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Finding Aid For:	Speer Hardware Company
Dates:	1909
Size:	1 folder
Creator/Collector:	Speer Hardware Company
Call Number:	Special Collection (SC)
Language(s):	English
Abstract:	Dave Speers and his nephew, Clifford E. Speers, opened the Speers Hardware Company in 1887. The store opened on North 2 nd street, but moved locations several times over the 109 years it was in operation. The most notorious location was at 205 Rogers Avenue where they operated from 1910 to 1967. The hardware store closed permanently in 1996. The Speer Hardware Company collection contains an invoice of names from 1909, likely the shareholders names.
Subject Terms:	Speer Hardware Company Fort Smith Businesses
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research.
Copyright:	Copyright restrictions may apply. For further information contact the repository.
Preferred Citation:	[Item], [Series], [Record Group], [Container #], [Collection Name], Fort Smith Public Library, Fort Smith, Arkansas.
Acquisition Information:	Unknown
Repository:	Fort Smith Public Library, Barbara Walker Genealogy and Arkansas History Collection, Fort Smith, Arkansas
Finding Aid Created By:	Rachel Sanford, 2023.
Processing Information:	The records were found in a box of miscellaneous items in great condition. They were pulled out and placed in a folder. The collection was processed by Rachel Sanford in July 2023.

Collection Details

Historical Note:

1887 – Dave Speer relocated his family to Fort Smith, Arkansas. With his nephew, Clifford E. Speer, they opened Speer Hardware Company as a retail hardware store. They operated in a two-story building at 101-103 North 2nd Street. Their slogan: “Spear Edge: Manufactured for Speer Hardware company, Fort Smith, Arkansas.”

1892 – Dave Speer switched from retail to wholesale distribution of hardware.

1893 – The hardware store incorporated with a capital stock of \$60,000.

1896 – Dave Speer had a four-story building built at 206-208-210 Garrison Avenue.

1898 – Dave Speer bought land at 205 Rogers Avenue, behind their current location.

1909 – In July Dave Speer contracted to have a six-story building to be erected on the land he bought 11 years previous.

1910 – In February the new store opened at 205 Rogers Avenue.

1917 – Dave Speers died suddenly. F. B. Dunlop became president through 1922.

1923 – Dave Speers’ son, Fred Speer, took over as president until 1951.

1951 – Dave Speers’ second son, Ralph Speers, became president until 1955.

1955 – Ralph Speers Jr. Became president of the store until he retired in 1971.

1966 – Ralph Jr. Purchased 320 Rogers Avenue, the Williams-Atkins Hardware store.

1967 – Speer Hardware Company moved into the Williams-Atkins Hardware store at 320 Rogers Avenue

1969 – National Park Service bought the old Speer Hardware building at 205 Rogers Avenue.

1971 – Arnold O’Neal, a man who worked for Speer Hardware since

1950, became the final president of the store.

1971 – The Speer Hardware Company moved out of the Williams-Atkins building and into a new location on North 6th Street.

1978 – Arnold O’Neal sold the Williams-Atkins Hardware building to the Old Fort Museum. Melanie Speer, Ralph Jr’s wife, was on the board of the Old Fort Museum.

1979 – Old Fort Museum moved out of the Commissary building into the Williams-Atkins / Speer Hardware Company building.

1980 – The National Park Service demolished the old building at 205 Rogers Avenue.

1986 – Speer Hardware Company was bought by American Hardware Company. Speer Hardware remained open as Speer Division.

1996 – American Hardware merged with True Value Hardware, and Speer Division closed permanently.

Scope and Content:

The records of the Speer Hardware Company contains a list of names on an invoice for 1909. The list appears to be shareholders and their \$5 paid. This could be related to the new six story building Speer Hardware Company contracted in July of 1909 and finished in February of 1910.

System of Arrangement:

The collection is small, in only one folder, so it is placed in a larger container with other collections. This collection is in folder 2 labeled: 2. Speer Hardware Company.

Collection Inventory

Container 123: Fort Smith Businesses, 1860 to 1931

Series 1: Speer Hardware Company, 1909

2

Speer Hardware Company, 1909

1. Invoice from Speer Hardware Company to Judge Falconer List, 206 to 273
2. Invoice from Speer Hardware Company to Judge Falconer List sheet #2, 274 to 278, with handwritten notes and the date 1909 September 3
3. Invoice from Speer Hardware Company to Miss Kate Sandels and Mrs. Tom Barnes, 279 to 343
4. Invoice from Speer Hardware Company to Miss Kate Sandels and Mrs. Tom Barnes sheet #2, 344 to 352, with handwritten notes