

Inventory of the

**Piper Business**  
Byron, Illinois

Collection

In the

Regional History Center

**RC 78**

## INTRODUCTION

Robert A. Boger donated the Piper Business Collection to the Regional History Center on May 15, 1980.

Property rights to the records belong to the Regional History Center. Literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the materials in the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space 10  
Number of containers 12 + 2 volumes  
Northern Illinois Regional History Center  
Collection 78

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

These records document the financial history of the Piper family hardware business from 1882 to 1972. The records are arranged chronologically by the type of document. There are business accounts, day and cash book registers for the years 1891-1960 (1916-1935 are missing), account ledgers and check registers for 1919-1963, and payroll and weekly time books for 1937 to 1970. The Oregon store is noticeably documented only for the years 1950-1952 in the form of a check register, monthly account ledger, and weekly time books, but may be mentioned in some of the Byron store ledgers. Although only a small amount of correspondence exists to complement all the financial documentation, a number of hardware catalogs (1925-1971) have been included in the collection as supplementary material.

Additional account books dealing with the threshing and shelling business are also housed in the collection. Business files containing correspondence, building plans, contracts and estimates detail various plumbing and heating jobs handled by Piper Hardware from 1896 to 1923, though the bulk of the files date 1907-1923.

Researchers should note that the Center's holdings include the Jordan Hardware Company Records (RC 166) located in Ottawa, Illinois.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Piper's Tru-Value Hardware store began in 1891 as a small blacksmith shop operated by S. F. Piper on his farm located west of Byron, Illinois. Mr. Piper's shop offered a number of services including wood sawing, shelling corn, moving buildings, dehorning cattle and threshing. By 1898 Piper's work was in such demand that he moved the business into Byron and formed a partnership with P. E. Millis. Millis and Piper then were able to add well drilling and pump and windmill work to the other services which had been available at the blacksmith shop.

In 1919 the Millis-Piper business arrangement underwent a small change when Piper's son, Leo, returned from the service to form a partnership with his father. S. F. Piper and Son Hardware was formed to take over the plumbing, heating, and repairing aspect of the former partnership while Mr. Millis went on to build his own well drilling business. By 1923 S. F. Piper had retired from active duty in the firm, but Leo continued to expand and develop the business for the next 40 years.

Leo Piper's expansion took the form of three business ventures. In 1929 he purchased the D. A. Bellis plumbing and heating firm in Oregon which was operated in connection with the Byron store until 1953. Piper also acquired the Frank Spoor Hardware store in Byron in 1935 under the supervision of Merrit Harmon. Finally, Leo's son-in-law, Robert Boger took interest in and joined the firm in 1947. By 1976 Boger had enough experience and perserverance to purchase the entire business from the Piper family. Today, Mr. Boger and Piper's Tru-Value Hardware continue to provide quality tools and home-care products to the Byron community.

#### SUBJECT TRACINGS

American Standard Company  
Blacksmithing  
Byron  
Hardware Industry  
Kohler Company  
Piper Hardware Company  
Plumbing Industry  
Retail Trade  
Tool Industry

COLLECTION INVENTORY

| <u>BOX</u> | <u>FOLDER</u>   | <u>DESCRIPTION</u>   |
|------------|---|--|
| 1          | 1-8<br>9  | Business Account Ledgers, 1891-1907<br>Monthly Account Ledger, 1902-1907   |
| 1A         | 1-2<br>3  | Business Account Ledgers, 1908-1909<br>Day Books, 1902-1903  |
| Oversize   | 1 volume  | Day Book, 1904   |
| 2          | 1<br>2<br>3<br>4<br>5<br>6-7<br>8<br>9-10   | Day Book, 1910<br>Cash Book, 1910<br>Business Account Ledger, 1910<br>Day Book, 1911<br>Cash Book, 1911<br>Business Account Ledgers, 1911-1912<br>Monthly Account Ledgers, 1908-1912<br>Business Account Ledgers, 1913-1914  |
| 3          | 1 volume<br>1<br>2<br><br>1 volume<br>3<br>4<br>5-7<br>8<br><br>9<br>10-11<br>12-13<br><br>14 | Business Account Ledger, 1915<br>Monthly Account Ledger, 1913-1915<br>Correspondence and Records Extracted from the Business<br>Account Ledgers, 1903-1915<br>Day Books, 1936<br>Day Books, 1937-1938<br>Monthly Report Book, Byron and Oregon Stores, 1935-1938<br>Daily Cash Books, (1949-1960)<br>Account Ledger, (1919-1952)<br>Check Registers:<br>Oregon Store: 1951-1952<br>Byron Store, 1951-1955<br>1957-1958<br>Payroll:<br>Sheets, (1937-1963) [Restricted] |
| 4          | 1<br>2<br><br>3<br>4<br>5   | Time Books, 1938-1942<br>Ledgers, 1963-1970<br>Weekly Time Books:<br>Earl Barnhart, (1941-1950)<br>Tom Norris, (1952-1956)<br>Gene Spangler, (1949-1953)   |

| <u>BOX</u> | <u>FOLDER</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION</u>  | 4 |
|------------|---------------|---|---|
| 4          | 6             | Clyde ? (1948-1953)   |   |
|            | 7             | Various Employees (1944-1952), n.d.   |   |
|            | 8             | Oregon Store, 1950-1952   |   |
|            | 9             | General Correspondence, (1938-1972)   |   |
| 5          | 1 volume      | Price Book, (1948-1962)   |   |
|            | 1 volume      | American Radiator Company, <u>Catalog of Parts for Ideal Boilers</u> , 1925 |   |
|            | 1 volume      | American Standard, <u>Ratings Data and Dimensions</u> , 1955                |   |
|            | 2 volumes     | American Standard, <u>Plumbing Fixtures</u> , 1948-1950                     |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Baker Manufacturing Company, <u>Monitor Manual</u> , 1950                   |   |
| 6          | 1 volume      | James B. Clow & Sons, <u>Clow Bulletin; A Pricing System</u> , 1929         |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Crane Company, <u>Kitchen Ideas</u> , n.d.                                  |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Crane Company, <u>Bathroom Ideas</u> , n.d.                                 |   |
|            | 1 volume      | General Electric, <u>TV &amp; Stereo</u> , (1966?)                          |   |
|            | 1 volume      | General Electric, <u>Major Applicances - Television-Stereo</u> , 1963       |   |
| 7          | 3 volumes     | Kohler Co., <u>Plumbing Repair Parts</u> , n.d.                             |   |
|            | 2 volumes     | Kohler of Kohler, <u>Plumbing Fixtures</u> , 1959, 1971                     |   |
|            | 2 volumes     | Kohler of Kohler, <u>Catalog K-Plumbing Fixtures</u> , 1928-1932            |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Kohler of Kohler, <u>Catalog K-36-Planned Plumbing and Heating</u> , 1936   |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Kohler of Kohler, <u>Plumbing Fixtures</u> , 1948                           |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Kohler of Kohler, <u>Catalog K63-Plumbing Fixtures</u> , 1960               |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Louden Machinery Co., <u>Catalog 56-Barn Equipment</u> , 1937               |   |
| 8          | 3 volumes     | A. Y. McDonald Mfg. Co., 1917, 1940, 1959                                   |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Mott Bros. Co., 1952  |   |
| 9          | 2 volumes     | Universal-Rundle Corp., <u>Plumbing Fixtures</u> , 1957, n.d.               |   |
|            | 1 volume      | Wisco Hardware Co., 1967  |   |
| Oversize   | 1 volume      | Daily/Monthly Account Ledger-Oregon Store, 1951-1952                        |   |
| 10         | 1-2           | Memorandum and Account Books, (5 volumes), 1882-1885, 1900-1907             |   |
|            | 3             | Business Files "A-Z", 1907-1923   |   |
|            | 4-27          | Business Files "Byron-Kise Electric Co.", 1896-1923                         |   |
| 11         | 1-14          | Business Files "Kishwaukee School-Williams, H.W.", 1907-1923                |   |