

A Guide to the Thompson-Plaster X-Ray Company Account Book, 1917-1918

Thompson-Plaster X-Ray Company Account Book 1917-1918
1917-1918

A Collection in theThomas Balch Library BV 006
Thomas Balch Library
2006

Author: Austin Backus

History

Processed by: Austin Backus

Title Statement

A Guide to the Thompson-Plaster X-Ray Company Account Book, 1917-1918

Subtitle: Thompson-Plaster X-Ray Company Account Book

Collection: BV 006

Author: Austin Backus

Publication Statement

Date: © 2006 By Thomas Balch Library. All rights reserved.

Publisher: Thomas Balch Library

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Beth Schuster, 20 February 2008

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Collection number

BV 006

Language

English

Abstract

This collection contains one bound account book, 500 pages long, dating from 2 April 1917 through February 1918.

Creator

Thompson-Plaster X-Ray Company, Inc.

Extent

1 bound volume

Repository

Thomas Balch Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open for research.

Use Restrictions

Physical characteristics and conditions affect use of this material. Photocopying not permitted.

Acquisition Information

Brian Conley, Fairfax County Library, VA

Processing Information

Formerly filed as NUCMC 40

Preferred Citation

Thompson/Plaster X-Ray Company Account Book, April 1917-February 1918 (BV 006), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Accruals

1991.0002

Alternative Form Available

None

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Historical Postcards (VC 004): 004-3074, 004-3075, 004-3070, 004-3071, 004-3000, 004-3079

Bibliography

Ancestry Library Edition, United States census, military enlistment records,

Loudoun Mirror

Loudoun Times Mirror

Out of the Attic

"The Turn of the Century Electrotherapy Museum,"

<http://www.electrotherapymuseum.com/Library/ThompsonPlaster/index.htm>.

Thomas Balch Library Biography Files: "Thompson" and "Plaster," Leesburg, VA.

Thomas Balch Library Family Files: "Thompson" and "Plaster," Leesburg, VA.

Thomas Balch Library Vertical Files: "Mayors of Leesburg," Leesburg, VA.

Other Finding Aid

None

Historical Information

Hugh Ashby Thompson (1861-1941) married Hannah Elizabeth Norris sometime before 1886. They had two daughters: Eild T. Thompson (b. 1888), and Helen T. Thompson (1890-1961). He was a familiar face to the citizens of Leesburg, VA. His long business career began in 1888 as a cashier for the People's National Bank in Leesburg where he worked until 1906. He sat as a town councilman, and served as Mayor of Leesburg in 1896-1897 after Mayor Benjamin V. White resigned shortly after his election. Thompson was president of the

Leesburg Chamber of Commerce, and was an active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1917 he founded Thompson-Plaster X-Ray Company in Leesburg with William Emory Plaster (1887-1941).

Plaster married Thompson's daughter Helen in September 1914. Their only child was William Emory Plaster Jr. (1916-2002) who was born before Plaster was drafted for the war effort in 1917. It was upon his return from the war that Plaster and his father-in-law started their x-ray company. Thompson - Plaster X-Ray Company, Inc. had its headquarters on the southeast corner of Loudoun and King Streets in downtown Leesburg, VA. The building was erected in 1900, and served as the home of H. A. Thompson and his wife Hannah. The building still stands today, now the location of Black Shutter Antiques.

The company thrived in the twenties selling x-ray equipment and supplies to hospitals throughout the United States. Their most popular machine was the Thompson Plaster Cabinet which proved to be a versatile piece of medical machinery. Its goal was to treat an array of diseases, such as atrophied muscles, using precisely measured electric currents - a developing medical field in the early 20th century known as electrotherapy.

Thompson and Plaster founded their company at a time when electrotherapy had become a fad. While many patients put hope in the quick promises of electrotherapy for everything from muscle aches to sinuses the medically competent referred to it as "quackery," because only the slightest, if any, results were ever achieved. Often the procedure caused more pain than healing. By around 1930, the medical community and the federal government acted to prevent abuses of electrotherapy, and problems quickly dissipated.

It is unclear why Thompson - Plaster X-Ray Company closed their doors some time in the twenties. It seems likely, though further research would be needed to corroborate, that the company declined as the electrotherapy fad passed. By 1930, Plaster was working as a real estate agent in Loudoun County. Towards the end of Thompson's life, he was working in the developing field of insurance sales.

Scope and Content

This collection contains one bound account book, 500 pages long, dating from 2 April 1917 through February 1918. Entries include sales and expenses, with the names of individuals or companies, and include a brief description of the items. There is an envelope at the front of the book containing fragments of the label originally attached to the front cover.

Contents List

Container BV 006

Folder 1: Account Book, 1917-1918

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