

Collection #  
M 0802,  
OMB 0112,  
BV 3607-3614

## OPPENHEIM'S DRY GOODS STORE RECORDS, 1874-2000

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July 5, 2007

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF  
COLLECTION:

Manuscript Materials: 17 document cases, 1 OMB box, 8 bound volumes,  
Visual Materials: 1 OVA folder of photographs, 1 negative

Printed Materials: 3 books  
Artifacts: 12 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1874–2000

PROVENANCE: Patricia Oppenheim, Leesburg, Indiana, January 2001; February 2001

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2001.0183; 2001.0334

NOTES: This collection forms part of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society Collection.

## **HISTORICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

The Oppenheim family can be traced back to Oppenheim, Germany, where they were first listed on the tax register in 1241. Based on death certificates and naturalization papers, it is believed that the American Oppenheim family originated from Vistytis, Lithuania. As there were only 230 Jews still living in Vistytis at the commencement of World War II, it is also believed that the Oppenheims from that region had died or immigrated before the start of the war. The Oppenheim family can be traced back to Solomon Oppenheim and Bessie Weinstein. Oppenheim and Weinstein were married around 1830 and their four children, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, and Rose immigrated to the United States in the mid to late 1880s. Many Oppenheims founded dry good stores located in Goshen, Milford, and North Manchester, Indiana, as well as in Detroit, Kalamazoo, Jackson, and Dowagiac, Michigan.

Solomon's first-born son, Jacob, was born in East Prussia and immigrated to the United States in 1870. He first lived in Detroit, Michigan, where he made a living as a peddler. In 1873, Jacob and Louis Jacobs opened the New York Store in Paw Paw, Michigan; in 1875, the partnership was dissolved. In 1875, Jacob opened his own store, Oppenheim's New York Cheap Store, in North Manchester, Indiana. The store motto was and remained, ". . . the best place to trade, after all." In the beginning, Jacob offered men's, boys', and women's clothing, as well as groceries. The store went through several name changes from Oppenheim's New York Cheap Store to B. Oppenheim & Co. by the 1930s the store was simply called Oppenheim's.

The town of North Manchester which Oppenheim's called home sits in Wabash County, Indiana. When Jacob Oppenheim first opened his dry goods store the town boasted about 1,600 inhabitants. Oppenheim faced competition from other dry goods stores populating the downtown commercial area. Besides dry goods, a pharmacy, and The DeWitt High Wheel Auto Buggy factory operated until 1910 when a fire destroyed the building.

Jacob and his wife, Pauline, had five children: Ben, who was born in Germany, and Ike, Fanny, Ida, and Etta, all born

in North Manchester. Jacob died in March 1883.

After his father's death, Ben and Ike took over the family business. They also shared ownership in a wholesale business, and when Ike left the family business in 1922, he became the sole owner of the wholesale business. Ben's son, Jean, a Columbia University graduate, entered the family business in 1922 and remained there until his death in 1949.

Jean and his wife, Valery, had two children – Barbara and Phil. Phil graduated from Notre Dame in 1948 and entered the family business shortly after. After Ben's death in 1950, Phil became the owner and manager of Oppenheim's. The store closed in 2000.

Sources:

*From Peddlers to Merchants . . . history of four Jewish owned stores founded in Indiana more than one hundred years ago and owned and operated by the same families.*

Joseph Levine. Indiana Jewish Historical Society: July 1979.

<http://www.nmanchester.org/history.php> "A Brief History of North Manchester."

Written for the Historical Society By The Center for History. Last accessed 5 July 2007.

Materials in collection.

*The Oppenheim Family History 1750–1995.* Bert Oppenheim. Robert Reed Publishers.

San Francisco: 1995.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Oppenheim store records are broken down into seven series based upon the various aspects of the operation primarily from 1874–1979:

Series 1: Business/accounting journals of Oppenheim's dry goods (later department) store for the period from about 1874 to 1895. The main feature of these journals is that first of them dated back to 1870's are written in Hebrew but in very strange way – pages go the same way as in non-Jewish tradition – from right to left and words are written from right to left as it should be in Hebrew. Some of the ledgers during this time period are fragile and have been stored separately in phase boxes.

Series 2: Receipts from different manufacturers with whom Oppenheim's store had business contacts, payroll and bank checks and 11 bankbooks, 1874–1979.

Series 3: Operational records such as employee hours, lease contract, and retail merchandise certificate, 1877–1979.

Series 4: Big books with advertisement clippings of Oppenheim's store, various booklets and coupons of the store including advertisement of "Capitan Gizmo's boys shop." The ads stored in the manuscript boxes have been clipped out and glued on college ruled paper. The bulk of these advertisements and catalogs come from the 1950s.

Series 5: Correspondence and Newspaper clippings. Miscellaneous materials-Knights of Honor certificate from 1881, a draft of a plaque, and radio transcript-are contained in this series. Also included are a community development plan and a jobber's list and ephemera materials.

Series 6: Visual Materials. Of the nine photographs and postcards only one is in color and this is a postcard of West Main Street in North Manchester, Indiana. Pictures date from ca. 1900 to ca. 1950. Photographs are of front exterior of Oppenheim's. Two of the photographs have people standing in front of the store. No one is identified.

Series 7: Printed Materials and artifacts. A family history is included in this series as well as artifacts such as printing blocks, notary seal, and small store signs.

## SERIES CONTENTS

### Series 1: Business/Accounting Journals, 1874–1974

#### CONTENTS

Jobbers Invoice Ledger, 1876

Invoice of Goods Ledger, 1876–1887

Register of Invoices, 1877–1884

Register of Invoices, 1890–1894

Purchases Ledger, 1949–1952

Customer Accounts Ledger, 1874–1886

Account Records Ledger, 1877

Sales Ledger, Aug. 1882–June 1883

Sales Book, 19 June 1883–25 Jan. 1884

Sales Book, 26 June 1884–26 Aug. 1884

Sales Book, 1884–1885

Sales Book, 16 Jan. 1885–15 June 1885

Sales Book, 16 June 1885—31 Oct. 1885

Sales Book, 31 Oct. 1885–20 Mar. 1886

Sales Book, 23 June 1886–4 Oct. 1886

Sales Book, 4 Oct. 1886–10 Jan. 1887

Sales Book, 10 May 1887–30 July 1887

Sales Book, 4 Aug. 1887–5 Nov. 1887

Sales Book, 1887–1888

Sales Book, 21 Feb. 1888–21 May 1888

Sales Book, 21 May 1888–7 Sept. 1888

Sales Book, 7 Sept. 1888–27 Nov. 1888

Sales Book, 27 Nov. 1888–25 Mar. 1889

Sales Book, 25 March 1889–22 June 1889

Sales Book, 24 June 1889–28 Sept. 1889

#### CONTAINER

BV 3608

Box 11, Folder 13

Box 11, Folder 14

Box 11, Folder 15

Box 12, Folder 1

BV 3607

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

Box 1, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

Box 2, Folder 1

Box 2, Folder 2

Box 2, Folder 3

Box 2, Folder 4

Box 2, Folder 5

Box 2, Folder 6

Box 2, Folder 7

Box 2, Folder 8

Sales Book, 4 Jan. 1890–4 May 1890	Box 2, Folder 9
Sales Book, 18 Oct. 1890–17 Jan. 1891	Box 2, Folder 10
Sales Book, 23 Jan. 1897–23 Apr. 1897	Box 2, Folder 11
Sales Book, 24 Apr.–26 June 1897	Box 3, Folder 1
Sales Account Ledger, 1886–1887	BV 3609
Sales Account Day Book, May 1888–July 1890	BV 3610
Sales Account Day Book, Aug.1890– Feb.1893	BV 3611
Sales Account Day Book, Feb. 1893–Nov. 1895	BV 3612
Sales Account Day Book, Nov. 1895–Jan. 1898	BV 3613
Sales Record Ledger, 1947–1974	Box 3, Folder 2
Bad Account Loss Log, 1920–1952	BV 3614

**Series 2: Finances (Receipts, Checks, Payroll, Taxes and Bankbooks), 1874–1979**

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Bank Book, 1876–1878	Box 3, Folder 5
Bank Book, 1883–1885	Box 3, Folder 6
Bank Book 1885–1886	Box 3, Folder 7
Bank Book, 1886–1887	Box 3, Folder 8
Bank Books, 1890–1891	Box 3, Folder 9
Bank Book, Sept.–Dec. 1891	Box 3, Folder 10
Bank Book, 1891–1892	Box 3, Folder 11
Bank Book, 1892–1893	Box 3, Folder 12
Bills/Receipts/Checks, n.d.	Box 3, Folder 13
Bills/Receipts, 1870s	Box 3, Folder 14
Bills/Receipts, 1874–1875	Box 3, Folder 15
Bills/Receipts, Mar. –Aug. 1876	Box 3, Folder 16
Bills/Receipts, Sept.–Oct. 1876	Box 3, Folder 17

Bills/Receipts, Nov. –Dec. 1876	Box 3, Folder 18
Bills/Receipts, Jan.–Feb. 1877	Box 3, Folder 19
Bills/ Receipts, Mar.–May 1877	Box 4, Folder 1
Bills/Receipts, June–Aug. 1877	Box 4, Folder 2
Bills/Receipts, Sept.–Oct. 1877	Box 4, Folder 3
Bills/Receipts, Nov.–Dec. 1877	Box 4, Folder 4
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Bills/Receipts, April 1879	Box 5, Folder 2
Bills/Receipts, May–June 1879	Box 5, Folder 3
Bills/Receipts, July–Aug. 1879	Box 5, Folder 4
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Bills/Receipts, Oct. 1879	Box 5, Folder 6
Bills/Receipts, Nov. 1879	Box 5, Folder 7
Bills/Receipts, Dec. 1879	Box 5, Folder 8
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Bills/Receipts, Jan. 1880	Box 6, Folder 2
Bills/Receipts, Feb. 1880	Box 6, Folder 3
Bills/Receipts, Mar. 1880	Box 6, Folder 4
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Bills/Receipts, Nov. 1880	Box 6, Folder 13
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Tax Return, 1941	Box 14, Folder 8
Tax Return, 1942	Box 14, Folder 9
Tax Return, 1943	Box 14, Folder 10
Tax Return, 1944	Box 14, Folder 11
Tax Return, 1945	Box 14, Folder 12
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Payroll, Oct. 1949–Aug. 1953	Box 14, Folder 14
Payroll, Aug. 1953–Apr. 1956	Box 14, Folder 15
Payroll, May 1956–Apr. 1959	Box 14, Folder 16
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Assessed Value, 1943–1948	Box 14, Folder 19
Account Records, 1972–1973	Box 14, Folder 20
Account Records, May–Nov. 1973	Box 14, Folder 21
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### **Series 3: Operational Records (Employee Hours, Lease, Permits), 1877–1979**

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Retail Merchandise Certificate, 1965–1968	Box 14, Folder 20
Income and Expenses, 1922–1950	OMB 0112, Folder 5
Employee hours, 1964–1967	Box 15, Folder 2
Employee hours, Feb. 1967–Mar. 1970	Box 15, Folder 3
Employee hours, Mar. 1970–Apr. 1973	Box 15, Folder 4
Employee hours, May 1973–Apr. 1976	Box 15, Folder 5

Employee hours, May 1976–Apr. 1979

Box 15, Folder 6

#### **Series 4: Advertisements and Catalogs, 1874–1975**

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Anniversary Sale Advertisements, 1925–1975

Sales Advertisements, 1874–1949

Sales Advertisements, 1950–1976

Sales Ads, 14 Aug. 1952–2 Oct. 1952

Sales Ads, 2 Oct. 1952–26 Feb. 1953

Sales Ads, 5 Mar. 1953–14 May 1953

Sales Ads, 18 May 1953–24 Sept. 1953

Sales Ads, 24 Sept. 1953–31 Dec. 1953

Sales Ads, 4 Jan. 1954–20 May 1954

Sales Ads, 24 May 1954–9 Aug. 1954

Sales Ads, 9 Aug. 1954–25 Oct. 1954

Sales Ads, 28 Oct. 1954–20 Dec. 1954

Catalogs, 1953–1959

Store Event Calendar, 1950s

Captain Gizmo materials, 1950s?

Price List and Inventory, 1951

##### CONTAINER

OMB 0112, Folder 1

OMB 0112, Folder 2

OMB 0112, Folder 3

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Correspondence, 1875–1895

Correspondence, 1921–1995

Newspaper Clippings, 1943–2000

Newspaper Clippings, 1995 and 1997

Jobbers' Price List and Ephemera, 1840–1954

##### CONTAINER

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Box 17, Folder 8

Box 17, Folder 9

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Box 17, Folder 11

Miscellaneous, 1881–1975

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### **Series 6: Visual Materials, ca. 1900–ca. 1950**

#### CONTENTS

Exterior views of the store, a fire next to the store, West Main St. in North Manchester, Ind., photographs and postcards, [ca. 1900–ca. 1950]

“Quick Sales and Small Profits, and Never to be Undersold by Anyone. B. Oppenheim & Company. North Manchester, Indiana.” [store motto]

#### CONTAINER

OVA Photographs:  
Folder 1

35 mm acetate negative,  
Folder 1

### **Series 7: Printed Materials and Artifacts**

#### CONTENTS

From Peddlers to Merchants by Joseph Levine

Tales of the Old Days by W.E. Billings

The Oppenheim Family History: 1750–1995

2 printing blocks both inscribed “Oppenheim’s...in North Manchester since 1875”

Wood printing block inscribed “Captain Gizmo’s Boys Shop Oppenheim’s”

2 printing blocks show Oppenheim store (ca. 1890)

Metal printing plate with two impressions: “NRA member we do our part” and “We support the U.S. economic program. We fight inflation.”

2 signs with chain glued back to back: “North Manchester Chamber of Commerce member 1999”; “1996—Manchester Main Street, Inc. Indiana’s 101<sup>st</sup> Main Street Community organized for the betterment of downtown since 1989”

#### CONTAINER

General Collection:

General Collection:

General Collection:

Artifacts: 2001.0183

Artifacts: 2001.0183

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Artifacts: 2001.0183

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5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.