

Title: Ambrosia Chocolate Company Collection

Reference Code: Mss-1741

Inclusive Dates: 1894-1992 (bulk 1910s-1960s)

Quantity: 8.4 cu. ft.

Location: WC, Sh. 077-081
OS SM "A" (1 item)

Abstract: The Ambrosia Chocolate Company was founded in Milwaukee in 1894 when Otto Schoenleber converted his furniture-making space on Fifth Street into a chocolate factory. From the 1890s to the early 20th century, Ambrosia manufactured chocolate confectionary and penny candy, including candy that would be sold in the very first vending machines. By the 1910s they had expanded into baking chocolate and "breakfast cocoa," eventually winning a government contract to supply cocoa to the United States Navy shortly before the outbreak of World War I. By World War II, Ambrosia had established itself nationally as a leading manufacturer and supplier of bulk chocolate, confectionary coatings, Dutch processed cocoa, and ice cream coatings and inclusions. Ambrosia chocolate would eventually be found in products as ubiquitous as Eskimo Pies and Sally Fields cookies.

The Fifth Street factory expanded around the corner to West Highland Avenue in 1958 and included a food science and quality control laboratory as well as one of the Milwaukee area's first bulk sugar systems. In 1953, Amby, an anthropomorphic cocoa bean, was introduced as Ambrosia's mascot. In 1961, Ambrosia acquired controlling interest in Hooton Chocolate Company of Newark, NJ and in 1963 opened a southern division office in Charlotte, NC. In 1964, Ambrosia merged with multi-industrial W.R. Grace & Co. of New York. Ambrosia's downtown plant closed in 1992 and the company moved to a new facility on West Carmen Avenue. Minneapolis-based Cargill purchased the plant and the Ambrosia name in 2015.

Scope and Content: This collection consists of materials that provide a historical overview of the Ambrosia Chocolate Company's growth and change as a business, in addition to providing insight into chocolate, the candy industry, advertising, food and health trends, and labor issues in the early to mid-20th century. Materials include administrative and business records, trademark, patent, and other legal documents, price lists and customer mailings, employee relations materials such as newsletters, manuals, and wages and benefits information, company publications and marketing materials, advertisements, clippings from local and national newspapers, magazines, and trade journals, documents relating to the Schoenleber Clock Tower, and several hundred issues of The Northwest Confectioner (shortened to The Confectioner in 1940), a monthly candy industry trade journal published in Milwaukee.

Access and Use: No restrictions

Language: English, German, Greek and Polish

Notes: Collection processed by Taylor Kelley in 2019.

Arrangement:

Series 1: Business and Administration Records includes sales books and ledgers, financial reports and profit plans, expense reports, meeting minutes, records pertaining to a 1962 negligence lawsuit, trademark and patent records, employee relations materials including wages and benefits information, policies and company safety, materials relating to a 1952 trucking strike and efforts in the early 1970s to unionize Ambrosia factory workers, materials on government legislation including Medicare, Executive Order 11246, Equal Opportunity Employment, and retirement age, items relating to Christmas parties and contests, and records and photographs relating to expansion of the Fifth Street plant, its demolition, and the construction and opening of the plant on Carmen Avenue.

Series 2: Customer Relations includes price lists mailed to customers and sales representatives between 1926 and 1957, other customer mailings that include sales, credit, and promotional information, and other miscellaneous records relating to Ambrosia's customer base from the 1920s to the 1970s.

Series 3: Public Relations and Advertising includes company published brochures such as "Food of the Gods" and "The Story of Cacao," original advertisement mock ups and proofs, early 20th century advertisements from local Milwaukee newspapers including German, Polish and Greek newspapers, records on advertisement costs and publication, ads from trade journals, materials relating to trade show and convention appearances, newspaper, magazine and trade journal clippings related to Ambrosia and trends in the candy and chocolate industry, and materials related to the Amby mascot, including his development and introduction in 1953, and examples of his appearances in advertisements, customer mailings, and promotional materials including booklets and stickers.

Series 4: Miscellaneous includes Ambrosia products labels and packaging, signage and other retail merchandising materials, fundraising candy and food services information, materials related to competing chocolate companies including Nestle and Hershey, and memos, letters, and brochures related to the Schoenleber Memorial Clock Tower, built in 1969 and formally dedicated in 1970.

Series 5: The Northwestern Confectioner Trade Journals consists of an incomplete run of The Northwestern Confectioner (later known as simply The Confectioner) trade journal from 1916 to 1955. Issues reflect important national issues such as the New Deal and World War II.

Folder Heading	Box #	File #
Series 1: Business and Administration Records		
Sales Book 1894-1896	1	1
Accounting Ledger 1923-1930	1	2
Financial Reports 1956-1965	1	3
Financial Reports 1966-1972	1	4
Profit Plans 1966-1969	1	5
Profit Plans 1970-1975	1	6

Expense Reports 1975	1	7
Strategy Memorandum 1981	1	8
Sales Meeting Materials 1958-1961	1	9
Expansion Information 1961-1964	1	10
Board of Directors/Shareholders Meeting Minutes 1963-1964	1	11
Articles of Incorporation and Dissolution 1964-1969	2	12
Lawsuit 1962	2	13
Trademarks and Patents 1905-1910	2	14
Trademarks and Patents 1912-1929	2	15
Trademarks and Patents 1930-1933	2	16
Trademarks and Patents 1934-1939	2	17
Trademarks and Patents 1940-1949 (includes oppositions)	2	18
Trademarks and Patents 1950-1959 (includes oppositions)	2	19
Trademarks and Patents 1960-1962	2	20
Trademarks and Patents 1963-1969	2	21
Employee Relations – Benefits 1959-1972	2	22
Employee Relations – Wages and Bonuses 1963-1972	2	23
Employee Relations – Handbooks and Pamphlets 1956-1971	2	24
Employee Relations – Policies and Safety 1962-1973	2	25
Employee Relations – Hiring Announcements 1962-1969, 1984	2	26
Employee Relations – Unions and Strikes 1952, 1971-1972	2	27
Employee Relations – Fundraising 1950-1971	2	28
Employee Relations – Govt Legislation 1966-1972 includes Medicare, Executive Order 11246, Equal Opportunity Employment, Retirement Age	2	29
Employee Relations – Politics, Natl. Elections 1968, 1970, 1972	2	30
Employee Relations – Newsletters 1946-1992	2	31
Employee Relations – Christmas 1937-1938, 1968-1972	2	32
Employee Relations – Misc. 1950s-1992	2	33
Carmen Ave. Plant 1989-1990	3	34
Carmen Ave. Plant Construction Photos	3	35
Fifth Ave. Plant Demolition Photos	3	36
Administrative Misc.	3	37
Series 2: Customer Relations		
Price Lists 1926-1935	3	38
Price Lists 1941-1947	3	39
Price Lists 1948	3	40
Price Lists 1949	3	41
Price Lists 1950	3	42
Price Lists 1951	3	43
Price Lists 1952	3	44
Price Lists 1953	3	45
Price Lists Jan – May 1954	3	46
Price Lists June-Dec 1954	3	47
Price Lists 1955- 1957	3	48

Customer Mailings 1928-1934	3	49
Customer Mailings 1935-1937	3	50
Customer Mailings 1938	3	51
Customer Mailings 1940s	3	52
Customer Mailings 1950s	4	53
Customer Mailings 1960s	4	54
Customer Mailings 1970s	4	55
Customer Info Misc.	4	56
Series 3: Public Relations and Advertising		
Publications and Marketing Materials 1937-1963	4	57
Publications and Marketing Materials 1967-1992	4	58
Advertising Records 1925-1932	4	59
Advertising Records 1949-1959	4	60
Advertising Records 1960-1969	4	61
Advertising Records 1970-1979	4	62
Advertisements – Originals & Proofs 1910s-1950s	4	63
Advertisements 1897-1935	4	64
Advertisements – Foreign Language 1910s-1920s	4	65
Advertisements – Polly Pops 1930s	4	66
Advertisements 1940s	4	67
Advertisements 1950s	4	68
Advertisements 1960s	4	69
Advertisements – Hooten 1960s-1970s	4	70
Advertisements 1970s-1990s	4	71
Trade Shows and Conventions 1920-1991	5	72
Newspaper & Magazine Clippings 1890s-1959	5	73
Newspaper & Magazine Clippings 1960-1973	5	74
Trade Journal Clippings 1950s	5	75
Trade Journal Clippings 1960-1962	5	76
Trade Journal Clippings 1963	5	77
Trade Journal Clippings 1964-1969	5	78
Trade Journal Clippings 1970-1983	5	79
Press Releases 1950-1982	5	80
Amby Development and Ads 1950s-1960s	5	81
Series 4: Miscellaneous		
Retail and Merchandising Materials circa 1930s-1940s	5	82
Fundraising Candy circa 1970s-1980s	5	83
Food Services circa 1980s	5	84
Recipes 1950s-1984	5	85
Packaging 1930s-1980s	5	86
Labels – Inventory, Ordering, and Printing 1940s-1950s	5	87
Labels – Private Label Brands 1940s-1960s	5	88
Labels 1940s-1960s	5	89

Other Companies Misc.	5	90
Schoenleber Memorial Clock Tower	5	91
Series 5: Northwest Confectioner Trade Journals		
The Northwest Confectioner 1916-1930	6	
The Northwest Confectioner 1931-1937	7	
The Northwest Confectioner 1938-1945	8	
The Confectioner 1946-1948	9	
The Confectioner 1949-1956	10	
Ledgers and Scrapbooks	Location	
Scrapbook – labels and packaging 1950-1953	WC, Sh. 81	
Scrapbook – labels and packaging 1950-1957	WC, Sh. 81	
Scrapbook – labels 1960-1962	WC, Sh.81	
Scrapbook – labels 1962-1963	WC, Sh. 81	
Scrapbook – labels 1969-1972, 1988	WC, Sh. 81	
Scrapbook—Correspondence 1950-1953	WC, Sh. 81	
Scrapbook – custom scrapbook of advertisements, retail displays, labels, and packaging	WC, Sh.78	
Scrapbook – custom scrapbook of advertisements and labels, made to present as evidence in Civil Action No. 317-G Ambrosia Chocolate Company vs. Ambrosia Cake Bakery, Inc.	WC Sh. 78	
Accounting Ledger – 1894-1896	WC Sh. 80	
Accounting Ledger – 1898-1900	WC Sh. 80	
Oversize Items		
Framed first sales receipt 1894	OS SM “A”	
Photographs: See: M-263		