Guide to the Caesar R. Bannihr Papers

MS 830

compiled by Diane Kaplan

August 1978

Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
mssa.assist@yale.edu
http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
mssa.assist@yale.edu
http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/

CALL NUMBER: MS 830

CREATOR: Bannihr, Caesar R., 1857-1943

TITLE: Caesar R. Bannihr papers

DATES: 1883–1942

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2 linear feet (5 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers are made up almost entirely of diaries and account books that record Bannihr’s business career, both as the owner of a trimming business in New York, and as an engraver and die sinker. Bannihr’s early diaries (1883-1891) describe his life as a young working man in Cheshire, Connecticut, where he was active in Democratic politics and the district school committee. Included in the diaries are descriptions of his mechanical inventions. His wife also kept a diary for a portion of this period (1890-1893), which takes in the years of their courtship and early married life. Samples of Bannihr’s work in the form of plaster casts, master molds, and metal dies are also in the collection.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0830

Requesting Instructions
To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0830.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder
Caesar R. Bannihr (1857-1943) was a tinkerer and an inventor, and by profession, an engraver and die sinker. All that we know about Bannihr is what can be found in the diaries and account books that are in the Bannihr Papers. Bannihr was twenty-six-years-old when he started recording the events of his daily life in the series of diaries found in these papers. From 1883-1891 Bannihr worked a ten-hour day at the Cheshire (Connecticut) Manufacturing Company. In his leisure time he invented a match box machine, a safety brake, and other gadgets; practiced drawing, piano, and guitar; bicycled and served as sales agent for the Columbia Bicycle Company; sold cigars as a small business venture with his father; attended the local Democratic Party caucuses; and served on the Committee of School District No. 12, Cheshire. It was while Bannihr was on the school committee that he started to court his future wife, Cynthia Tucker (1858-?), a teacher at the school. Since Cynthia Tucker Bannihr also kept a diary for the period 1890-1893, we can see this developing relationship from both sides. There is no diary of Caesar Bannihr’s after he left Cheshire for New York in December 1891, but Cynthia Tucker Bannihr’s diary shows us the plans for the October 1892 wedding and their first year of married life in New York City.

When Bannihr moved to New York, he presumably went into partnership with his brother Henry in the trimming business. There are two account books for his enterprise. However, Bannihr soon was working at the trade of engraving and die sinking. The account books from 1894-1942 would indicate that he was self-employed, but he also might have practiced his trade while holding a full-time job. The account books show not only the economic course of the business, but also the craftsmanship of Bannihr; they contain numerous sketches and samples of the dies and engravings.

The papers contain another series of diaries kept by Bannihr from 1934-1941 while he and his wife were living in Stratford, Connecticut. In these Bannihr recorded day-to-day happenings, the produce of his garden, and the decreasing work load of his later years.

The papers are arranged as follows:

Diaries of Caesar R. Bannihr,* 1883-1891; 1934-1941
Diaries of Cynthia T. Bannihr, 1890-1893
Account Books,* 1891-1942
Photograph, n.d.
Misc. printed material & sample dies 1885-1890, n. d.

*In several places Bannihr used old account books for his diary or recorded financial matters at the end of a diary volume. Where such overlap occurs has been noted in the folder list.

The papers were purchased from M. Earle, April 17, 1944.
## Collection Contents

### Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, f. 1</td>
<td>1883 Sep (kept during his vacation to Boston and Maine)</td>
<td>1884 January–December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, f. 2</td>
<td>1884 January–December</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1, f. 3</td>
<td>1885 January – December</td>
<td>1885 January – December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, f. 4</td>
<td>1886 Jan - Dec (2 vol.); 1886 Aug 30 - Sep 6 (kept during a trip to Philadelphia)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1, f. 5</td>
<td>1887 Jan - Dec (2 vol.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1, f. 6</td>
<td>1888 Jan - Dec (2 vol.); 1888 Jun - 1889 May (Vol. contains a record of School District No. 12, Cheshire, Conn. business.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, f. 7</td>
<td>1889 Jan - Dec (2 vol.); 1889 Jun - 1891 Mar (Vol. includes a record of School District No. 12, Cheshire, Conn. business with the school expense account.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, f. 8</td>
<td>1890 January – December; 1891 January – December (2 vol.) (Vol. includes accounts of Bannihr as an agent for Columbia Bicycles.)</td>
<td>1890 January – December; 1891 January – December (2 vol.) (Vol. includes accounts of Bannihr as an agent for Columbia Bicycles.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2, f. 10</td>
<td>1935 September – December</td>
<td>1935 September – December</td>
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<tr>
<td>2, f. 11</td>
<td>1936 Jan - Dec (Vol. includes the pages of Bannihr’s account book from 1903-1905.)</td>
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<td>2, f. 12</td>
<td>1936 November – 1938 January</td>
<td>1936 November – 1938 January</td>
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<tr>
<td>2, f. 13</td>
<td>1938 Jan - Feb; 1938 Feb - Sep (Vol. includes pages from a “Time Book Weekly” Account, 1896 Mar-Apr.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Container</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 15</td>
<td>1940 May - Nov (Vol. contains a few pages of financial accounts, 1883-1884; 1894-1895.)</td>
<td>1940 May - Nov (Vol. contains a few pages of financial accounts, 1883-1884; 1894-1895.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 16</td>
<td>1940 Dec - 1941 Feb (Vol. includes a few pages of salesmen’s commission accounts, 1893 Jan-Oct, presumably for Bannihr Bros. Trimmers.)</td>
<td>1940 Dec - 1941 Feb (Vol. includes a few pages of salesmen’s commission accounts, 1893 Jan-Oct, presumably for Bannihr Bros. Trimmers.)</td>
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<td>b. 3, f. 17-20</td>
<td>1890 January – December 1893</td>
<td>1890 January – December 1893</td>
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<td>b. 3, f. 21</td>
<td>Bannihr Bros. Trimmers: Accounts of Jacob H. Guggenheimer, salesman, (Vol. also includes accounts for C. R. Bannihr’s die works, 1904 Aug - 1906 Sep.)</td>
<td>1891 October–1893 April</td>
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<td>b. 3, f. 22</td>
<td>Accounts of M. J. Loeb, salesman</td>
<td>1894 June–September</td>
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<td>b. 3, f. 23</td>
<td>Die works</td>
<td>1894 January–1895 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 24-25</td>
<td>Engraving and die works</td>
<td>1895 June–1898 November</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 26</td>
<td>Engraver and die sinker</td>
<td>1903–1905; also 1930 March–December</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 27-30</td>
<td>Engraver and die sinker</td>
<td>1906–1930 January; 1931 January–1942 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 5, f. 31</td>
<td>Photograph: Caesar R. Bannihr with bicycle</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5, f. 32</td>
<td>Printed material relating to Columbia Bicycles and to the League of American Wheelmen</td>
<td>1885–1890</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 5, f. 33</td>
<td>Notes and drawings</td>
<td>1936, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5, f. 34-35</td>
<td>Die samples</td>
<td>1936, undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
Business
Businessmen
Education
Engraving (Metal-work)
Labor
Labor movement
Science
Working class

Geographic Names
Cheshire (Conn.)
Connecticut

Genres / Formats
Account books
Diaries

Occupations
Engravers

Names
Bannihr, Caesar R., 1857-1943
Bannihr, Cynthia Tucker, b. 1858