

MS-126: Charles O. Wolpers Papers

Collection Number: MS-126

Title: Charles O. Wolpers Papers

Dates: 1817-1865

Creator: Wolpers, Charles O., 1790-1868

Summary/Abstract: The Charles O. Wolpers Papers consist of early 19th century daybooks, journals, and financial ledgers from stores that Wolpers owned in Bellefontaine (earlier named Belleville) and Germantown, Ohio. Also included are a few letters written to Wolpers by his brother in Germany.

Quantity/Physical Description: 0.5 linear feet

Language(s): English, German

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection.

Restrictions on Use:

Copyright restrictions may apply. Unpublished manuscripts are protected by copyright. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder.

Preferred Citation:

[Description of item, Date, Box #, Folder #], MS-126, Charles O. Wolpers Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

Acquisition: The collection was donated by Lyndon E. Abbott, the husband of Charles O. Wolpers' great-granddaughter, Mildred Naomi (nee Schaeffer) Abbott.

Other Finding Aid:

The finding aid is available on the Special Collections & Archives, Wright State University Libraries web site at <https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms126.pdf>. It is also available in the OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository at <http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/>.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The ledgers in this collection are extremely brittle. The edges of the books are tattered and, in some cases, torn. Please handle the materials with care.

Related Materials:

MS-21 Logan County Business Records

(<http://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms21.pdf>)

Processed by: David B. Allbaugh, July 1982.

Revisions:

Finding aid revised according to DACS standards by Alyssa Stark and Toni Vanden Bos, March 2019.

Arrangement:

This collection is arranged into three series.

Series I: Belleville Store Records, 1817-1819

Series II: Wolpers and Schwartze Store Records (Germantown, Ohio), 1844-1865

Series III: Letters from Wilhelm Wolpers to Charles Wolpers, 1824-1825

Historical Note:

Theodore Carl Otto Wolpers was born January 15, 1790, as the son of General States Auditor Paul Godfried Frantz Wolpers in Maelstricht, Prussia. Wolpers immigrated to the United States sometime around 1810-1812, but continued to keep in touch with family in Germany. The transcription of his naturalization papers in the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas on October 7, 1836 certifies that he had resided more than five years in the U.S. and “proven his residence in the United States since before the 17th of June 1812 by oath of Augustus J.B. Swarts”. Swarts (also spelled – Schwartze) was Wolpers’ brother-in-law, with whom he was in business in Germantown, Ohio. It is unclear where Wolpers resided after his arrival in the U.S. in 1812 and before moving to Belleville in Logan County, Ohio (present day Bellefontaine) in 1817. In 1871, Charles Wolpers was an owning partner of the Belleville Store, a general store selling considerable quantities of whiskey, among other items.

At some point in the early 1820s, C.O. Wolpers left Belleville and relocated to Germantown, Ohio where he resided for the rest of his life. In Germantown in the late 1820s-1830s, C.O. Wolpers and his brother-in-law, Augustus Schwartze, formed a partnership. The Germantown Gazette of 1845 listed Wolpers and Schwartz – Drug and Chemical Store. It also appears that Charles Wolpers may have also had a separate business, as he is also listed in the 1845 Germantown Gazetteer as Charles O. Wolpers – Chemical Laboratory, which may have been an euphemism for a distillery. Charles O. Wolpers died on December 21, 1868. He is buried in lot 259 in Germantown Cemetery.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection contains records from the Belleville Store in Logan County, Ohio, dating from 1817-1819 when Charles O. Wolpers was a partner, as well as records from when Wolpers and his cousin operated the Wolpers and Schwartze Store in Germantown, Ohio dating from 1846-1865. The records include names of buyers, lists of merchandise, and the unit price of items sold. The collection also includes two letters from Charles’ brother, Wilhelm, which have been

transcribed from German to English. The two letters in the third series are the only personal papers included in the collection. The bulk of the collection consists of store ledger books.

Series I, Belleville Store Records, 1817-1819, consists two ledgers. The first ledger is a daybook dated May 4, 1817 to August 19, 1817. Entries for each day's sales are given with the name of the purchaser, item or items purchased, how many of each, unit price for each item and the total price for the transaction. The name of Charles O. Wolpers appears among the purchasers' names on the dates of May 14, May 30, June 4, and June 10; at least 40 names are readable. The journal is unbound and is 8" x 12 ½".

The second item in this series is a hardback account book labeled "Journal" on the front. The cover is dated January, 1941, and on the top of each page appears the date of February 1, 1820. However, the earliest entry is date is actually May 3, 1817 (the same as the beginning date in the Daybook), and the latest date is July 14, 1819. The entries include the name of the debtor, followed by "To Gluer and Wolpers." Under this heading is the date that each debt occurred, the item or items purchased, how many of each, the unit price, and the total debt owed. The ledger contains fewer names than the daybook. Some names appear in both sets of books; for example, George Blalock and John Workman.

Series II, Wolpers and Schwartze Store Records (Germantown, Ohio), 1844-1865 contains three different ledgers.

The first ledger is a bound, 6" x 14 ½", from Wolpers and Schwartze Store in Germantown with entries for years 1844-1855. The first section consists of 26 pages of an alphabetical index of customers during a four-year period, 1846-1850. There are over 300 names in the index. The remainder of the ledger consists of the names of customers, what they bought, and the price. A few of the entries are dated: 1844, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1854, and 1855. These last few years in the ledger are potentially people paying off of old debts from previous years. The last two pages in the ledger are dated 1852-1855 and contain the account with Unger and Groneweg (this may be Stoneweg; it is hard to tell from the writing). Customers were from Farmersville, Lebanon, Westville, and Greenville. Pages 14-15 contain the personal account of C.O. Wolpers. Near the end of the ledger are three pages of "Notes registered, Sept. 26, 1846." They are listed by name of town with the name of purchaser and amounts sold. The towns include Springborough, Miamisburg, Centerville, New Madison, West Alexandria, Paris, Westville, Eaton, New Baltimore, Lexington, Jacksonburgh, Richmond, Oxford, Cambridge, Mittenville, Camdden (Camden), Winchester, and Lewisburgh.

The second ledger is a bound day book, 6 ½" x 8" in size, from Wolpers and Schwartze Store in Germantown. Front cover is inscribed "New Book." This contains entries of individual transaction, purchases, name of customer, article, price, date, payments, and name of payee, amount, and credit by cash that was paid on delivery. First entry is on November 10, 1851. Last entry in continuous series is September 20, 1862. There are a number of entries after that; the last one is on March 4, 1865. Page 39 (1853) is a draft of a letter soliciting business and praising the quality of whiskey, gin, and vinegar. Page 230, May 25, 1861, by cash in Kentucky currency - \$26.00; Page 255, October 12, 1863 and page 256, October 17, 1863, have reference to cash being paid to the First National Bank of Germantown. These would have been one of the First

National Bank which was chartered in 1863. Several unnumbered pages near the back of the book contain a list of the amount of whiskey, vinegar, gin, and ether sold at various dates in 1856, 1857, and 1858. There are also several drafts of a letter dated June 12, 1854 that are unsigned and concern the appointment of a chemical inspector of a “chemical liquor inspector” for Montgomery County. Whoever wrote this seemed to be either recommending someone for the post and/or is declining the appointment himself.

The third volume is a ledger, 6” by 15”, from Wolpers and Schwartze Store or business in Germantown. The front cover of the ledger a note is written and reads, “Charles O. Wolpers in act with Wolpers & Schwartze Extracted from Old day Book and New Day Book.” The first section of the book is an alphabetical index to the accounts in the third section, giving the name of the individual and the page number where the account appears. The second section consists of four pages headed, Charles O. Wolpers account with purchases from various individuals. This may have been done by Wolpers as a traveling salesman. The first entry appears to give the total worth of Wolpers & Schwartze as of Oct. 5, 1850. The third section, pages 1-48, are cumulative accounts of 65 different individuals. On the left hand page are the charges or purchases; on the right hand page are the credits or payments. Dates range from 1850-1862, so it is a companion record of the New Day Book (with cross-referenced pages). There are also some page references to the Old Day Book. Merchandise sold included chemicals, ammonia, ether, whiskey, wine, brandy, and vinegar.

Series III: Letters from Wilhelm Wolpers to Charles Wolpers, 1824-1825, contains copies of two typed letters which have been translated from German by Margaret Wilde.

The first letter is from Wilhelm Wolpers to his brother Charles (whom he calls Otto), dated March 12, 1824. Sent from the Principality of Lippe Detmold, town of Horn, Wilhelm writes of his and the entire family’s joy at finding out that Charles is alive and well in America. Wilhelm tells about how their brothers and their families and their aged mother are doing. Wilhelm tells about his own life, how he met his wife and married her and the number of children that they have. Wilhelm says that currently times are bad, but he believes that he and his wife will make it through them. He looks forward to correspondence with Charles and hopes to see him again someday, either in Germany or America.

The second letter is also from Wilhelm Wolpers to his brother, Charles, and dated September 30, 1825, a letter. Wilhelm apologizes for not having written to him sooner because their brother Heinrich kept the letter in Bremen for several months. Wilhelm goes on to say that times are still hard for their family. Wilhelm’s father-in-law suffers badly from epilepsy, but otherwise everybody is in good health, including their 77 year old mother. All the family loves Charles and is anxiously waiting to hear from him.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Wolpers, Charles Otto, 1790-1868

Wolpers, Wilhelm

Organizations/Corporate Names

Belleville Store (Belleville, Ohio)

Wolpers and Schwartz (Germantown, Ohio)

Places

Germantown (Ohio) – History – 19th century

Bellefontaine (Ohio) – History – 19th century

Logan County (Ohio) – History – 19th century

Subjects (General)

General stores – Ohio – Logan County

Material Types

Account books

Letters (correspondence)

Daybooks

Collection Inventory

Box	File	Description	Date
Series I: Belleville Store Records			1817-1819
1	1	Belleville Store Daybook	1817 May 4- 1817 August 19
1	2	Belleville Store Account Book	1817 May 3- 1819 July 14
Series II: Germantown, Ohio Store Records of Wolpers and Schwartze			1844-1865
1	3	Ledger	1844-1855
1	4	Daybook	1857-1863
1	5	Ledger	1851 November 10-1865 March 4
Series III: Letters from Wilhelm Wolpers to Charles Wolpers			1824-1825
1	6	Letter 1	1824 March 12
1	7	Letter 2	1825 September 30