



Finding Aid for

**FRUEHAUF TRAILER COMPANY RECORDS, 1931-1969**

**Accession 98.1.1828**

Finding Aid Published: June 2016



Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford  
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## OVERVIEW

**REPOSITORY:** Benson Ford Research Center  
The Henry Ford  
20900 Oakwood Blvd  
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029  
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**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 98.1.1828

**CREATOR:** Fruehauf Trailer Company

**TITLE:** Fruehauf Trailer Company Records

**INCLUSIVE DATES:** 1931-1969

**BULK DATES:** 1938-1940

**QUANTITY:** 1.0 cubic ft. (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** The materials are primarily in English. Items also in Spanish and Japanese.

**ABSTRACT:** The Fruehauf Trailer Company was founded in 1918 by August Fruehauf. The records contain annual reports, product literature, product manuals, and photographs spanning from the early 1930s into the 1960s.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The collection is open for research.
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Donated to The Henry Ford in 1998.
- ALTERNATE FORMS:** Selected material from the collection has been digitized and is available online at <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/search-results#advancedSearch=1&tab=artifact-results&s.0.in=collectionTitle&s.0.for=Fruehauf%20Trailer%20Company%20Records&years=0-0&perPage=10&pageNum=1&sortBy=relevance>
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material held by The Henry Ford:  
- 1914 Fruehauf Truck Trailer. Object ID 62.114.1  
- 1946 Fruehauf Semi-Trailer, Used by Cole's Express. Object ID 88.382.1
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 98.1.1828, Fruehauf Trailer Company Records, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Kathy Makas, March 2015
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared by Terry Hoover.  
  
Finding aid written by Kathy Makas, April 2015, and published in June 2016.  
  
Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

The Fruehauf Trailer Company was incorporated in 1918 in Detroit, Michigan by August Fruehauf, a blacksmith and carriage builder. In 1914 he had been asked by a neighbor to build a trailer to haul a boat behind a Ford Model T, this trailer was so successful he was soon asked to build more trailers to haul lumber. Business boomed over the next four years, and Fruehauf Trailer Company was established. The popularity of the trailers increased as the company made several innovations to the trailers utilizing various sizes and designs.

In 1930, August's son Harvey Fruehauf, took over as president and focused on sales campaigns to widen the company's customer base. Harvey retired in 1949, and Roy Fruehauf, August's youngest son, became president. Roy established manufacturing branches all over the United States and Europe and expanded the business world-wide. In the mid-1950s, however, Roy's financial interactions with the Teamsters led to federal indictments which, though eventually dismissed, resulted in instability in the company. In 1958, Roy stepped down as president and William Grace took over the role. The company again found itself in legal troubles over tax and financial practices when they were indicted and tried for tax evasion in the 1970s. By the 1980s, financial issues forced the company to sell off some of its divisions. The company continued to struggle financially and in 1996, Fruehauf Trailer declared bankruptcy under Chapter 11 and was bought out by Wabash Trucking in 1997.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Fruehauf Trailer Company Records focus mainly on the public side of the company's activities. The collection contains advertising materials such as product literature, product manuals, color samples, stickers and signs, branch locations and information, and photographs spanning from the early 1930s into the 1960s. The collection also contains company materials from the 1930s and 1940s such as annual reports, handouts to employees, greeting cards, instructive materials, and newsletters.

## **ARRANGEMENT**

The collection is arranged alphabetically and chronologically.

## **SUBJECT TERMS**

Names, Personal and Corporate  
Fruehauf Trailer Company

Subjects

Advertising

Selling

Transportation

Tractor trailer combinations

Trailers

Truck trailer industry

Truck trailers

Geographic

Detroit (Mich.)

Genre and Form

Advertisements

Annual reports

Brochures

Greeting cards

Instructional materials

Manuals

Pamphlets

Photographs

Photographic prints

Promotional materials

## CONTAINER LIST

<b>Box no.</b>	<b>Description</b>
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### Box 1

Annual Report, 1938  
Annual Report, 1939  
Branches, Sales and Service locations (relocation and opening announcements; branch trade cards)  
Certificates, 1935-1940  
Driver's Daily Log, 1939 (blank log book)  
Fruehauf *Forwarder*, Vol 2 No 2, 1940  
Fruehauf Trailers Color Selector, 1940  
Greeting cards, 1939-1940  
Maintenance Manual and Parts Catalog  
    Model FW, 1940  
    Model T-88, 1940  
    Model 1, 1941  
    Model 5, 1941  
    Model GT55, 1942  
Master Parts Book, 1st edition, undated  
Pamphlets, posters, and handouts, 1936-1941  
Photographs, Trailers, 1950s-1960s (8x10 inch photographic prints; black-and-white)  
Name Badge with Ribbon, "S.H. Denler", undated  
Product literature  
    Assorted, 1935-1940  
    "Advice from men who have used both six wheel trucks and tractor-trailer units", 1935  
    "Aerovan", 1940  
    "Canada's Choice!", 1939  
    "Fruehauf 5th Wheel", 1934  
    "Fruehauf Field Bulletin", no. 13, 1934  
    "Fruehauf Tandem Semi-trailers", 1935  
    "Fruehauf Trailers", 1938 (2 copies)  
    "Fruehauf Trailers", 1940  
    "Fruehauf Trailers", Los Angeles, 1940 (2 copies)  
    "Go where you will..." circa 1934 (from Des Moines, Iowa, factory branch)  
    "The Ideal Set-up for Pull, Performance, and Profit", undated  
    "Let It Pull For You!", 1937 (2 copies)  
    "Parade of Features", 1940 (poster format)  
    "Pile Up Bigger Payloads to Pile Up Bigger Profits!", undated  
    "Remolques Fruehauf", 1940 (2 copies; in Spanish)  
    "Signs of the Times", 1935  
    "The Tie-Up of the Times", 1937  
    "Trailer Headquarters", 1939 (8 copies; one copy each for Columbus, Houston, Indianapolis, Norfolk, Peoria, Pittsburgh, South Bend, and Virginia factory branches)

**Box 1 continued:**

- "You Can't Beat This Two-Way Money Saving Hook-Up", 1937
- Sales materials, 1931-1940 (11 items)
- Program and Notes, Silver Anniversary National Convention, Detroit, MI, 1940
- Invitation to Sail on S.S. My Kay, 1939-1941 (material related to what is presumed to be a sales team-building boat trip on the Great Lakes)
- Stickers and Signs, undated (small metal sign plate and adhesive stickers; one sticker with text in English and Japanese; also includes one Fruehauf Corporation departmental communications envelope)
- Weight Distribution Calculator and Size Limit Chart, circa 1937-1940 (2 calculators and 2 charts)
- Rubber Stamp, "Experimental", undated (0.5x2.75 inch text block; produced by Volk Stamp and Stencil Co., Detroit, Michigan)
- Rubber Stamp, "Fruehauf Corp. / Detroit, Mich.", undated (0.63x2.75 inch text block; produced by Accurate Stamp, Detroit, Michigan)