Register of the Smith & Lang Co. (Stockton, Calif.) Records, 1910-1947

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Collection number: Mss135

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Descriptive Summary
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Biography
Smith & Lang was Stockton, Calif.'s oldest department store, established in 1899 by Alfred B. Lang and John H. Smith. Alfred B. Lang (b.1874), a founding partner, first worked at the Alexander Chalmers Dry Goods Store where he met another clerk, John H. Smith, with whom he opened a store at 124 E. Main. The company was incorporated in 1910 and six years later John Smith died leaving Alfred Lang President for over thirty-five years. The partners took over the Hale Brothers building at Main and San Joaquin Street (1915) and, in 1939, expanded this structure by an additional 7,700 feet. In July 1945 Smith & Lang was sold to J. Wesley Hearne, a veteran buyer and merchandise manager in California and New York, and Alfred Lang retired, but Walter Sampson continued as manager and the name "Smith and Lang" was retained by the new owner. In February 1946 C. M. Dicker of Redding bought J W Hearne's interest in Smith & Lang and Dicker became the general manager. By 1950 the company employed 125. On July 22, 1958 Smith & Lang burned to the ground in a fire called the "worst national mercantile fire of 1958." Insurance claims totalled $3,000,000. Plans were soon made to rebuild the store and, on August 25, 1959, it reopened in a building designed by Welton, Beckett and Associates of Los Angeles.
February 1963 Weinstock-Lubin purchased Smith & Lang and the company ceased business.

Scope and Content
This collection includes the Smith & Lang Co.’s by-laws, a minute book (1910-1947), a general ledger (1910-1929), stock book (1910-1943), bank statements and checks (1945-1946), and other financial documents (1922-1946).

BOX 1: SMITH & LANG CO. RECORDS, 1910-1947
1.1: STAFF RESEARCH FOLDER
- Stockton Record clippings
- Notes
1.2: SMITH & LANG BY-LAWS
1.3: SMITH & LANG RECORD BOOK, 1910-1947 [pasted in typescript (pp. 1-10); manuscript, 11-78, pasted in typescript (pp.79-87)]
- Minutes of incorporation, 1910
- Minutes of monthly meetings, 1916-1947 [incl. resolution to honor memory of John H. Smith who died September 1, 1916; agmt. to liquidate assets, December 18, 1947]
1.4: STOCK JOURNAL AND LEDGER BOOK, 1910-1929
1.5: BOOK OF STOCK CERTIFICATES, 1910-1943 [manuscript index to shares. Lists date issued, to whom, certificate number, and number of shares, from 1910 to March 14, 1939]
1.6: BANK STATEMENTS AND RETURNED CHECKS, 1945-1946 [incl. ledger sheets, August through October 1945]
1.7: MISCELLANEOUS FINANCIAL RECORDS, 1922-1944
- Ledger pages of stock certificates issued
- Scattered notes on dividends paid, 1922-26; 1940-44: names, shares & amounts, 12 pp.]
- Memorandum to Mr. Sampson on stock prices, 1-19-39
- Analysis of stocks on March 1, 1940: names, shares, and dividends
- Request for consent to transfer shares to Bessie Smith Sampson and Golden Smith Bainbridge, daughter of Mary A. Smith, deceased, 4-2-41
- Premium Adjustment Statement, Insurance Co. of N. America, 1944-45
- Notes Financial Statement of 1945, cash at $296,084.00
- Bills and misc. documents
- Journal entry: liquidity payment of capital $200,000, 1-15-46
- Stock notes
- Bonuses: 1/31/45 to 6/30/45
1.8: BLANK CHECK FORMS: #1816-1851, Bank of America, Stockton, Calif.