

Baur's Collection

Mss.02624

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Summary Information

Repository	History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center
Creator - Originator	Baur, Otto Paul, 1846-1904
Creator - Donor	Carlin, Lee Jacobs
Creator	O. P. Baur Confectionery Company.
Title	Baur's Collection
Date	circa 1932 - 2001
Extent	2.75 Linear feet + 2 flat boxes
Location note	Photographs and moving images in Series IX are stored with the Photography Department in Ph.00562.
Language	English
Archival Material [Box]	1.75 linear feet + 2 flat boxes
Abstract	<p>The Baur's Collection (1906-2001) documents the establishment and growth of the O. P. Baur Confectionery Company in Denver, Colorado. This mixed collection contains materials related to the corporate history of the business, including photographs, advertisements, menus, employee newsletters, baking & confectionery artifacts, and most notably over 1,000 recipes dating from 1934-1961, which comprise eight bound volumes of recipes. Colloquially known as Baur's, and established when Colorado was still a territory, the company was founded by German immigrant Otto P. Baur in 1870, and soon became synonymous with quality, Old World elegance, and unique creations. It quickly became a fixture in the Denver community, with many of Baur's modern-minded decisions</p>

serving as historic touchstones. In 1860, Otto Baur personally served free biscuits to the Native Americans who camped in Denver. During the Great Depression, his shop passed out free ice cream cones to children-- a gesture that soon became an anticipated annual event. And in the late 1930s, before the era of racial integration, Baur's took a stand and served amid protests, the racially-mixed party of the legendary African-American singer Marian Anderson, who was in town for several performances. Although Baur's closed in 1970, just shy of a century in business, the longevity of Baur's popularity as a Denver institution reflects their dedication to the community, to their cadre of loyal employees, to modern management practices, and most of all to creating a range of exceptional products.

Historical note

Otto P. Baur was born on October 15, 1846 in Wurtemberg, Germany to Dr. John Joseph Baur and his wife Pauline Kohler. He was seven years old when his large family emigrated to Tamaqua, Pennsylvania in 1853. At the age of sixteen he moved to Pottsville, Pennsylvania to live with his sister Clara and her husband John Henry Jacobs and worked in the bakery that his brother-in-law had recently started. He learned a great deal about the confectionery business during his three-and-a-half year immersion and performed well, earning a 60% raise in his weekly salary after just two years. Baur moved to New York City to further refine his confectionery skills, but was called home by his father in April of 1867. He was to accompany his sister Thusnelda and her four small children in a move to Denver to join her husband Julius F. Stockdorf, who had left the previous year to seek his fortune. During that time, Stockdorf had become the proprietor of a hotel called the Pennsylvania House on Blake Street, between E and F Streets (now Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets).

Despite the long and at times perilous stagecoach ride, during which they had been chased by groups of Native Americans on horseback, Baur and his relatives arrived safely in Denver on May 5, 1867. Denver was a rustic pioneer settlement oriented around prospectors and miners, with a variety of cottage industries that had sprung up to fulfill everyday needs. Baur quickly found work at the popular and well-established City Bakery, which happened to be the first bakery in town and conveniently located next to the hotel that his brother-in-law owned on Blake Street. Over the next few years Otto Baur ventured beyond the confines of Denver, partnering with friends to provide gold prospectors and rail line surveyors with his culinary fare, particularly baked goods and confections. However, success was often short-lived in such circumstances, and the following year Otto Baur returned to Denver.

He took a position as a baker at Jacob Schueler's store on Larimer Street specializing in fine cakes, but was determined to start his own business. Later in 1870 he joined forces with James Colwell, a bookkeeper with connections and some capital to invest. The firm of Colwell & Baur became the first established catering firm in Denver, and they experienced success catering private events for many of Denver's social elite and even hotel banquets. Located at 16th and Lawrence Streets, Baur's firm also created candies by the cartload for miners who craved his sweets. It is during this time that he invented one of his first famous concoctions -- the ice cream soda in 1871. (For a detailed account of this invention and the related dispute, see pages 8-10 of "A History of Baur's" by Lee Jacobs Carlin, included in this collection).

As Colwell & Baur's prospered, the need for expansion soon became a evident. In 1874, Baur finally realized a long sought-after dream--to own his own shop. He bought Jacob Schueler's shop on Larimer Street and shortly afterwards bought out Colwell's share in the business, making Baur the sole proprietor. After employing Theodore L. Meier in 1878, an able confectioner from the East Coast, Otto Baur and his wife Marie Kuner were able to make many trips east and to Europe to study the latest trends and improvements in confectionery. Meier played an increasingly important role in the company over the years; when the Baur Company moved to 1512 Curtis Street in 1891, Meier was made a partner in the firm. In the years that followed, Baur's catering business flourished, serving the successful miners who built lavish homes in Denver and a number of prominent figures like Molly Brown, all of whom enjoyed

throwing lavish parties. Baur continued to make many trips, including one to Mexico City in 1898 where he studied the Aztecs' use of cocoa, and he incorporated this into his delicious chocolate candies. By the late 1890s the O. P. Baur Confectionery Company employed twenty workers to keep up with the demand of producing high quality candies, which were shipped throughout the United States and to many foreign countries.

With his increased success and prominence throughout Denver, Otto Baur established a family tradition of becoming active in civic affairs. He was involved in the Board of Trade, the Chamber of Commerce, and was a lifetime member of the Elks Club. He was also a leader in creating the Festival of Mountain and Plain in 1895, which became famous as a sort of annual Western Mardi Gras, featuring historic figures, Native Americans, and lots of pioneer pageantry. In 1904, in appreciation of his labors, Otto Baur was honored at a surprise ceremony given by the Chamber of Commerce, and was presented with an engraved gold-headed cane (still in the possession of the family). As his health started to decline, he and his wife made a trip to Europe to encourage respite and recovery, but just a month after his return he died on August 3, 1904.

Baur's nephew, John Joseph (Joe) Jacobs, had moved to Denver in 1891 with his new bride to work for his uncle. He learned the business from the ground up, working 16 hour days 7 days a week in the kitchen. But after five years, Joe Jacobs returned back East to work at a bakery and candy company in Hartford, Connecticut. When his uncle passed in 1904, Marie Kuner Baur, Otto Baur's widow, wrote to Jacobs requesting that he come back to Denver and run the company. In 1906, Joe Jacobs and his wife Mame moved back to Denver so that he could become the General Manager, thus relieving Theodore Meier of the additional responsibilities that he'd been managing since Otto Baur's death.

By 1918 Baur's opened its first restaurant at 1512 Curtis Street, which soon became quite popular, generating enough revenue to maintain 125 employees on the payroll. They eventually added the Pompeian Room, which was decorated in Italian rococo, and the tearoom and the English Room with its wainscoted walls and hunting prints. The restaurant had the same splendor as the famed soda fountain and candy counters. Together Meier and Jacobs invented new candies for their shop -- the Mija (an English toffee with a name conflating the first syllables of their last names), French Mints, and Crystal Cuts. Baur's became the spot for many of Denver's elite families; according to historian LeRoy Hafen, the English room was especially "popular with business and professional men for lunch, and groups of friends have daily met at their own tables very much in the customs in clubs and the famous 'round table' at New York's old Mouquin." (Colorado and Its People, 4: 527).

When Theodore Meier retired in 1924, Joe Jacobs became the president of the company and the sole owner of Baur's, managing 15 departments and 250 employees. He, like Otto Baur, continued to travel and bring back French, Swiss, and Viennese recipes for pastries and candies. According to Hafen, the success of Baur's in the twentieth-century is inextricably linked to the appeal and influence of Joe Jacobs' personality. "He erected the business by applying the same human relations and methods to his employees that he applied to his social relations. He was one with them--spurred their ambition, gave each a chance to prove the mettle of his or her ability. He extended his business interests, joined clubs and civic organizations, went to the top in Masonry, becoming Knight Templar and member of the Shrine." (Colorado and Its People, 4: 528-29 and Lee Carlin, A History of Baur's 18.) Known for his philanthropic activities, Joe Jacobs took a special interest in the children and the elderly. During the Great Depression, he promoted a free ice cream cone day for children and helped create homes for the aged, often hosting banquets in their honor. In 1933, as in other years, Jacobs and the Baur's staff

teamed up with the Denver Post to provide an Easter Egg hunt for Denver children. Jacobs also enjoyed presenting beautifully decorated birthday cakes to those on the cusp of 100 years of age. His generosity also extended to orphanages and hospitals, and he insisted on bringing the delectable confections and candies from his store to any celebratory occasion.

Having lost his wife in 1935 and forced to contend with the reality of his own failing health, Joe Jacobs was determined to follow the tradition of keeping the business in the family. He wrote to his nephew John H. Jacobs in Pennsylvania, and invited him to come to Denver to work for the O. P. Baur Confectionery Company. John's extensive education in business and experience as an apprentice within several confectionery businesses back East was a boon for Baur's. When Joe Jacobs died on September 28, 1937, his will gifted a significant portion of his fortune to Denver's Children's Hospital and to the Shriner's Hospital for Children, and the majority shareholder interest of the company to his siblings. His will also named W. S. Dent, a long-time secretary of the firm, as his successor as president.

W. S. Dent was president of Baur's from 1937 until his sudden death in 1940. During this time, the Uptown Store at 16th and Glenarm opened in 1938, followed by the opening of a popular adjacent grill that became "one of downtown Denver's favorite cocktail bars." John H. Jacobs had worked alongside Dent as an apprentice in various sectors of the business during a time when a bitter dispute was occurring over Joe Jacobs' will and the extent of economic hardships that the Depression had wrought on the business. When W. S. Dent died of a heart attack in 1940, John H. Jacobs was elected president and general manager at just 28 years of age. The tumult that arose from the recent deaths of two company presidents and the ongoing conflicts between employee stockholders and controlling family stockholders posed considerable challenges to John H. Jacobs. Nevertheless, he pressed ahead to expand the business. He led the company during the war years, a time when rationing of sugar and other necessary ingredients negatively impacted a number of confectionery and restaurant businesses. Baur's still managed to expand in 1942, adding popular lunch counters and candy and bakery counters at the May Company.

Though an inexperienced leader, John H. Jacobs relied on his experience and training in confectionery business administration and proceeded with reorganizing and renewing Baur's from the inside out. Taking a cooperative tack, and utilizing the older employees' experience, he gave full responsibility and authority for each department to the department managers. This approach required significant adjustment and additional systems for better management and overall communication. John Jacobs modernized Baur's, tried new marketing techniques, upgraded equipment and processes, and supported internal dialogue through the employee newsletter, the *Baur's Beacon*. When wages were frozen during the war, Jacobs instituted health and retirement benefits for Baur's employees. He used communications, the focus of his master's study at the University of Denver, as a management tool. In order to survive, the company had to shift from the structure of one-man leadership to a team management structure.

Despite its popularity, Baur's expansions led to increasing debt. In September, 1951 the investment firm Peters, Writer and Christensen bought Baur's from Joe Jacobs' estate as well as the controlling interest from the family stock holders. The family control of the business officially ended at that time, despite their continued involvement in various aspects of the business.

Recognizing that downtown Denver was losing some business to other areas in the city, Gerald Peters opened a Baur's Restaurant in 1955 at the newly opened Cherry Creek shopping center while the Curtis Street location remained the center of bakery and candy operations. By the 1960s, Baur's commitment to superior ingredients and exemplary service resulted in difficulties when competing with the convenience,

speed, and economy of the rapidly growing fast food industry. For a short time in 1962, John H. Jacobs returned as treasurer and candy bakery manager. As Lee Carlin noted, "To its last day, Baur's hallmark quality was maintained by making everything in-house." Several branches closed as the company continued to lose money. Finally, in 1969 the existing six Baur's restaurants were sold to Aircoa and the Baur's name ceased operations.

The flagship Curtis Street building was spared demolition, just beyond the boundary of Skyline Urban Renewal District in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Later in 2004 the flagship building was bought and restored to its previous architectural glory. In 2006, the flagship building at 1512 Curtis Street was added to both the Colorado and the National Register of Historic Places.

Colorado Poet Laureate Thomas Hornsby Ferril recalled the company's slogan, "Famous for good things to eat," and asserted, "Famous indeed, and enjoyed and looked forward to and representative of an era when an ice cream soda could be a week's worth of dreams." (*Denver Post*, 15 September 1958, 30).

[Adapted from "Let's Get Acquainted. . . Baur's and You, c. 1947; National Register of Historic Places site report, c. 31 May, 2006; "A History of Baur's" by Lee Jacobs Carlin, c. 2001, Idlewild, Colo.: Grapvine Desktop Press]

Scope and Contents note

The Baur's Collection (1906-2001) documents the establishment, growth, and popularity of the O. P. Baur Confectionery Company (1874-1970) in Denver, Colorado, and the many confectionery and culinary recipes that made them famous. In addition to the company's extensive civic and cultural contributions, they embraced modern management techniques while upholding the exceptional quality that had become synonymous with the Baur name for nearly 100 years. As the third-oldest family-operated business in the city, Baur's became the "most popular and longest-lived confectionery, catering, and restaurant firm in Denver." (National Register of Historic Places Report, 2006). The collection includes over 1,000 recipes dating from 1934-1961, newspaper articles, advertisements, photographs, menus, a corporate history, newsletters, and a range of artifacts including baking and confectionery tools and supplies, circa 1906-2001. It also contains 57 photographs that depict the employees, products, stores, and events of the company from circa 1880-1955, as well as "Sweet Magic Baur's," a moving image film produced circa 1947 that documents the company's production line.

Arrangement note

This collection is arranged by material type, alphabetically, and chronologically. When possible, original order was maintained.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center

Conditions Governing Use note

This collection is open to researchers without restrictions.

Provenance

This collection was donated by Lee Jacobs Carlin, the daughter of John H. Jacobs, who was the great nephew of Otto Baur, the original founder of O. P. Baur Confectionery Company. John H. Jacobs was president of Baur's from 1940-1950.

Processing Information note

Processed by Kalyani Fernando, January 2015. Photographs and moving images processed by Megan K. Friedel, February 2015.

Related Materials

Mixed Collection Note

The Baur's Collection is part of a larger donation (Accession 2013.77 and 2014.10) of materials that include artifacts and photographs in addition to archival documents. Please contact the Research Center staff for more information.

Related Archival Materials note

See also History Colorado's Otto P. Baur and Bertha Stockdorf Collection, Mss.01368, and the Fisher and Fisher Architectural Records, WH932, Box 12, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library, concerning details about the flagship location of the O. P. Baur Confectionery Company at 1512 Curtis Street, Denver.

Controlled Access Headings

Function(s)

- Cake decorating.

Genre(s)

- Advertisements
- Articles of incorporation
- Bakery
- Caricature.
- Certificates
- Colorado--Newspapers.
- Confectionery--Equipment and supplies
- Cookbooks
- Employee handbooks.
- Menus.
- Molds (Cookware)
- Newsletters.

Geographic Name(s)

- Denver (Colo.)

Personal Name(s)

- Anderson, Marian, 1897-1993 -- History

- Baur, John Joseph, Dr.
- Baur, Marie Kuner
- Baur, Pauline Kohler
- Brown, Margaret ("Molly") Tobin, 1867-1932 -- History
- Colwell, James
- Dent, W. S. -- History
- Jacobs, John H. , 1912-1999
- Jacobs, John Joseph (Joe), 1872-1937
- Jacobs, Mame Luecke
- Jarrett, Mrs. -- History
- Meier, Theodore L. -- History
- Schueler, Jacob

Subject(s)

- Bakeries--Colorado
- Bakery employees
- Bread.
- Cake.
- Candy.
- Chocolate desserts.
- Clear Toys (Candy)
- Coffee cakes
- Confectionery
- Cookies.
- Crystal Cuts (Candy)
- Denver post.
- Doughnuts
- Entrees (Cooking)
- French Mints (Confectionery)
- Ice cream soda
- Ice cream, ices, etc.
- Marshmallow
- Marzipan
- National Register of Historic Places
- Nougats
- Pancakes, waffles, etc.
- Pies.
- Puddings.
- Restaurants.
- Salads.
- Sandwiches.
- Soda fountains--Anecdotes.

- Tea cakes.
- Truffles (Confectionery)

Accession number

2013.77, 2014.10, 2014.63.1

Collection Inventory

Series I Company History & Documents 1906-2001

FF1 A History of Baur's 2001

A History of Baur's

Carlin, Lee Jacobs (2001). A History of Baur's. Idledale, Colo. : Grapevine Desktop Press

Accession number

2013.77.19

FF2 Sweet Magic: The Story of Baur's Candymaking (DVD) [1940-1950]

General note

2013.77.37

FF3 Certificate of Incorporation 1906

Accession number

2013.77.26

FF4 Menus 1959, undated

Accession number

Public Relations

2013.77.32; 2013.77.33

FF5 Miscellaneous Documents 1922, undated

Accession number

2013.77.29; 2013.77.30

Series II Public Relations 1932-1955, 1973

FF6 Advertisements 1932-1955

Accession number

2013.77.24; 2013.77.25; 2013.77.34

FF7 Media Coverage 1973, undated

General note

2013.77.23; 2013.77.31

Series III Personnel [1944-1950]

FF8 Employee Handbook 1946

Accession number

2013.77.27

Recipes: Confectionery

FF9 Employee List 1944-1945

Accession number

2013.77.28

FF10 *Baur's Beacon* Vol. 1 1944-1945

Accession number

2013.77.20

FF11 *Baur's Beacon* Vol. 2 1945-1946

Accession number

2013.77.21

FF12 *Baur's Beacon* Vol. 3 Special Edition [1946-1950]

Accession number

2013.77.22

Series IV Recipes: Confectionery

Accession number

2013.77.36

Candy

Subseries I Candy

FF13 Baur's Inventions 1937-1958

Scope and Contents note

Baur's original candy inventions include the Mija, French Mints, and Clear Cuts, the latter of which are made in the Clear Toys molds. These candy molds are artifacts that are part of this collection.

FF14 Brittle/Caramel/Nougat/Toffee 1935-1958

FF15 Chocolate 1935-1962

FF16 Cream Centers 1935-1960

Scope and Contents note

These are recipes for the creamy centers of chocolates that were hand-dipped and hand-rolled.

FF17 Easter Candy 1935-1962

FF18 Fudge undated

FF19 Jelly & Fruit 1935-1950, undated

FF20 Marshmallow 1962, undated

FF21 Marzipan 1936, 1954

Cakes

FF22 Truffles 1935-1958

Subseries II Cakes

FF23 Cakes 1935-1961

FF24 Coffee Cakes 1935-1959

FF25 Cookies 1935-1936

FF26 Doughnuts 1935

FF27 French Pastries 1935-1936, 1961

FF28 Pies 1935-1961, undated

FF29 Tea Cakes 1935-1936, undated

FF30 Fondant/Paste/Toppings 1935-1957, undated

FF31 Icings & Fillings 1935-1961, undated

FF32 Related Documents 1942-1957, undated

Scope and Contents note

Includes handwritten notes, calculations, and receipts about the production costs of various confections.

Recipes: Bakery

Series V Recipes: Bakery

Accession number

2013.77.36

FF33 Breads 1935, 1961

FF34 Buns & Rolls 1931-1961

Series VI Recipes: Soda Fountain

Accession number

2013.77.36

FF35 Ice Cream (A-L) 1935-1957, undated

FF36 Ice Cream (M-Z) 1935-1954, undated

FF37 Ices & Sherberts 1935-1954, undated

FF38 Egg Nog, Frappes & Punch 1935-1954, undated

FF39 Syrups, Fudge, Etc. 1935-1954, undated

Series VII Recipes: Restaurant

Recipes: Bound Volumes

Accession number

2013.77.36

FF40 Breakfast 1936-1954, undated

FF41 Appetizers 1950, 1954

FF42 Salads & Dressings 1935-1961, undated

FF43 Soups & Sandwiches

FF44 Entrees

FF45 Side Dishes

FF46 Miscellaneous: Non-Baur's Recipes 1953-1958, undated

Series VIII Recipes: Bound Volumes

Accession number

2014.10.2.1; 2014.10.2.2; 2014.10.2.3; 2014.10.2.4; 2014.10.2.; 2014.10.2.6; 2014.10.2.7; 2014.10.2.8

FF47 Bound Recipe Volumes [1934-1935] Contains 4 bound volumes of recipes

Accession number

2014.10.2.1; 2014.10.2.2; 2014.10.2.7; 2014.10.2.8

FF Bound Recipe Volumes [1934-1935] Contains 4 bound volumes of recipes

Accession number

2014.10.2.3; 2014.10.2.4; 2014.10.2.5; 2014.10.2.6

Series IX Photographs & Moving Image 1880-circa 1955 0.25 Linear feet (57 photographs and 2 DVDs in 1 box)

Existence and Location of Originals note

The original 16mm nitrate film of "Sweet Magic Baur's" (Accession# 2014.63.1) is stored separately from the collection and is not available for research access or use.

Conditions Governing Access note

The original 16mm nitrate film of "Sweet Magic Baur's" is not available for research use, due to preservation concerns. Please use the DVD access copy located in this collection in Ph.00562. Contact the Stephen H. Hart Library & Research Center for more information.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains 57 photographs and 2 DVDs documenting Baur's from circa 1880-1955. The photographs include portraits of Otto P. Baur, Joseph Jacobs, and other employees; advertisements for the business; exterior and interior photographs of the Baur's stores, including the dining room; confectionery displays; confectionery conferences; Baur's employees at work packing confections; and events such as Breakfast at Baur's and other events. The DVDs include one disc of digital photos, given to History Colorado by the donor (who has retained some of the original photographs), and a DVD access copy of "Sweet Magic Baur's," a promotional moving image film originally made on 16mm nitrate film. The film was produced circa 1947 by the Baur's Confectionery Company and shows the Baur's candy manufacturing process and advertises its products.

Photographs

Photographs

FF2 Sweet Magic (DVD)