

# Archives and Special Collections

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## **Ball Stores Records 1944-1990 MSS 114**

Title: Ball Stores records

Creator: Ball Stores (Muncie, Ind.)

Inclusive Dates: 1944-1990

Extent: 0.3 cubic feet

Container(s): 1 box

Language of Materials: Materials entirely in English.

Preferred Citation:

Ball Stores Records, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries

Administrative History:

Ball Stores opened with great fanfare in November 1934. The store was located in the old W.A. McNaughton Company building at the corner of Charles and Walnut Streets in downtown Muncie, Indiana. George A. Ball, the vice president of Ball Brothers, was the store's first president. Ball Brothers had no particular desire to operate the store, but they believed the need existed in Muncie for a high quality retail outlet. On opening day, some 50,000 people crowded the store to gaze upon the gleaming new fixtures and the wide range of merchandise. The new store employed 125 people, many of whom had been unemployed for quite some time due to the Great Depression. The store carried a complete line of merchandise, selling everything from clothing and shoes to groceries and furniture.

In 1938, Fred and Margaret Ball Petty purchased the business from Ball Bros. Fred became president and treasurer of the company and served in those capacities until his death in 1949. Margaret assumed control of the company until 1965, when her son Edmund took over. He served as president until 1982, when he was succeeded by Martin Clark. The Pettys operated the business as an independent department store specializing in high quality merchandise. The store also held the honor as the largest independently owned and operated department store in Indiana. In 1968, Ball Stores acquired Collegienne Shops, a retail outlet on University Avenue near Ball State University. In 1970, the Muncie Mall opened, permanently changing the shopping patterns of Muncie and drawing consumers away from downtown. Both Sears and J. C. Penny soon

abandoned their downtown locations in favor of the new mall. In 1978, Ball Stores opened an outlet at the mall in order to remain competitive in the Muncie Market.

By the 1980s, the company was starting to experience financial difficulties. A group of investors, most of whom hailed from Muncie, acquired the company in order to reestablish its past glory. However, the downward slide continued. In 1984, the store's home furnishing outlet closed. In 1986 the downtown store closed, followed by the closing of Collegienne in 1988. In 1989, after city officials considered and withdrew proposals for transforming the Ball Stores building into the new city hall, the building was demolished. By 1990, the Muncie Mall outlet was closed, bringing an end to a chapter in Muncie's commercial history.

**Scope and Contents:**

The collection includes correspondence, newspaper clippings, publications, and documents related to the later years of Ball Stores and efforts to reuse the building after it closed (1944-1990).

**Conditions Governing Access:**

This collection is open for research.

**Copyright Notice:**

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Ball State University, Muncie, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Archives and Special Collections.

**Custodial History:**

The Ball Stores Records were received by Archives and Special Collections as a donation from Francis Petty Sargent on 1990/5/10.

**Accruals:** No additions are expected.

**Processing Information:**

Collection processing reviewed 2009/01/10 by Maren L. Read.

EAD finding aid completed 2009/01/10 by Maren L. Read.

EAD finding aid revised 2009/08/05 by Maren L. Read.

**Arrangement:**

The Ball Store Records are arranged alphabetically.

**Controlled Access Headings:**

- Muncie (Ind.)
- Stoeckel Archives of Local History
- Ball Stores (Muncie, Ind.)
- Department stores
- Correspondence
- Documents
- Clippings

Collection Inventory:

Box	Contents
1	Correspondence and Related Materials, 1986-1988
	Correspondence and Related Materials, 1988
	Newspaper clippings, 1984-1988
	Newspaper clippings, 1988-1990
	Proposal for Adaptive Reuse, 1988
	<i>The Ball-oon</i> , publication, October 1944