



The Historical  
Society of  
Pennsylvania

Collection 2064

**Fletcher Works  
Records**

1845-1955, n.d.

6 boxes, 1 flat file, 2 lin. feet

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**Restrictions:** None

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**Abstract**

This collection represents the files of Otto W. Schaum and his son Fletcher, directors and managers of Fletcher Works, Inc., a Philadelphia manufacturer of machinery for the textile industry. While most of the records deal with the operation of the firm, some material pertains to the elder Schaum's personal finances. Several family photographs and documents are also included.

Spanning almost sixty years of operation, different record types document several aspects of Fletcher Works. Otto Schaum's twenty-five foundry notebooks, in which he recorded his daily business and personal activities, give a narrative of the early years of the company, from 1890-1924. Most of the materials relate to issues of production, including sales reports and operation analysis sheets, and cover the post-WWII and early 1950s period. Detailed wage and salary surveys of numerous metal manufacturers in the area make up the majority of records documenting the labor aspects of the business during the war years and through the mid 1950s. A 1945 job rating survey prepared specifically for Fletcher Works is of particular interest as it details not only the skills and education level required for each job, but the working conditions, "unavoidable hazards," and physical and mental demands that each position entailed. While those records represent tools of management, several documents on union negotiations take the common worker into account and underscore America's 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial legacy of the power struggle between management and labor. Audit reports, 1921-1955, outline a history of the company's finances. Other documents deal with several negotiations to sell the company, which the family eventually did in 1955.

**Background note**

Located at Second and Glenwood Streets, Fletcher Works, Inc. began operations in 1850 as Schaum & Uhlinger. Sometime in 1920 a change was made in stock ownership and the company was renamed. The Schaums, however, retained their interest in the firm until its sale in 1955.

The operation consisted of a machine shop and iron foundry and was recognized as a major producer of textile machinery. Fletcher Works built fabric looms (including batters and shuttles), rayon throwing machines (including twisters, reels, and winders) and centrifugal extractors (used for textiles, chemicals, sugar, laundry, and dry cleaning).

### **Scope & content**

The collection consists of two series, representing the business and personal aspects of the Schaum family. Series 1 documents more than sixty years of the company's operations. The materials have been processed into subseries that reflect the typical functional divisions of a manufacturing concern, such as finance and legal, production, and labor. The elder Schaum's foundry notebooks, 1890-1924, afford an additional subseries regarding the early years of operation.

These materials, particularly the papers dealing with production and labor issues, offer a glimpse into the mindset of American industry during the 1940s and 1950s. An emphasis on the need to measure productivity and efficiency becomes evident in the sales and production reports, operation analysis forms, and production schedules. A scientific approach to labor management becomes evident in the industry-wide reports of wages and salaries and job rating surveys. The effects of war on production and manpower are addressed directly in the memos accompanying the wage reports, including directives from the War Labor Board on wage scales and the re-employment of returning service men.

Tempering the efficiency mantra of manufacturing leaders is the collective voice of the workers laboring in these factories. Although this collection's documentation of the subject is minimal, the few papers regarding union negotiations and agreements underscore management's need to seek compromise with the rising power of the labor movement.

Materials regarding personal matters are processed as Series 2. Most of these papers deal with Otto W. Schaum's personal finances and other business ventures. Schaum's use of his personal shares of company stock as collateral against loans to him and his wife Katherine is well documented in the correspondence files of two local banks. The Northwestern National Bank papers also document his investment in that bank and in Victory Liberty Bonds. More than twenty years of his personal expenses are recorded in Schaum's personal account books.

Most of the family portraits are of Fletcher Schaum as an infant and young boy. There is also a portrait of Otto and of his wife. Juxtaposing that image are the few group portraits of what appear to be factory workers.

Memorabilia consists of a few mid-nineteenth century papers, including a passport in German. There are also two oaths of citizenship, 1853 and 1855, taken in New York City by Caroline and Caspar Schaum. The former notes a Prussian heritage. Perhaps these are Otto's parents. If so, the success of Fletcher Works would be another example of the fulfillment of the American dream, as the son of immigrants makes his fortune here.

## Series overview

Series I	Fletcher Works, 1890-1955	5 boxes
a.	Early Operations, 1890-1924	37 notebooks
b.	Finance and Legal, 1923-1955	7 folders
c.	Production, 1929-1955, n.d.	13 folders and 1 flat file
d.	Labor, 1942-1955, n.d.	12 folders
Series II	Schaum Family, 1845-1947	1 box
a.	Otto W. Schaum Personal Finances, 1918-1947	5 folders and 4 account books
b.	Schaum Family Photographs, 1890-1917	1 folder and several loose photos in envelopes
c.	Schaum Family Memorabilia, 1845-1865, 1929	1 folder

## Series description

### Series 1. Fletcher Works, 1890-1955, n.d. (Boxes 1-5)

This series represents the Schaum family's sixty-year involvement with the business and consists of four subseries.

- a. *Early Operations, 1890-1924.* Within these twenty-five notebooks, Otto W. Schaum recorded a variety of business and personal observations. Schaum's diligent efforts to promote his company are evident in entries such as that of October 11, 1892, in which he reminds himself to have young girls operate looms at the Worlds Fair and to drop off promotional material at hotels. One journal is devoted to his European trip in 1894 in which he describes his many visits to factories across the continent.
- b. *Finance and Legal, 1923-1955.* Audit reports prepared by Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery from 1921 to 1955 make up most of this subseries. Also included are some financial papers and legal documents regarding the family's sale of the company.
- c. *Production, 1929-1955, n.d.* Papers include cost sheets, 1929-1951, an incomplete run of monthly sales reports during the 1940s, and various papers regarding the production of certain machines such as looms, battens, and extractors. Management's attempts to improve production efficiency are recorded in the operation analysis sheets, 1946-1947, which note new production methods for various tasks and the time saved.
- d. *Labor, 1942-1955, n.d.* The Metal Manufacturers Association of Philadelphia prepared the industry-wide reports of wages and salaries (1942-1949, 1951-1954) by surveying approximately 200 companies in the area. The 1945 Job Rating Survey was prepared for Fletcher Works by the National Metal Trades Association. Of particular interest in the union agreements file is the one from

1952. The agreement was between the union and a group of manufacturers (including Fletcher Works) represented by specific agents.

**Series 2. Schaum Family, 1845-1947 (Boxes 5-6)**

- a. *Otto W. Schaum Personal Finances, 1918-1947.* In addition to the bank files and personal account books, there is also correspondence with Schaum's attorney, Rowland Evans regarding various business ventures. Correspondence with George Fletcher deals with Fletcher's attempts to repay a loan to Schaum.
- b. *Schaum Family Photographs, 1890-1917.* Only one of the group portraits is identified as Flag Raising at the Atlas Ball Company, Philadelphia. Unrelated to the portraits are two prints of a penny farthing bicycle (also referred to as a high wheeler).
- c. *Schaum Family Memorabilia, 1845-1865, 1929.* In addition to the mid-nineteenth documents noted above, there is also a patent for a thermostat issued to Fletcher Schaum, 1929.

## Separation report

The following volumes also were removed from the collection:

Volume of lithographic views of Bergner & Engle Brewing Company. Philadelphia, n.d.

Brown & Sharp Mfg. Co. *Small Tools, Catalog No. 34*. Providence, 1941.  
[Tq .40 B793]

Zimmerman, O.T. and Irvin Lavine. *Industrial Research Service's Conversion Factors and Tables*. Dover, N.H., 1944.

Oberg, Erik and F.D. Jones. *Machinery's Handbook*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, 1942.

## Subjects

Collective labor agreements—Machine industry—20<sup>th</sup> century  
Foundries  
Looms  
Textile machinery  
Wages--Foundrymen  
Schaum, Fletcher  
Schaum, Katherine E.  
Schaum, Otto W.  
International Moulders and Foundry Workers  
Metal Manufacturers Association of Philadelphia  
National Metals Trade Association (Chicago, Illinois)

## **Administrative Information**

### **Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

### **Acquisition information**

Gift of Mrs. Fletcher Schaum, 1978.

Accession number 78:17.

### **Preferred citation**

Cite as: Fletcher Works Records (Collection 2064), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

### **Processing note**

Initial processing notes indicate that these records were organized in the original order of Fletcher Schaum's files. Because of this order, most of the papers are in a rough chronology, with some papers out of date order. There are also some files with multiple copies of a page filed throughout one folder. Because this irregular filing may in fact have been arranged by Schaum according to related job orders, this arrangement has been maintained. An exception to this is folder 4 of box 3. The monthly sales reports are now chronological with extra copies attached to original sheets.

During the reprocessing, general series and subseries were assigned, and a few of the business-related folders were reordered under subseries categories more appropriate to their content.

Two small notebooks that contained records of Otto and Katherine Schaum's personal accounts were transferred from the foundry notebook box to the family series.

Most of the folder titles were also revised to more closely reflect the wording of the papers contained and better define their research application.

## Box and folder listing

### Series 1. Fletcher Works. a. Early Operations

Volume	Date	Box	Folder
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #4	Oct. 1890-Dec. 1890	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #7	June 1891-July 1891	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #8	July 1891-Sept. 1891	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #9	Sept. 1891-Oct. 1891	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #10	Oct. 1891-Dec. 1891	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #11	Jan. 1892-April 1892	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #12	April 1892-July 1892	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #13	July 1892-Sept. 1892	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #14	Sept. 1892-Dec. 1892	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #15	Dec. 1892-March 1893	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #16	March 1893-July 1893	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #17	July 1893-Dec. 1893	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #18	Dec. 1893-March 1894	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #19	March 1894-June 1894	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook (European Notes)	June 1894-Sept. 1894	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #21	Dec. 1894-April 1895	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #22	April 1895-July 1895	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #23	Aug. 1895-Jan. 1896	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #24	Jan. 1896-May 1896	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #25	May 1896-Oct. 1896	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #26	Oct. 1896-Feb. 1897	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #27	Feb. 1897-June 1897	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #28	Jun 1897-Dec. 1897	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #29	Dec. 1897-Oct. 1898	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #31	Oct. 1898-Dec. 1898	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #32	Feb. 1899-Sept. 1899	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #33	Oct. 1899-March 1900	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #34	March 1900-Oct. 1900	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook (unnumbered)	Nov. 1900-April 1901	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #35	April 1901-Nov. 1901	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #36	Nov. 1901-Mar. 1902	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook (unnumbered)	March 1902-July 1902	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #37	Aug. 1902-June 1903	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #40	May 1904-Oct. 1904	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #46	Jan. 1911-June 1913	1	n/a



O.W.S. Foundry Notebook #47	July 1913-May 1915	1	n/a
O.W.S. Foundry Notebook (unnumbered)	June 1918-May 1924	1	n/a

**Series 1. Fletcher Works. b. Finance and Legal**

<b>Folder Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Audit Reports by Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery	1921-1926	1	1
Audit Reports by Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery	1927-1935	2	1
Audit Reports by Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery	1936-1942	2	2
Audit Reports by Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery	1942-1946	2	3
Audit Reports by Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery	1947-1951	2	4
Audit Reports by Lybrand, Ross Brothers and Montgomery	1952-1955	2	5
Financial and legal documents re: sale of company	1940, 1941, 1950, 1955	3	1

**Series 1. Fletcher Works. c. Production**

<b>Folder Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Cost sheets and related material	1929-1936	3	2
Cost sheets and related material	1936-1951	3	3
Monthly sales reports and other cost analysis materials	1940-1949 (incomplete)	3	4
Monthly production reports	Jan., Sept. 1953; May, July, Sept, 1955	3	5
Loom production schedules	1952-1953	3	6
Batten shop monthly and annual operations and related material	1953-1954	3	7
Batten shop--parts diagrams and related notes	1953	3	8
Extractor motor production, pricing and testing reports and related material	1923-1945	3	9
Equipment Inventories (3)	n.d.	3	10
Projects memos; misc. batten shop papers	1953, 1954	3	11
“Data for Directors” (various materials re: production and pricing)	1950	3	12

Operation analysis sheets (“time saved”)	1946	3	13
Operation analysis sheets (“time saved”)	1947	3	14
Mechanical drawings (62 total) and bills of materials	n.d.	n/a	FF 1

**Series 1. Fletcher Works. d. Labor**

<b>Folder Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
MMA industrial charts, reports and surveys of wages and salaries	1942-1944	4	1
MMA industrial reports and surveys of wages and salaries	1944-1946	4	2
MMA industrial reports and surveys of wages and salaries	1946-1947, 1949 (chart only)	4	3
NMTA Job Rating Survey prepared for Fletcher Works	1945	4	4
Job Rating Survey worksheets (occupational rating and substantiating data)	n.d.	4	5
Job Rating Survey draft worksheets and notes	n.d.	4	6
Internal reports of jobs by labor grades and hourly earnings	1944-1946	4	7
Union negotiation papers	1946, 1952, 1954	5	1
Union agreements and meeting report	1947, 1948, 1952	5	2
MMA and NMTA industrial wage reports	1951-1954	5	3
MMA industrial wage reports and wage and fringe settlement bulletins	1954-1955	5	4
Insurance and retirement correspondence and report	1954-1955	5	5

**Series 2. Schaum Family. a. Otto W. Schaum Personal Finances**

<b>Folder Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Rowland Evans correspondence (Otto W. Schaum attorney)	1937-1938	5	6
George Fletcher correspondence	1918-1922	5	7
Market Street National Bank correspondence	1925, 1927, 1934-1944	5	8

Northwestern National Bank correspondence	1919-1929	5	9
Northwestern National Bank correspondence	1930-1941	5	10
Personal account books (3)	1922-1926, 1930-1942, 1942-1947	6	n/a
Katherine E. Schaum personal account book	1926-1936	6	n/a

**Series 2. Schaum Family. b. Photographs**

<b>Folder Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Family portraits	c. 1890-1910	6	n/a
Miscellaneous groups	1890-1917	6	1

**Series 2. Schaum Family. c. Memorabilia**

<b>Folder Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Various legal documents	1845-65, 1929	6	2