

Inventory of the

**National Chair Company**  
Rockford, Illinois

Records

In the

Regional History Center

**RC 59**

## INTRODUCTION

Mr. Harry West of Rockford, Illinois, donated the records of the National Chair Company to the Regional History Center on October 24, 1978. Mr. Stanley Kjellgren supplemented the collection by donating the National Chair corporate record book on May 3, 1979.

Property rights in the collection are held by the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 3  
Number of containers: 2 + 5 volumes  
Northern Illinois Regional History Center  
Collection 59

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The records in this collection are business correspondence files, financial records, and legal documents falling in the period 1927 to 1954. These documents were found mingled with the records of another defunct Rockford business, the Rockford Chair and Furniture Company. There appears, however, to have been no formal connection between Rockford Chair and National Chair. These records, used in concert with other Center manuscript material collections and printed sources, offer a value and unique insight on one of Rockford's most important industries during a period when the manufacture of furniture almost disappeared from the city. Researchers using this collection may wish to consult the records of the Rockford Chair and Furniture Company (RC 42), the Union Furniture Company, and Winnebago Radio and Cabinet (all found in RC 57).

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Winfield L. Anderson, Gilbert W. Johnson, C. Amos Stockhus, M.A. Kjellgren, Frank I. Johnson, Alfred A. Carlson, and John H. Lindblade organized the National Chair Company on July 11, 1927 with a capitalization of \$100,000. During the first few years of its existence, the National Chair Company contracted with eight Rockford furniture factories to supply chairs: included among these customers was the Rockford Chair and Furniture Company (RC 42). By 1942 due to restrictions of material, the attitudes of government toward production of consumer goods and competition with the machine shops for local labor, the National Chair Company seriously considered dissolving manufacturing operations. In 1943, the board of directors agreed to sell a part of the premises and plant to the Commercial Platers and Manufacturers, Inc. On May 28, 1954, the stockholders of the National Chair agreed to liquidate the assets of the business and dissolve the corporation.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

Chairmakers  
 Furniture Industry  
 Labor Unions  
 National Chair Company  
 Rockford  
 World War II

COLLECTION INVENTORY

| <u>BOX</u> | <u>FOLDER</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION</u>   |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 1          | 1-23          | National Chair Company, correspondence: incoming, alphabetical, 1936-1943          |
| 2          | 1-12          | Correspondence: outgoing, chronological, 1936-1943                                 |
|            | 13            | Company purchase options, 1941   |
|            | 14            | Corporate reports, 1939  |
|            | 15            | U.S. Department of Labor, 1934-1942  |
|            | 16            | Furniture and Bedding Inspection, 1937-1939  |
|            | 17            | Furniture Workers Union, 1937-1942   |
|            | 18            | Insurance files, accident reports, 1933-1942                                       |
|            | 19            | Unemployment data, 1938-1942   |
|            | 20            | War Production Board, 1941-1943  |
|            | 1 volume      | Corporate record book, 1927-1954   |
| Oversize   | 4 volumes     | Business account books, 1927-1951  |
|            | 1 volume      | Wage and hour rates, 1943-1951   |
|            | 1 volume      | <u>Merchant Manufacturer's and Trader's Reference Book</u><br>[missing 10/12/1992] |