted to Leopold desks which provides additional information about the company and its history. You may contact Mr Roth for further information.

<https://www.burlingtonfirestation.com/leopold.htm> (Links to an external site.)

<https://www.pastandpresenthomegallery.com/whats-new/2017/3/8/meet-the-characters-antique-leopold-desk> (Links to an external site.)

## Conditions of Access and Use

**Conditions Governing Access:** This collection is open for research. Copyright restrictions may apply; please consult Special Collections staff for further information.

**Languages and Scripts of the Material:** English, Spanish

**Preferred Citation:** Leopold Desk Company Records, The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

## **Content and Structure**

**Scope and Content:** The records of the Leopold Desk Company document the first eighty years of its history with annual reports, property accounts, minutes from stockholders and directors meetings, and time books. Their products are showcased in catalogs dating from 1888 to 1927. The collection also contains corporate ephemera, including documentation of labor rules and regulations, and blueprints for the furniture plant.

Our collection of catalogs has been fully digitized. Additionally, several items of corporate ephemera, including a union contract, book of shop rules, and books of labor rules and regulations have also been digitized. You may visit the collection's home page at <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/desks> and conduct a search across all of the catalogs.

### **System of Arrangement:**

Series 1: BUSINESS AND LABOR RECORDS

Sub-Series: **Financial Records**

Annual Reports

*Auditor's Report: Year Ended December 31, 1922*

*Auditor's Report: Year Ended December 31, 1923*

*Auditor's Report: Year Ended December 31, 1928*

Property Account of Rand & Leopold

*Property Account of Rand & Leopold 1886-1891*

Sub-Series: **Business and Labor Records**

Minutes of Stockholders and Directors Meetings

*Minutes of Stockholders and Directors Meetings of the Northwest Furniture Co., between 1886 and 1891*

*Secretary's Records of Stockholders and Directors' Meetings 1886-1891, 1891-1907*

Corporate Ephemera

*Scrap Book*

*Christmas banquet program, December 23, 1915*

*Handy Information on Office Desks, January 1924*

Time Books

*Time Book Monthly*

*Time Book Monthly*

*Time Book Monthly*

Leopold News

*Leopold News Vol.3 1923-24*

*The Leopold News*

*The Leopold News*

Things to Remember Books

Sub-Series: **Historical Documents**

Documents of Labor Regulations

*Shop rules and information issued by Leopold Desk Company, May 1, 1917*

*Burlington Employment Association, Constitution and By-laws, May 1918*

*Sales Code and Inspection Rules, January 1921*

*Introduction to Eggers, Union Contract, June 6 1950*

Clippings and Printed Internet Documents

*A Brief History of Leopold Desks Company*

*Obituary of Fredric Leopold (1896-1989)*

*Materials from Burlington Public Library*

*Advertisement: "The Spirit of Gracious Living Moves Downtown"*

*Advertisement: "Bird Homes"*

*Pamphlet from 1955 Open House*

Blueprints

*Blueprints for furniture plant*

**Series 2: CATALOGS**

Sub-Series: **Catalogs- Northwestern Furniture Company**

*Office desks, manufactured by the Northwestern Furniture Co., January 1888*

*Northwestern Furniture Co. [Catalog and price list]*

*Catalogue and price list, Northwestern Furniture Co., January 1891*

Sub-Series: **Catalogs- Rand & Leopold Desk Company**

*Illustrated catalogue of the Rand & Leopold Desk Co., January 1895*

*Illustrated catalogue of the Rand & Leopold Desk Co., January 1897*

*The Leopold desks [catalog] no.22, [1899]*

*The Leopold desks [catalog] no.23, [1900]*

*Leopold Desk Company, catalog no. 40, 1909*

Sub-Series: **Brochures**

*The President Suite*

*The Beau Geste Suite*

*The Cavalier Suite*

*The Senator Suite*

*The Aristocrat Suite*