

The Morey Mercantile Company: Solitaire Brand

Mss.02609

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Summary Information

Repository	History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center
Creator	Morey Mercantile Company. (Denver, Colo.)
Title	The Morey Mercantile Company: Solitaire Brand
Date	1897-1954
Extent	0.25 Linear feet
Language	English
Collection [Box]	.25 lf

Preferred Citation note

Cite as: The Morey Mercantile Company: Solitaire Brand Collection, Mss.02609 (accession 2012.50)
History Colorado. Cite specific accession numbers when applicable.

Historical note

The Morey Mercantile Company, originally known as the C. S. Morey Mercantile Company, was established in 1884 by C. S. (Chester Stephen) Morey. Chester was born in Dane County, Wisconsin on March 3, 1847. Before he was seventeen he enlisted in Co. I. 36th Wisconsin Infantry and took part in several Civil War battles. Later he attended Eastman's Business College in Chicago in 1867. He obtained work in the retail grocery of Cobb & Thorne. In 1873, he became a western representative for Sprague, Warner & Co. He soon became their top salesman and later partner. He handled the sales for Sprague, Warner & Co. and later established the C.S. Morey Mercantile Company, out of his office at 1809 Blake Street in Denver.

The C. S. Morey Mercantile Company soon outgrew the Blake Street building and moved to 1537 Market Street followed by a move to Wazee and 19th Streets. In 1896 Morey began the construction of a much larger building at the corner of Wynkoop and 16th Streets. The six story building sat on five lots and included a "mill" with a twenty-five foot frontage that housed the roasting plant, spice grinding department, extract laboratory, and print shop. In 1907, again in need of more space, Morey purchased the property across the alley facing Wazee Street. A bridge was constructed over the alley. More buildings on Wynkoop Street were acquired at various times. By 1925, a total of 253,000 square feet in Denver were in use by the company.

The company grew to an organization employing roughly 500 people in Denver and in its eighteen branches in Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico and Nebraska. In 1902, Morey started the Solitaire Brand, which became the company's top seller in top quality canned goods. Canned fruits, vegetables, and coffee started the line. Items were added from time to time, including such varied products as matches, cigars, writing tablets, brooms, jar rings and a complete assortment of food products such as cereals, fish, cheese, and macaroni.

C. S. Morey's son John W. Morey began to work in the company in 1901. John was born on December 22, 1878 in Denver and graduated from Yale University. John became president of Morey Mercantile in 1913. His father Chester died on January 22, 1922. The Morey company grew to become the largest grocery business in sales, territory and number of employees. The company eventually bought out other companies such as the Struby-Estabrook Mercantile Company and the J.S. Brown & Brother Mercantile Company. In 1956 the Board of Directors met to discuss arrangements regarding the sale of the company to Consolidated Foods Corporation, a national grocery company in Chicago. Just eight days after the sale of his company on November 3, 1956 J. W. Morey passed away.

Arrangement note

This collection has been arranged chronologically.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center

Conditions Governing Use note

Open to researchers without restrictions.

Provenance

The items in this collection were collected by Don Wilson. The collection was donated by Don and Linda Wilson, May 2012.

Processing Information note

Processed by Leigh Jeremias, September 2013.

Related Materials

Related Materials note

This collection is part of a larger donation of material. Please contact research center staff for more information.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- C. S. Morey Mercantile Company. (Denver, Colo.)
- Morey Mercantile Company. (Denver, Colo.)

Genre(s)

- Brochures
- Employee handbooks.
- Handbook
- Posters.
- Receipts.

Subject(s)

- Distributors (Commerce)
- Selling--Groceries.
- Spice trade.
- Wholesale trade.

Accession numbers

2012.50.96 -.104

Collection Inventory

FF 1 Receipt Sept. 28, 1897

Accession number

2012.50.101

FF 2 Want Book: Your Customer Wants [1915]

Accession number

2012.50.97

FF 3 Want Book: 50 years service to Independent Grocers [1934]

Accession number

2012.50.98

FF 4 Want Book: Yippee Solitaire Groceries [ca. 1938]

Accession number

2012.50.99

FF 5 Want Book: Quality Solitaire Foods are Good [ca. 1940]

Accession number

2012.50.100

FF 6 Poster: Solitaire Food Factory [ca 1940]

Accession number

2012.50.104

FF 7 Brochure: The Solitaire Kitchen [ca. 1940-1945]

Accession number

2012.50.102

FF 8 Booklet: 60 years of Quality and Service 1944

Accession number

2012.50.103

FF 9 Employee Handbook Feb. 1954

Accession number

2012.50.96