

PENNSSTATE



Guide to the Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company Records, 1882-1906

Record group number 40
University Libraries
The Pennsylvania State University
Special Collections Library
Historical Collections and Labor Archives

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Descriptive Summary

- Title:** Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company Records, 1882-1906
(bulk 1886-1897)
- Record group number:** RG 40
- Extent:** 0.40 cubic feet
- Repository:** Pennsylvania State University, University Libraries, Special Collections Library
- Languages(s):** The collections is predominantly in English, and partly in German.

Administrative Information

Access

The Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company records are available to all researchers, with the literary and all other rights therein, including copyright, donated to the public. Materials can be photocopied without restrictions.

Preferred Citation

Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company Records, 1882-1906, RG 40, Historical Collections and Labor Archives, Special Collections Library, University Libraries, Pennsylvania State University.

Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Charles Apfelbaum, 1993.

Arrangement

The Eberhardt and Ober Brewery Company records are organized into three series: I. Brewery Manufacturers' Association and Labor Relations File; II. Architectural and Engineering Files; III. Brewing Scientific Stations File.

Corporate History

The Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company was established at Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, in 1870 by John Peter Ober and his brother-in-law William Eberhardt, son of another Allegheny City, Pennsylvania brewer. The small brewery absorbed the J.N. Straub Brewing Company in 1883. Located in the heart of historical "Deushtown," the sprawling Eberhardt and Ober Brewery complex became a permanent fixture of north Pittsburgh during the late nineteenth century. The surviving main office and administrative building of the original brewery complex is now listed in the National Register of Historic Sites. The modern-day Pennsylvania Brewing Company is located on this site and continues to brew and distribute beer to this day. All beers are made in accordance with the German beer purity law (implemented by royal decree during the 1500s), termed the *Reinheitsgebot*. According to this law, all beer is to be brewed using only classical ingredients--malt, wheat, hops, water, and yeast.

A postcard image of the brewery complex is contained within the collection; and additional information about the Pennsylvania Brewing Company (now located on the original site) can be found on www.pennbrew.com.

Related Material

Historical Collections and Labor Archives also has Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Allegheny City for the period 1890 to 1920 that provide detail on the design and layout of the Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company industrial complex.

The University of Pittsburgh, Archives Service Center, owns 1.5 cubic feet of the Records of the Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company, 1883-1897.

Scope and Content

The Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company records consist of a small, diverse collection of materials documenting labor relations, legislative issues, production, and scientific research pertaining to the brewing industry in the late 19th century. Materials contained therein date from 1882-1906, with the bulk of the collection falling within the date span 1886-1897.

The files of the Eberhardt and Ober Company records fall into three broad categories: documents and letters pertaining to labor relations within the brewing industry (1887-1906); correspondence among Pennsylvania brewers and their various management associations; and letters from machine manufacturers, design architects, and representatives of brewery scientific stations from New York and Chicago engaged in the chemical analysis of water and purity of ingredients used in brewing beer

(1886-1892).

The Eberhardt and Ober Company records highlight labor-management relations among various brewing management associations and brewery workers unions. Correspondence and labor agreements document collective bargaining activity within the brewing industry at the local, state, and national levels. There is ample correspondence within the papers illustrating how the brewers attempted to curb the power and influence of the unions. Brewery owners, through their trade associations, banded together and took action along a number of other fronts. They organized and lobbied to defeat anti-saloon and temperance legislation. Other letters illustrate brewery manufacturers efforts to regulate their own trade by reducing competition through administered pricing of products, and enforcing unity of action during labor negotiations and strikes.

The Eberhardt and Ober Company records contain a wealth of material pertaining to the architectural design and physical layout of a late nineteenth century brewery. Between 1882 and 1895 the company expanded its main brewing facility and engaged several architectural and engineering firms to upgrade machinery and streamline production for efficiency. There is ample correspondence devoted to specifications for the construction of brewery facilities and departments, and the machinery and technology used in the large-batch brewing process. Since brewing entailed the vertical integration of production processes among several departments situated on different floor levels of the main Eberhardt and Ober brewery, the company engaged specialized engineering firms to maximize floor space and increase workflow. The company retained one engineering firm to design and construct special elevators and compatible loading platforms to deliver the primary brewing ingredients (hops, wheat, and malt) to the workers, who operated the elaborate network of vats, kettles, kilns, and steel tubing used in the brewing process.

Company correspondence and records also document bargaining over the cost of customized brewing machinery and services rendered by engineering firms and scientific consultants. There are detailed letters relevant to the architectural planning of the brewery, and the design and layout of machinery. Principal correspondents include: Chas. Kaestner and Co. (machinists), Chicago ; Joseph Stillburg (architect), Pittsburgh; White and Raeder (engineers and architects), Chicago; Baumann and Lotz (Edward Baumann; architects and engineers), Chicago; Charles Stolper (Cooper and dealer in staves, hoops and barrels), Milwaukee; Jos. Eichbaum and Co. (Printers, stationers, blank book makers and electrotypers), Pittsburgh; United States Brewers' Association; Otto C. Wolf (Engineer and Architect), Philadelphia; and Fred W. Wolf (architect).

The Eberhardt and Ober Brewery records also contain correspondence with scientific brewing stations in Chicago and New York, dating from October 19, 1886 to May 4, 1892. Owners of the Eberhardt and Ober Brewery consulted with chemists from these stations to analyze the quality of the ingredients and purity of water used in the brewing process. There are letters from The First Scientific Station for the Art of brewing in New York (Director, Anton Schwarz); and the scientific station for brewing [Wahl-Henius Institute of Fermentology] of Chicago (Directors, Wahl and Henius).

Index Terms

These materials are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Pennsylvania State University. Researchers wishing to find related materials should search the catalog under these index terms.

Corporate Subjects

Eberhardt and Ober Brewery -- Archives

J.N. Straub Brewing Company

Personal Name Subjects

Eberhardt, William, 1844-1899

Ober, John Peter, 1848-1909

Topical Subjects

Breweries -- Design and construction

Breweries -- Pennsylvania

Brewery workers -- Labor unions

Brewing -- Equipment and supplies

Brewing -- Microbiology

Brewing industry -- Law and legislation

Brewing industry -- Pennsylvania

Brewing industry -- Taxation

Collective bargaining -- Brewing industry

Collective labor agreements -- Brewing industry

Correspondents

Baumann, Edward, 1828-1889

Schwarz, Anton, 1839-1895

Stillburg, Joseph

Stolper, Charles

Wolf, Otto C. (Otto Charles), 1856-1916

Wolf, Fred W.

Corporate Correspondents

Baumann and Lotz

Chas. Kaestner and Co.

Jos. Eichbaum and Co.

Knights of Labor. District Assembly No. 3. Local No. 22

United States Brewers' Association

Wahl-Henius Institute of Fermentology

White and Raeder

Form/Genre Terms

Business records

Collective labor agreements

Correspondence

Container List

Brewery Manufacturers Association and Labor Relations Files Series

Brewery Manufacturers Association and Labor Relations Files, 1887-1906 (bulk 1887-1889).

0.10 cubic feet

Arrangement

Chronologically.

Series Description

Letters contained within this series chiefly document labor relations and collective bargaining between the Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company and various brewery workers' unions--affiliated as part of Local No. 22, District Assembly No. 3, Knights of Labor--during the late nineteenth century. There are a number of letters from various brewers' associations (local, state, and national) that highlight the brewers' distrust of unions and provide evidence of their collective efforts to suppress union organization among brewery workers. The series contains printed labor demands, contracts and agreements, and reports pertaining to strikes and work stoppages. Most of the labor agreements and contracts were between the Eberhardt and Ober Brewery and local brewery workers represented by the Knights of Labor. But the series also contains some contracts and labor documents relating to national strikes conducted by the brewery workers.

This series also documents the brewers' lobbying campaign to defeat proposed temperance, anti-saloon, and local option legislation within Pennsylvania. The letters can be gleaned for information regarding proposed bills and legislation designed to thwart the business interests of the brewers. There is ample documentation regarding a proposed liquor and tax bill before the Pennsylvania General Assembly that the brewers opposed. Through their various trade associations, the brewers also sought to exercise a measure of control over the sale and distribution of beer, and impose a uniform pricing structure for their product.

Box 1

Folder 01

Letters about The Brewery Workman's Union and The Brewer's Association, 1887-1888

Box 1

Folder 02

Letters about The Brewery Workman's Union and The Brewer's Association, 1889-1906

Architectural and Engineering Files Series

Architectural and Engineering Files, 1882-1895 (bulk 1882-1886).

0.20 cubic feet

Arrangement

Chronologically.

Series Description

Letters within this series chiefly document business relations between the Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company and various engineering, architectural, and brewing machinery firms hired to re-design and equip the company's brewing departments and industrial complex. Company officers hired engineers and architects to prepare reports covering the design, layout, and cost effectiveness of brewing equipment and machinery--including water tanks, kettles, kilns, and steam boilers. These reports contain a wealth of technological information relating to design and operating

specifications. Much attention was devoted to planning the layout of machinery and equipment to increase productivity and operating efficiency. Among the machinery used in continuous large-batch beer production were: trash machines, rice rakes, wash machines, mash machines and the grain remover. In addition, much attention was given to the heating processes and apparatus used in the kiln--essential for brewing quality beer.

Box 1

Folder 04

Letters from Architects, and Large Machinery, Huge Vats and Tubs Manufacturers, 1882-1886

Box 1

Folder 05

Letters from Architects, and Large Machinery, Huge Vats and Tubs Manufacturers, 1886-1895

Brewing Scientific Stations Files Series

Brewing Scientific Stations Files, 1886-1892 (bulk 1886-1891).

0.10 cubic feet

Arrangement

Chronologically.

Series Description

This series contains letter exchanges between the Eberhardt and Ober Brewing Company and representatives of scientific brewing stations that the company retained to analyze the quality of water and main ingredients used in brewing beer. The company consulted two main scientific stations: The First Scientific Station for the Art of Brewing in New York, and the Scientific Station for Brewing of Chicago. The majority of the correspondence falls within the date range of October 1886 to December 1891. The letters report on the chemical analysis of water, sucrose, yeast, and malt--essentially the primary ingredients used in brewing beer. The brewery made a substantial investment to safeguard the purity of its water. Brewing ingredients were subjected to intense chemical analysis to ensure quality and to establish a fair market price for those ingredients purchased by the company. Additional correspondence covers negotiations and bargaining over charges and fees for the chemical analysis conducted by the two scientific brewing stations.

Box 1

Folder 03

Letters from the scientific stations, 1886-1892