National Park Service
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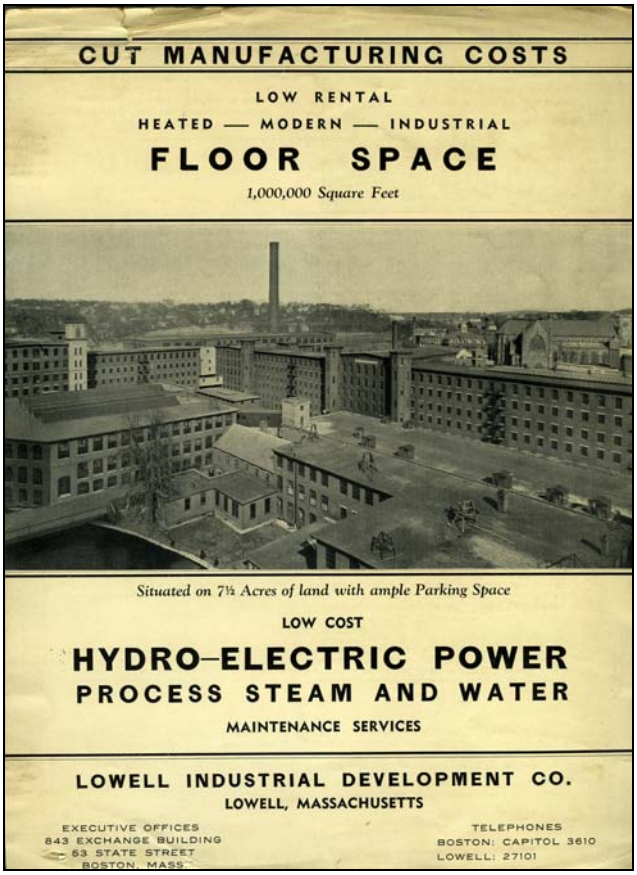
Finding Aid

Lowell Industrial Development Company Records, 1937-1956 (Bulk dates 1949-1951)

Catalog No. LOWE 15734
Lowell National Historical Park
Lowell, Massachusetts



NORTHEAST MUSEUM SERVICES CENTER

LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS

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FINDING AID FOR THE

LOWELL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY RECORDS, 1937-1956 (BULK DATES 1949-1951)

CATALOG NUMBER: LOWE 15734 -- COLLECTION

PREPARED BY

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Northeast
MUSEUM SERVICES CENTER

August 2008

Cover illustration: Details from LIDC advertisement brochure, n.d. Box 7, Folder 1.

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PREFACE

This document, the *Finding Aid for the Lowell Industrial Development Company Records, 1937-1956 (bulk dates 1949-1951)* describes records created and maintained by the Company at their facilities in Lowell, Massachusetts. These records are now part of the archives of Lowell National Historical Park (LOWE). These records and those of other closely related Lowell industries were processed as part of a backlog cataloging project carried out by the Northeast Museum Services Center (NMSC) with FY08 Backlog Cataloging funds.

The catalogers would like to express their gratitude towards the staff of LOWE for their assistance in carrying out this work. LOWE staff, including Dan Walsh, former Collections Manager, cared for them in the years before this cataloging project. In particular, thanks must go to Museum Specialist Jack Herlihy and David Blackburn, Chief of Cultural Resources and Programs, for their aid and advice during this project.

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INTRODUCTION

This finding aid describes the contents of the relatively small amount of extent records related to the Lowell Industrial Development Company (LIDC). Most of these records date from 1949 to 1951, although the company was formed twenty years earlier to convert vacant mill buildings into spaces to be leased. Boott Mills helped to found the company and eventually merged with it. Presumably Boott Mills staff stored these records with their materials in the records storage facilities for the Boott Mills and the Proprietors of the Locks and Canals on Merrimack River where Lowell National Historical Park (LOWE) curatorial staff salvaged them shortly before a move of the records in 1984. They form part of accession LOWE-111.

As part of a fiscal year 2008 project to catalog collections related to the Proprietors and their affiliated companies in the LOWE archives, the Northeast Museum Services Center (NMSC) transferred the collection to its Charlestown facilities. NMSC Archivist Margaret Welch cataloged and rehoused the collection under the direction of Regional Archivist David Vecchioli. Sara Wolf, Director, and Giles Parker, Deputy Director, administered the Center during this time. Backlog cataloging moneys funded this project.

The finding aid is divided into four sections:

- Part 1: Collection Description:

- Scope and content note:
- Outline showing the organization of the collection;
- Descriptions of the various series into which the collection is organized.

- Part 2: Corporate History.

- Part 3: Collection Listing:

- Document boxes: a box and folder list;
- Oversize material

- Bibliography.

PART 1:

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Accession number: LOWE-111.

Catalog number: LOWE 15734.

Quantity: 4.5 linear feet (approximately 7,200 items).

Storage: 6 legal archives boxes, 2 flat boxes, and 6 map folders.

Location: Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell, Massachusetts 01852-1029, (978) 970-5241.

Description: These records were created and maintained by the Lowell Industrial Development Company which specialized in leasing space and power in the former Massachusetts Mills buildings and other Lowell facilities. Specifications and proposals for hydroelectric machinery, employee time cards, real estate appraisals, and bank account documents are included in the records.

Cross-references: The Proprietors of the Locks & Canals Records, 1813-2008 (bulk dates 1890-1970) (LOWE 5058, various catalog numbers) holds General File 1030 "Lowell Industrial Development Company" (boxes 17-19). The series of architectural and engineering drawings holds the LIDC boiler sub-series and the Massachusetts Mills sub-series.

The Boott Mills Records, 1905-1989 (bulk dates 1955-1985) (LOWE 15733) refer to the later "L.I.D. Division."

Organization: Lowell Industrial Development Company Records, 1937-1956 (bulk dates 1949-1951):

Series I. Financial Records
- A. Machinery Purchase
- B. Customer Accounts
- C. Bank Accounts

Series II. Taxes
Series III. Real Estate
Series IV. Miscellaneous
Series V. Oversize

Series Descriptions

Series I. Financial

A. Machinery Purchase

The most extensive records remaining in this collection are those related to major purchases of equipment in the early 1950s. These records consist of job specifications and designs and the subsequent proposals from the bidding companies. The LIDC treasurer, at the time Louis Waldron, kept these files including his handwritten notes and the copies of graphs comparing the companies' bids. It should be noted that most of the proposals were rejected, and the designs are, in most cases, not the final version; the LIDC staff may have retained these files with rejected proposals for long-term reference purposes. (The Proprietors of the Locks and Canals on Merrimack River Records (LOWE 5058) holds boiler drawings from the 1948-1950 period).

The machinery included boilers and other steam-related equipage and elevators. Most proposals relate to potential upgrades in the newly acquired Assets Realization division of the company. The file code system appears to include the main job number, a letter, and the number of the individual drawing, i.e., 647-E-9. The middle letters could represent the following: "M" for machinery, "E" for electrical, and "S" for supplemental.

B. Customer Accounts

Meter sheets document the electric lighting, power, and steam supplied to LIDC customers. The sheets incidentally provide the client companies' names.

C. Bank Accounts

These 1931-1934 bank statements and checks are a fraction of those created for the LIDC.

Series II. Taxes

A cross-reference to a real estate appraisal made during a tax dispute with the City of Lowell in 1957 comprises this series.

Series III. Real Estate

The varied documents in this series describe the buildings of the former Massachusetts Mills complex. A notebook holds photographs of the mills and power houses and floor plans showing the spaces leased by the individual companies. The real estate appraisals give, in addition to detailed description of the property, an historical background. A list of client companies renting space is included.

IV. Miscellaneous

Individual items not clearly belonging to a series include brochures from the Lowell Development & Industrial Commission, the Lowell government agency promoting industry. A file labeled “LIDC Liquidation” and an untitled notebook relate to the 1956-1957 period when Boott Mills took over LIDC.

V. Oversize

These items are intellectually associated with the letter- and legal-size materials but are too large to be stored in standard legal-size folders and boxes.

PART 2:

CORPORATE HISTORY

Chronology

1930 January	Boott Mills and Merrimack Manufacturing Company form LIDC; Pepperell Manufacturing Co. sold former Massachusetts Mill properties to LIDC (see Fig. 1).
1948 1 March	LIDC purchased Assets Realization property at 200 Market Street.
1950-1951	Purchasing new steam power equipment for the Assets Division.
1955 1 April	Northern Textiles of Lowell bought Boott Mills stock including the 50% interest in LIDC.
1955 20 October	Boott Mills bought remaining 50% in LIDC. (included property of Assets Realization situated on Market Street).
1956 9 April	Boott Mills and LIDC formally merge.
1956 13 July	Boott Mills and Northern Textiles merge; with the LIDC identity retained as the "L.I.D. Division" of Boott Mills.

Narrative

Due to a combination of factors -- nineteenth-century facilities unable to house heavier twentieth-century automated machinery, lower costs in the American South, transportation -- major textile companies failed or left Lowell by the 1920s. Local investors, confronted with the large complexes and their energy-generating capacities, rethought the use of these structures. The Lowell Industrial Development Company, formed by owners of the Boott Mill and the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, redeveloped the buildings into smaller spaces suitable for a variety of light manufacturing and offices. Its first acquisition in 1930 was the former Massachusetts Mills complex bought by the Prescott Company and later the Pepperell Manufacturing Company. Some structures were torn down, and the buildings, converted to multi-tenant use, were leased. The energy-generating capacity, developed with the Merrimac River flowage and supplemented by steam generators, was maintained and so heat, electricity, and process steam was produced and sold to tenants and other buyers.

Many small firms such as Lowell Paper Box Company, Lorum Fiber Company, and Spindle City Athletic Clothing Company ran their operations from the main LIDC campus (see Fig. 1). The principle sources of income for LIDC were rent, power sales to Boott Mills and Merrimack Mills, and power and light sales to customers other than Boott and Merrimack. In 1948, LIDC purchased the Assets Realization Company which controlled former mill property on Market Street not contiguous to the LIDC campus. LIDC apparently upgraded the new "Assets Division" facilities' steam generating facilities in the early 1950s.

The Boott Mills initially held fifty percent interest in LIDC; after its sale to Northern Textiles in 1955, Boott bought the remaining LIDC shares. Boott Mills retained the old LIDC components as separate entities: the Boott Mills records into the 1980s indicate "Massachusetts Division" and "Assets Division." As the Boott Mills sold off the Massachusetts Mills and Assets Realization buildings, the Lowell Industrial Development Corporation's identity faded.

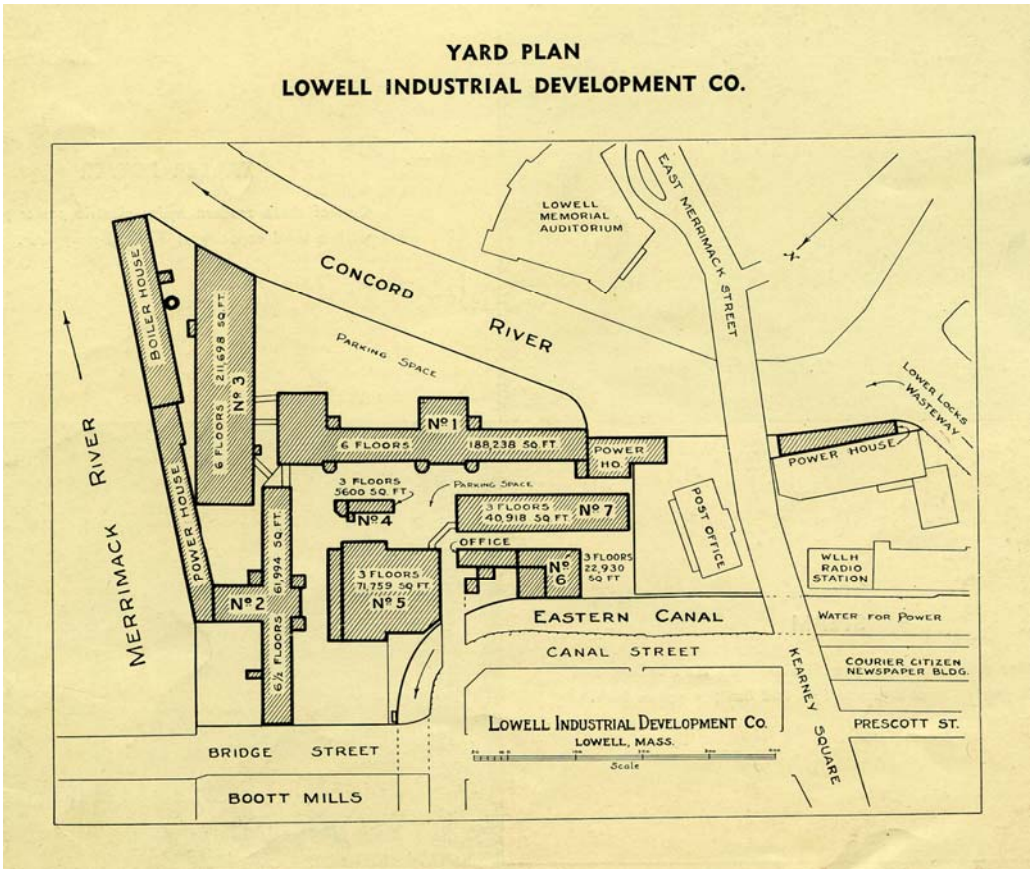

Figure 1. Detail from LIDC brochure showing the Massachusetts Mills buildings, Box 7, Folder 1.

PART 3:

COLLECTION LISTING

Series I. Financial Records, 1949-1953[1]

A. Machinery Purchase[2]

Box 1 (5.0" legal size)

1. Boiler Conversion (Job 627), 1949-1950 (Part 1 of 5)[3]
2. Boiler Conversion (Job 627), 1949-1950 (Part 2 of 5)[4]
3. Boiler Conversion (Job 627), 1949-1950 (Part 3 of 5)[5]
4. Boiler Conversion (Job 627), 1949-1950 (Part 4 of 5)
5. Boiler Conversion (Job 627), 1949-1950 (Part 5 of 5)[6]
6. Boiler (Job 647-M-1), 1950 (Part 1 of 2)[7]
7. Boiler (Job 647-M-1), 1950 (Part 2 of 2)[8]
8. Boiler (Job 647 –M-2 [Piping]), 1950[9]
9. Boiler (Job 647-M-2 [Piping] and –M-3 [Flue]), 1950[10]
10. Boiler (Job 647-M-3 [Feedwater Regulator]), 1950[11]
11. Boiler (Job 647-M-3, -M-4 [Metering], and –M-5 [Combustion Control]), 1950 (Part 1 of 3)[12]

Box 2 (5.0" legal size)

1. Boiler (Job 647-M-3, -M-4 [Metering], and –M-5 [Combustion Control]), 1950 (Part 2 of 3)
2. Boiler (Job 647-M-3, -M-4 [Metering], and –M-5 [Combustion Control]), 1950 (Part 3 of 3)[13]
3. Boiler (Job 647-M-3, -M-4, and –M-5), 1950 – Bailey Meter Company
4. Boiler (Job 647-M-5 [Combustion Control]), Spring 1950[14]
5. Boiler (Job 647-M-6 [Turbine Fan]), 1950[15]
6. Boiler (Job 647-S-4, -S-5 [Foundation]), Spring-Summer 1950[16]

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[1] All records LOWE-111.
[2] The Proprietors of the Locks & Canals Records holds boiler drawings from this period.
[3] Includes specifications.
[4] Oversize items moved to Box 8, Folder 1
[5] Oversize items moved to Box 8, Folder 1; Map Folder #1.
[6] Includes copy of "Survey on Operation as Independent Plant" (another copy in Box 4, Folder 5. Oversize items moved to Box 8, Folder 1; Box 9, Folder 1.
[7] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #1.
[8] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #1.
[9] Includes comparison of bids. Oversize item moved to Box 8, Folder 1.
[10] Includes drawings. Oversize item moved to Map Folder #2.
[11] The number 647-M-3 was apparently used for two parts of the project. Oversize item moved to Map Folder #2.
[12] Includes specification for combustion control and the comparison between proposals. Oversize item moved to Box 9, Folder 2.
[13] Oversize item moved to Box 9, Folder 2.
[14] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #3.
[15] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #3.

7. Boiler (Job 647-E-9 [Electrical Wiring]), September 1950
8. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-1), May 1950
9. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 1 of 8)
10. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 2 of 8)

Box 3 (5.0" legal size)

1. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 3 of 8)
2. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 4 of 8)
3. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 5 of 8)[17]
4. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 6 of 8)
5. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 7 of 8)
6. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-2 [Feedwater Heater]), May-June 1950 (Part 8 of 8)[18]
7. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-3, -4 [Piping and Insulation]), August 1950 - January 1951 (Part 1 of 2)[19]
8. Pump and Heater (Job 654-M-3, -4 [Piping and Insulation]), August 1950 - January 1951 (Part 2 of 2)
9. Pump and Heater (Job 654-S-1 [Support]), August 1950
10. Pump and Heater (?) (Job 654) [Plenum Chamber]), July 1950

Box 4 (5.0" legal size)

1. Boiler Conversion (Mass. Division), Job 655, 1951
2. Blow Down System (Job 691-M-1), 1951 (Part 1 of 2)[20]
3. Blow Down System (Job 691-M-1), 1951 (Part 2 of 2)[21]
4. Air Compressors, August-September 1949
5. Survey on Operation as Independent Plant [Assets Division], 17 November 1949 [Boiler and Electrical Capacities]
6. Analysis of Assets Division Boilers, 18 May 1950
7. Elevators, 1950-1951 (Part 1 of 3)
8. Elevators, 1950-1951 (Part 2 of 3)
9. Elevators, 1950-1951 (Part 3 of 3)
10. Float Valve, 1950 – January 1951[22]
11. Feedwater Pump (Mass. Division), 1953 (Part 1 of 3) [23]
12. Feedwater Pump (Mass. Division), 1953 (Part 2 of 3)

Box 5 (5.0" legal size)

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[16] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #3.
[17] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #4.
[18] Contains comparisons between proposals. Oversize item moved to Map Folder #4.
[19] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #4.
[20] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #5.
[21] Includes comparison between proposals. Oversize item moved to Box 9, Folder 3.
[22] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #6.
[23] Oversize items removed to Box 9, Folder 4.

1. Feedwater Pump (Mass. Division), 1953 (Part 3 of 3)[24]
2. "Tabulation of Bids on Boilers," Unidentified Project, n.d.[25]

B. Customer Accounts

3. Meter Sheets [Electrical], 1941-1948 (Part 1 of 5)
4. Meter Sheets [Electrical], 1941-1948 (Part 2 of 5)
5. Meter Sheets [Electrical], 1941-1948 (Part 3 of 5)
6. Meter Sheets [Electrical], 1941-1948 (Part 4 of 5)
7. Meter Sheets [Electrical], 1941-1948 (Part 5 of 5)
8. Meter Sheets – Assets Division, 1948-1950
9. Meter Sheets – Assets Division, 1950-1953
10. Meter Sheets (Power, PL&C Water), 1940-1947

Box 6 (5.0" legal)

1. Meter Sheets (Electricity), 1948-1953
2. Meter Sheets (City Water), 1948-1953
3. Meter Sheets (Power), 1948-1950
4. Meter Sheets (Steam), 1948-1953

C. Bank Accounts

5. Union Old Lowell National Bank Statements, 1931-1932
6. Union Old Lowell National Bank Statements, 1933-1934
7. Union Old Lowell National Bank Cancelled Checks, July 1931-1934

Series II. Taxes

See: "L.I.D. Company Tax Proceedings City of Lowell, Mass.," 1956 April Appraisal, Box 7, Folders 1-3 .

Series III. Real Estate, 1946-1956

8. Appraisal, 25 July 1946[26]
9. "Tenants" [notebook], January 1952[27]

Box 7 (5.0" legal)

1. Appraisal, 1956 (Part 1 of 3)[28]
2. Appraisal, 1956 (Part 2 of 3)

[24] Oversize items removed to Box 9, Folder 4.
[25] Oversize item moved to Map Folder #6.
[26] Includes photographs.
[27] Includes photographs.
[28] Oversize item moved to Box 8, Folder 2. Includes advertisements.

3. Appraisal, 1956 (Part 3 of 3)

Series IV. Miscellaneous, 1937-1956

4. "L.I.D. Liquidation Data," 1937-1953[29]
5. General Information Notebook, 1956 [includes Boott Mills][30]
6. Lowell Development & Industrial Commission Brochures, n.d.[31]

Series V. Oversize

Box 8 (14 ½" x 18 ½" x 1 ½" flat box)

1. Job 627[32]
2. 1933 Fire Insurance Map [later copy]; Kilowatt Power Input from Merrimack River[33]
3. Plan of Canal System, 29 May 1953; "Proposed Schedule for Operation of Personnel LID Co.," 25 October 1955[34]

Box 7 (20 ½" x 24 ½' x 1 ½" flat box)

1. Job 627 – Comparison of Bids[35]
2. Job 647[36]
3. Job 691[37]
4. Feedwater Pump (Mass. Division), 1953[38]

Map Folders (36" x 48")

1. Job 627, 647-M-1[39]
2. Job 647-M-2, -3, -4, -5[40]
3. Job 647-M-5, -6, -S[41]
4. Job 654[42]
5. Job 691-M-1[43]
6. Float Valve Project; Unidentified Project[44]

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[29] Oversize item moved to Box 8, Folder 3.
[30] Oversize items moved to Box 6, Folder 3.
[31] *See also:* advertising material incorporated in 1956 appraisal, Box 7, Folder 1.
[32] Items removed from Box 1, Folder 2; Box 1, Folder 3; Box 1, Folder 5; Box 1, Folder 8.
[33] Items removed from Box 7, Folder 1; Box 7, Folder 4.
[34] Items removed from Box 5, Folder 9.
[35] Items removed from Box 1, Folder 5.
[36] Items removed from Box 1, Folder 11.
[37] Item removed from Box 4, Folder 3.
[38] Items removed from Box 4, Folder 11; Box 5, Folder 1.
[39] Items removed from Box 1, Folder 3; Box 1, Folder 6; Box 1, Folder 7.
[40] Items removed from Box 1, Folder 8; Box 1, Folder 9; Box 1, Folder 10; Box 1, Folder 11.
[41] Items removed from Box 2, Folder 4; Box 2, Folder 5; Box 2, Folder 6.
[42] Items removed from Box 3, Folder 3; Box 3, Folder 6; Box 3, Folder 7.
[43] Items removed from Box 4, Folder 2.

[44] Items removed from Box 4, Folder 10; Box 5, Folder 2.

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