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Memphis Umbrella Company records

Title: Memphis Umbrella Company records
Collection No: MSS.135
Extent: 0.5 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1888-1940

Abstract: The collection comprises business records of the Memphis Umbrella Company including ledgers, accounts and fliers and other documents, and one photograph.

Processed by: Gerald Chaudron, 2019.
Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: Memphis Umbrella Company records, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: January 2019

Scope and contents

The collection comprises business records of the Memphis Umbrella Company including ledgers, accounts and fliers and other documents, and one photograph.

The Memphis Umbrella Company was established in 1888. When Englishman Samuel J. Purser (1854-1928) was the proprietor, it had premises at 382½ Main Street, Memphis, in 1903, and then moved to 134 South Main Street, before moving to the State Savings Bank Building at 72 Madison Avenue around 1910. Purser was also a jeweler, engraver and optician. His wife, Lillie, worked in the store and ran the business after Samuel's death on November 28, 1928, until her own death on March 17, 1940, when it was located at 2024 Lamar. Lillie Belle Harris was born in Burnsville, Tishomingo County, Mississippi on May 25, 1874, the daughter of Mary Elizabeth Newman Noyer (1856-1945). She joined the company in 1890 when it not only sold umbrellas, canes, and walking sticks but also repaired umbrellas. During the 1930s, the company saw business continue to decline and it closed on Lillie's death. Her daughter, Louise Ingram tried to revive the store after World War II but it only lasted a few years despite diversifying into other commodities.

Subject terms

Memphis Umbrella Company.
Purser, Lillie B., 1874-1940.
Purser, Samuel J., 1854-1928.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 Charter, 1888. Company comprised C.H. Raine, John I. Taylor, Claude M. Redford, W.A. Sneed and I.C. Brickey.
- 2 Tax return, 1934.
- 3 Lease, 1926-1930. Leases of premises in State Savings Bank Building, 72 Madison Avenue, Memphis.
- 4 Invoices: E.J. Goldsmith, New York, New York, 1926-1927.
- 5 Fliers, undated.
- 6 Letter: Mary Oliver, Rayville, La., 1938 October 20. Re: complaint about quality of umbrella cover.
- 7 Census of distribution, 1929.

- 8 Credit report, 1926.
- 9 Miscellany. Includes complaint by Purser of inability to secure good quality and well-priced silk, undated.
- 10 Clippings, 1928, 1940 and undated. Includes undated advertisement for Memphis Umbrella Company and copy of Lillie Purser's obituary.
- 11 Photograph: Image of a man and two women outside premises of Memphis Umbrella Company, undated. Possibly includes Samuel J. and Lillie B. Purser.

Ledgers:

- 12 1891-1913.
- 13 1912-1913.
- 14 1935-1938.
- unfoldered 1928-1938.