

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.pastandpresentmegallery.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