

F. Diehl & Son Collection  
Wellesley Historical Society

**Repository Identifier**

mawelhs

**Local Identifier**

2007.16

**Name and Location of Repository**

The Wellesley Historical Society

229 Washington Street

Wellesley, MA 02481

(781) 235-6690

[www.wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org)

**Title**

F. Diehl & Son Collection

**Date**

1876-2004

**Extent**

4 linear feet in 8 document boxes; plus Archives Oversize Materials

**Name of Creator**

Diehl Family

F. Diehl & Son, Inc.

**Biographical/Historical Note**

F. Diehl & Son, Inc. was founded by Frederick Diehl, Jr. and his young son William in 1876, as a supplier of “heavy commodities for the people of Wellesley and Natick,” including coal, lumber, and ice. An early company history notes that “the hard manual labor” was “carried on at first by these two men with the noble assistance of one reliable old gray horse.” For legal reasons, Frederick lent his name to the business, but William was the driving force behind its vision and growth; he managed business into the mid 1930s, when he was in his 80s. William died in 1937, and by then Diehl's had grown, through enterprise and acquisition, into a family business providing the area with a wide selection of goods, including coal, fuel oil, animal feeds, building and mason supplies, hardware, housewares, and more.

Known in the community simply as Diehl's, the business settled on a Linden Street location on land purchased in 1876 from the Hunnewell family, where it eventually straddled both sides of the street where Lindon Square is currently located. The sprawling company also encompassed a spur line off of the Boston & Albany Railroad to facilitate the delivery of coal (Box 1, Folder 18, flyer, May 1939). By this time Diehl's was considered one of the largest companies of its kind between Boston and Worcester; the company always attributed its success and growth to providing for the evolving and growing needs of the community, as well as a focus on customer service.

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From its inception, Diehl's was a family business, and continued to be run by family descendants, with daughters stepping into ownership and management roles from the 1950s forward. Over five generations managed the business until its closing in 2004. The Diehl family also had other notable businesses in Wellesley: In the 1880s Fred (Jr.) would leave the coal and wood business to William and open Diehl's stable on Central Street (in the vicinity of the current Faber Rug and Peet's Coffee and Tea), and another son would own another stable on Forest Street. Yet another son (Frederick III) had a blacksmith shop and haulage company on Linden which eventually became a Diehl's Ford dealership in the early days of automobiles.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection contains a variety of materials pertaining to the history and operations of the business, including family history, business records, company publications, correspondence, and employee information, and some audiovisual materials. Series 11 contains the bulk of the materials, seven boxes of photographs and negatives in a variety of formats; these photographs depict buildings, events, advertising, construction, equipment, and natural disaster and fire documentation from circa 1880 through the early 2000s.

### **System of Arrangement**

The collection is organized into twelve series, arranged by type of material.

- I. Diehl Family materials
- II. Financial Documents
- III. Diehl's Publications
- IV. Ephemera
- V. Customer Materials
- VI. Holiday Cards & Party Invitations
- VII. Correspondence
- VIII. Histories of Diehl's
- IX. Newspaper Clippings & Press Releases
- X. Employees
- XI. Photographs and Negatives
- XII. Audiovisual Materials

### **Library of Congress Index Terms**

Wellesley (Mass.)

### **Conditions Governing Access**

The Collection is open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.

info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org  
(781) 235-6690

### **Physical Access**

Some of the materials are fragile.

F. Diehl & Son Collection  
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**Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use**

Copyright restrictions may apply.

**Languages and Scripts of the Material**

English

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Accession 2000.31 -- F. Diehl & Son (calendars).

Accession 2007.16 -- Gift of Ann T. Murphy, Diehl family member.

Accession 2010.10 -- Gift of Ann T. Murphy, Diehl family member.

**Accruals**

The Historical Society may add materials to this collection in the future; however, no further accruals are currently expected.

**Related Materials**

Photograph Collection: Businesses: Diehl's (approx. 0.5 linear feet, 1 document box)

**Description**

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in February 2019 by Taylor Kalloch and Alden Ludlow. Processing of this collection was made possible through a grant from the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee.

**Bibliography**

F. Diehl & Son. Promotional materials, c.1935. In collection, Box 1, Folder 5.

Urann, Margaret. Manuscript history of F. Diehl & Son. In collection, Box 2, Folder 3.

White, Thomas G. "In Step With Time." Manuscript, 1973. In collection, Box 2, Folder 4.

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**Container List**

**I. Diehl Family**

**Box 1**

Folder 1: Genealogy; undated

Folder 2: Frederick Diehl Jr.'s Ford Dealership; Lower Linden Street; c. 1930

**II. Financial Documents**

**Box 1**

Folder 3: Invoices & Receipts from Diehl's; 1906 – 1925

Folder 4: Accounting Documents; bulk 1900 – 1920, & undated

**Archives Oversize Box 19**

Item 1 - Invoices; 1900 – 1902

**III. Diehl's Publications**

**Box 1**

Folder 5: Monthly Newsletter; 1935

Folder 6: Monthly Newsletter; 1936

Folder 7: Monthly Newsletter; 1938

Folder 8: Monthly Newsletter; 1939

Folder 9: Monthly Newsletter; 1940

Folder 10: Monthly Newsletter; 1941

Folder 11: Monthly Newsletter; 1942

Folder 12: Monthly Newsletter; 1943

Folder 13: Monthly Newsletter; 1944

Folder 14: Monthly Newsletter; 1945

Folder 15: Monthly Newsletter; 1946

Folder 16: Oil Brochure; 1956

Folder 17: "Report to the Pro." Published for contractors by F. Diehl & Son, 1991-1992

**IV. Ephemera**

**Box 1**

Folder 18: Post Cards; 1988

Folder 19: Desk Blotter; c. 1910

Folder 20: F. Diehl & Son, Inc. Calendars; 2000 & 2002

Archives Oversize Box 15: Folder 4 - Town of Wellesley Street Map, Compliments of Diehl's, History of Diehl's on Back of Map; undated

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**V. Customer Materials**

**Box 1**

Folder 21: Customer Ice Sign; c. 1910

Folder 22: Application for Charge Account; 1961

**VI. Holiday Cards & Party Invitations**

**Box 1**

Folder 23: Holiday Cards; 1980 & 1991

Folder 24: Holiday Party Invitations & Guest Books; 1996 & 1997

**VII. Correspondence**

**Box 2**

Folder 1: Correspondence; 1989

Folder 2: Thank You Letters & Drawings from 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders; 1994

**VIII. Histories of Diehl's**

**Box 2**

Folder 3: Diehl's History, by Margaret S. Urann; c. 1972

Folder 4: "In Step with Time", by Thomas G. White; November 26, 1973

**IX. Newspaper Clippings & Press Releases**

**Box 2**

Folder 5: Clippings; undated

Folder 6: Clippings; 1920s

Folder 7: Clippings; 1930s

Folder 8: Clippings; 1940s

Folder 9: Clippings; 1950s

Folder 10: Clippings; 1960s

Folder 11: Clippings; 1970s

Folder 12: Clippings; 1980s

Folder 13: Clippings; 1990s

Folder 14: Press Releases; 1969

**X. Employees**

**Box 2**

Folder 15: Coveney, Edward F.; 1938 & 1955

**XI. Photographs & Negatives**

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**Box 3**

- Folder 1: Advertisements
- Folder 2: Blizzard of 1978, Delivering Oil by Snowmobile; 1978
- Folder 3: Buildings & Property, Aerial Views; 1970s – 1990s, undated
- Folder 4: Buildings & Property, Exteriors; 1900, 1930s, 1950s – 1970s, & undated
- Folder 5: Buildings & Property, F.L. Diehl Ford Agency, 159 Linden Street; c. 1930
- Folder 6: Buildings & Property, Interior of Exit Window; 1969
- Folder 7: Buildings & Property, Interiors; 1939, 1950s – 1960s, & undated
- Folder 8: Buildings & Property, Milford Store; 1995
- Folder 9: Buildings & Property, Service Station; 1950s – 1960s, & undated
- Folder 10: Buildings & Property, Views of Linden Street; 1960s
- Folder 11: Buildings & Property, Yard, Coal; 1900, 1930s – 1940s, & undated

**Box 4**

- Folder 1: Buildings & Property, Yard, Not Buildings; 1930s – 1960s, & undated
- Folder 2: Construction, Demo of 162 Linden Street; 1988
- Folder 3: Construction, Hardware Renovation; 1992
- Folder 4: Construction, Installing Culverts; 1940s
- Folder 5: Construction, Installing New Sign; undated
- Folder 6: Displays; 1938 & 1994
- Folder 7: Equipment, Horses; 1880s – 1900s, & undated
- Folder 8: Equipment, Mechanical; 1940s – 1960s, & undated
- Folder 9: Events, 1<sup>st</sup> Softball Game & Picnic; 1990
- Folder 10: Events, 2<sup>nd</sup> Softball Game & Picnic; 1991
- Folder 11: Events, 3<sup>rd</sup> Softball Game & Picnic; 1992

**Box 5**

- Folder 1: Events, 4<sup>th</sup> Softball Game & Picnic; 1993
- Folder 2: Events, 5<sup>th</sup> Softball Game & Picnic; 1994
- Folder 3: Events, 749 Years Combined Service Celebration; 1989
- Folder 4: Events, Barbara MacDonald's Party; 1990
- Folder 5: Events, CPR Class; undated
- Folder 6: Events, Frank Haines Retirement Party; 1996
- Folder 7: Events, Grand Reopening of Hardware Store; 1992
- Folder 8: Events, Holiday Party; 1996
- Folder 9: Events, Holiday Party; 1997
- Folder 10: Events, Holiday Party; 1998
- Folder 11: Events, Joanne Womack's Goodbye Party; 1997
- Folder 12: Events, July Jubilation; 1994
- Folder 13: Events, Mary Kiser's Retirement Party; 1997
- Folder 14: Events, Natick Nursery School Visit; 1995

**Box 6**

- Folder 1: Events, Parades & Floats; 1950s – 1990s
- Folder 2: Events, Tent Sale; 1996

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Folder 3: Fires & Storm Damage, Grain Shed Fire; 1967  
Folder 4: Fires & Storm Damage, Hurricane Damage; 1938  
Folder 5: Fires & Storm Damage, Ice House Fire; 1939  
Folder 6: Fires & Storm Damage, Shed 2 Fire; 1978  
Folder 7: Negatives & Slide, 35 mm Slides  
Folder 8: Negatives & Slide, Safety Film, 35 mm  
Folder 9: Negatives & Slides, Safety Film, Small & Medium Format

**Box 7**

Folder 1: Negatives & Slides, 35 mm Negatives  
Folder 2: Negatives & Slides, Medium Format Negatives  
Folder 3: People, Employees at Work in Yard; bulk undated  
Folder 4: People, Large Format #1; 1900, & 1930s – 1980s  
Folder 5: People, Large Format #2; undated  
Folder 6: People, Medium Format; 1895, 1898, c. 1900, 1998, & undated  
Folder 7: People, Small Format; 1989, 1930s – 1990s, & undated  
Archives Oversize Box 15, Folder 5: Photographs; undated

**XII. Audio Visual Materials**

**Box 2**

Folder 16: Cassette Tapes #1, Contains 3 Cassettes  
Folder 17: Cassette Tapes #2, Contains 3 Cassettes

**Box 8**

Items: 10 VHS tapes