

**Collection #
M 1532
OM 0784
BV 5583-5584**

**HULMAN GEORGE FAMILY
PAPERS, 1858-1970**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript boxes, 2 photographs folders, 2 OVA photographs, 2 oversized folders, 2 bound volumes, 7 printed items, 1 artifact

COLLECTION DATES: 1858-1970

PROVENANCE: William C. Metzger for Terre Haute Realty LLC, 2023

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Clabber Girl Baking Book (pamphlet TX763 .C5); To be the best: Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, 1974-1999 (General Collection T171.R67 P52 1999)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2023.0005

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Today, the Hulman George family is best known for its ownership of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Anton “Tony” Hulman George, a driver himself, served as president and CEO of the track from December of 1989 to June 2009. His mother, Mari Antonia Hulman George, served as the track’s chairperson from 1988 to 2016. Mari’s father, Tony Hulman, Jr., purchased the racetrack in 1945 after it had been neglected during four years of war.

The fortune that made all this possible resulted from the union of two Indiana business dynasties with roots in the mid-19th century. The track’s purchaser Tony Hulman, Jr. had assumed control of his family’s thriving wholesale business, Hulman & Co., in Terre Haute, in 1931. In 1926, he had married Mary Josephine Fendrich, the only child of Evansville cigar baron John H. Fendrich.

The Hulman dynasty in the United States began when Diedrich Hulman immigrated from Lingen, Germany to New York City in 1842. He soon moved west to Cincinnati, Ohio. From there, he wrote to his brother Francis and encouraged him to join him in Cincinnati. It was Francis who began a business selling toys, jewelry, toilet articles, and other “fancy goods” in Cincinnati. The business was fine, but he noticed that it was slow in the spring and summer months, when people were outdoors and not buying many gifts. He decided to form a partnership with a grocer he knew, John Bernhard Ludowici, and start a wholesale grocery business “farther into the country.” Hulman and Ludowici’s destination was a small but established town in Indiana consisting of 40 blocks and home to about 4,000 residents. They arrived in Terre Haute in 1850.

In 1851 they established their dry goods business, with Ludowici providing most of the startup capital and Francis Hulman responsible for growing sales. However, the two soon realized they were incompatible as business partners. In March of 1853 the partnership was dissolved, and Francis started his own store directly across the street from his old partner’s. Unlike Ludowici’s, the F.T. Hulman Wholesale Store sold liquor. With railroads reaching Terre Haute in 1852, business got a little easier and his business expanded rapidly. In 1854, Francis finally convinced his younger brother Herman to join him in America. In 1857 another brother, Theodore, joined them.

Then in 1858, Francis, his wife Eleanora, and their young daughter visited Francis’ mother in Germany. On the return trip, the ship caught fire and sank. Though many were rescued, none of the three Hulmans aboard survived. This left the Hulman business in the hands of 27-year-old Herman and 18-year-old Theodore. Together, the two steered the business through the turbulent years of the Civil War. In 1864, Herman and his wife Antonia welcomed a son, Anton.

Business soared for H. Hulman & Co. after the war and the company expanded and diversified. For a short time, Herman Hulman also took on a partner, his competitor Robert S. Cox. During the 1870s, Hulman dabbled in whiskey, buying and then selling a successful distillery. He bought interests in the telephone company, railroads, and public utilities. He even founded Terre Haute’s first hospital, St. Anthony’s, in 1882. In 1885, Herman’s son Anton became a junior partner in the already mammoth business.

In 1893, Hulman & Co. opened its new six-story building at 9th and Wabash Streets. The red-bricked Romanesque Revival building provided the Terre Haute area with not only groceries, but all manner of home and farm products. The company's traveling salesmen brought in business from across Indiana, Illinois and into Kentucky. As Herman grew to old age, he formed a partnership with his sons Anton and Herman, Jr. On 11 February 1901, his grandson Anton Hulman, Jr. was born.

Anton "Tony" Hulman, Jr. would grow up to serve as an ambulance driver in World War I and then attend Yale. It was supposedly while in Atlantic City on summer vacation from Yale that he first met the young heiress of the Fendrich cigar company. According to family lore, after his graduation in 1924, his father Anton, Sr. told Hulman & Co. managers that Tony would have to work his way up and earn his position in the company. But in 1926, the same year he and Mary Fendrich were wed, he became sales manager. By the age of 30, in 1931, he was company president. He inherited the multimillion-dollar business at his father's death in 1942.

When Tony took over Hulman & Co. in 1931, the Great Depression was drastically slowing business and wholesalers like Hulman & Co. were in decline. Tony decided to take one product that had always had a steady regional base of sales and try to push it to national prominence. That product was Clabber Girl Baking Powder. Hulman salesmen ranged the country as far south as Texas promoting the product. A six-story baking powder plant was built, and a large billboard was erected on U.S. 40 heading into town reading "Five minutes to Terre Haute ... the home of Clabber Girl Baking Powder." Tony's campaign was successful, and sales of Clabber Girl kept the business solvent. At the time of his purchase of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (for \$750,000), Tony's estate was worth more than \$5 million.

From 1944 to 1951, Tony served as president of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce. He served on countless other boards and made numerous large philanthropic donations around town. After the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, Terre Haute Brewing Company president Oscar Bauer asked Tony to purchase stock in the brewery's revival, which he did. As a preferred stockholder, he served on the company's board from 1939 to 1955. Tony made several land and cash donations to the private technical school, Rose Polytechnic Institute. That school would change its name to the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in 1971. Tony also gave \$100,000 for the purchase of land for Terre Haute's municipal airport, which would open in 1944 as Hulman Field. Tony also served on the board of the Indiana Cancer Society.

When Tony died unexpectedly in 1977, the chairmanship of his extensive Terre Haute and Indianapolis empire passed to his widow, Mary F. Hulman. Their daughter Mari Hulman George, who had married driver Elmer George in 1957, was named vice president. Mary retired in 1988 and passed the chairmanship to Mari. In 1989 Mari named her son Tony Hulman George chairman of the Speedway. Her daughters Nancy, Josie, and Kathi also served on the board of the Speedway.

The Fendrich family arrived on American shores from southwestern Germany in 1833. Eventually, five Fendrich brothers began a business selling cigars from a wagon out of

Baltimore. In 1850, they began manufacturing cigars for themselves. To be nearer the source of their tobacco, which was chiefly grown in Kentucky, and for ease of shipping to New Orleans, they relocated to Evansville. Their first Evansville plant opened on Main Street near the Ohio River waterfront in 1855. The Fendrich brand proved popular as the older brothers were able to retire, leaving the company in the hands of Hermann Fendrich. Hermann earned a reputation as a leading businessman of postbellum Evansville.

In 1889, Hermann died, leaving the company to his 22-year-old son John H. Fendrich, a graduate of Notre Dame. Under John's direction, the company continued to expand. In the early 1900s, the five-story Fendrich plant employed around 700 women in processing tobacco leaf and hand-rolling cigars. Fendrich manufactured popular brands Charles Denby, Diamond Joe, and La Fendrich. In 1905, John and his spouse Nettie welcomed their only child, Mary Josephine Antoinette Fendrich.

In 1910, fire destroyed the Fendrich plant on Main Street, along with several neighboring businesses. Fendrich considered moving the business but ultimately decided to rebuild in Evansville. He designed a sprawling new plant with space for machinery and enough workers to produce thousands more cigars per 10-hour shift. The new facility opened to much fanfare in 1912.

The Fendrich brand had established itself as a major player in the cigar business. During the Great Depression, business continued, though the price for individual cigars was slashed from eight or ten cents to five cents. During World War II, tens of millions of Fendrich cigars were packed in waterproof crates and distributed by air to soldiers serving in the South Pacific. In 1950, the company celebrated a rare feat—a centennial. Three employees who had each worked fifty years for the company received \$500 bonuses. A few years later, the company was sold to a cigar conglomerate in Pennsylvania.

Sources:

“Dynasty built on young men’s dreams,” *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, 25 May 1997. [see clipping file: Hulman family]

“Herrmann & John Fendrich,” (http://cigarhistory.info/Cigar_companies-brands/H_Fendrich.html#41). Accessed 12 September 2024.

Materials in the collection.

Sigur E. Whitaker, *Tony Hulman: The Man Who Saved the Indianapolis Motor Speedway* (McFarland: New York, 2014)

“Tony’s touch impacts Terre Haute and beyond,” *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*, 26 May 1997.
[see clipping file: Hulman family]

Wikipedia. “Tony Hulman” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Hulman). Accessed 12 September 2024.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection is made up of materials from the Hulman George estate related to the Hulman and Fendrich families. It has been arranged into two series.

Series 1 consists of Hulman family materials. The bulk of it is board reports and correspondence resulting from Tony Hulman, Jr.'s service on the boards of the Terre Haute Brewing Company and the Indiana Cancer Society. However, several items predating Tony's control of the company also exist, including letter books of Herman Hulman and his partner R.S. Cox from the 1870s. Also present are seven Hulman & Co. catalogs from various years and some recipes and formulas for Hulman & Co. products.

Series 2 consists of Fendrich family materials. Included here is an 1887 document naming Herman Fendrich as tobacco inspector for Vanderburgh County. Also present are several photographs of John H. Fendrich, including three from the Fendrich company's 75th anniversary celebration in 1925.

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H. Hulman [Phoenix?] Distillery Letter Book E., 1872	BV5584
Group photograph, Hulman store employees, 1902	OVA Photographs: Folder 1 of 2
Hulman & Co. price list, 19 November 1906	General Collection:
Hulman & Co. price list, 2 March 1908	General Collection:
Herman Hulman memorial cards [18], 1913	Box 1, Folder 2
Group photograph, Hulman & Co. employees, 2 Jan. 1915	Photographs, Folder 1 of 2
Hulman & Co. Illustrated Weekly Catalogue, 30 July 1917	General Collection:
Ford one ton truck in Terre Haute, Charles W. Pence and Melvin Moore, 1918	OVA Photographs: Folder 2 of 2
Hulman & Co. Illustrated Weekly Catalogue, 1 Nov. 1920	General Collection:
Hulman & Co. Illustrated Weekly Catalogue, 20 Dec. 1926	General Collection:
Hulman & Co. Illustrated Weekly Catalogue, 14 Aug. 1933	General Collection:
Hulman & Co. "Costs on lab. items" [household chemicals], 1940-1948	Box 1, Folder 3
Hulman & Co. "Costs on Tennessee items" [condiments, preserves, etc.], 1940-1946	Box 1, Folder 4
Canned goods price list, 1955	Box 1, Folder 5

Hulman & Co. Gift Suggestions, 1969-1970	General Collection:
Scale maps, Terre Haute Brewing Co. premises, n.d.	OM0784 Folder 1
Newspaper section about "Champagne Velvet Day," <i>Terre Haute Tribune</i> , 16 March 1934	OM0784 Folder 2
Business correspondence, Terre Haute Brewing Co., 1939-1945	Box 1, Folder 6
Board reports and memorandums, Terre Haute Brewing Co., 1948-1952	Box 1, Folder 7
Board reports and memorandums, Terre Haute Brewing Co., Feb.-Jul. 1953	Box 1, Folder 8
Board reports and memorandums, Terre Haute Brewing Co., Aug. 1953-May 1954	Box 1, Folder 9
Board reports and memorandums, Terre Haute Brewing Co., Jun. 1954-Nov. 1954	Box 1, Folder 10
Board reports and memorandums, Terre Haute Brewing Co., Jan. 1955-Jul. 1955	Box 1, Folder 11
Board reports and memorandums, Terre Haute Brewing Co., Aug. 1955-Dec. 1955	Box 1, Folder 12
Annual report, American Cancer Society, 1947-1948	Box 2, Folder 1
Bylaws and minutes, Indiana Cancer Society, 1948	Box 2, Folder 2
Annual report, Indiana Cancer Society, 1948-1949	Box 2, Folder 3
"Campaign Bulletin," American Cancer Society, Jan.- Apr. 1948; 29 Jan. 1951	Box 2, Folder 4
Business correspondence, Indiana Cancer Society, 1949	Box 2, Folder 5
Newsletters, Indiana Cancer Society, 1949	Box 2, Folder 6
Business correspondence, Indiana Cancer Society, 1950	Box 2, Folder 7

Minutes and board reports, Indiana Cancer Society, 1951	Box 2, Folder 8
Minutes and board reports, Indiana Cancer Society, 1952	Box 2, Folder 9
Program, dedication of Hulman [Air] Field, 1944	Box 2, Folder 10
Program, Hunter's Feast, 1954	Box 2, Folder 11
Brochure, Liquid Carbonic Corporation, ca. 1950	Box 2, Folder 12
Tony Hulman Jr. articles, 1952; 1954	Box 2, Folder 13

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Fendrich miscellaneous, ca. 1883-1942	Box 2, Folder 15
Charles Denby cigars "Pinch Hitter" lithograph, n.d.	Box 2, Folder 16
Fendrich news clippings [copies], 1925-1948, n.d.	Box 2, Folder 17
H. Fendrich, Inc. press release, 1926	Box 2, Folder 18
Fendrich sales brochures, ca. 1938-1949	Box 2, Folder 19
Booklet, "One Hundred Years of Cigar Making," 1950	Box 2, Folder 20
Artifact: Diamond Joe Cigar Factory envelope, n.d.	Box 2, Folder 21

