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**Collection 223**  
**Franz Hill Papers**

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**History**

The Franz Hill Brewery was founded in 1899 and closed in 1920. Located on North Olden Avenue in the Wilbur section of Trenton, it was very popular with its adjoining tavern with pool table, bowling alley and basketball court. At the time, breweries were known to supply hotels and bars in town, and it was widely considered one of the city's most successful enterprises. Liquor authorities described Trenton liquor as some of the best in the country. The passing of the Volstead Act in 1920, making the manufacturing and selling of alcohol illegal, was responsible for the Brewery's failing. The building was eventually bought and torn down for a parking lot.

**Scope and Content Notes**

This collection contains 9 folders of papers and business records related to Franz Hill and the Brewery, mostly in the form of agreements and receipts with businesses that were responsible for building the brewery itself, to installing equipment, to providing the materials needed for brewing. The collection also contains documents related to other property owned by Franz Hill, as well as some personal items of Mrs. Franz Hill.

**Series Descriptions**

**Series I. Brewery**

This series contains detailed documents concerning the building plans of the Brewery, which consisted of two distinct buildings: the Brew House and the Bar. There are numerous letters of correspondence and legal agreements between the Brewery's owners, contractors, and architects. These documents detail the specific requirements regarding the building material to be used, and who was responsible for providing work equipment like scaffolding, tools, and raw materials. There are also invoices concerning the furnishings and equipment that the Brewery would have needed such as ranges and cutlery. Also included in this series are specifications by architect Herman Voight of Philadelphia (1893-1898), contracts from builder Patrick Corrigan of Trenton (1897), tax records (1890-1896), and receipts for various pieces of machinery and equipment (1898).

It appears that property and equipment was purchased from Jacob Hetzel (“Hetzel Grove”) in 1890 and interest on a mortgage was paid to him until at least 1894. It is not known if Franz Hill was taking over the Hetzel business and if this would eventually become his Brewery.

## **Series II. Other Business Ventures**

Items contained in this series may or may not be directly related to the Brewery. They include receipts for items from F.S. Katzenbach & Company, which specialized in hardware, cutlery, heaters, ranges, and mantles at 35 East State Street (1900) and S. P. Dunham & Company which was also a Trenton-based business specializing in dry goods (1907). One receipt is to William Dickson, a sanitary plumber, but it does not appear to be related to Franz Hill (1907).

Other items are documents from the Vanderbilt Timber, Mining, and Southwestern Railway Company addressed to Franz Hill, who was a stockholder (1903-1909); documentation from a lawsuit between Franz Hill and the Oakland Manufacturing Company concerning a property dispute (1904-1905); a description of Delaware & Bound Brook Railroad property (1876); a transfer of property in Hamilton Township (1900); and an undated journal with notes on properties and mortgages that Franz Hill appears to have owned, including information on his own home located at 47 North Clinton Avenue.

## **Series III. Personal Papers**

This series has one folder containing membership cards to the Mercer County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals belonging to Mrs. Franz Hill (1927-1928); a receipt for a charitable donation (1907); and a humorous check from the Bank of Prosperity for “365 Happy Days” (1906).

## **Container List**

### **Box / Folder / Title**

#### Series I. Brewery

- 1 / 1 Herman Voight, Architect (1893-1898)
- 1 / 2 Patrick Corrigan, Builder (1897)
- 1 / 3 Equipment (1898)
- 1 / 4 Taxes & Mortgage Payments (1890-1896)

#### Series II. Other Business Ventures

- 1 / 5 Deeds (1876, 1900)
- 1 / 6 Business Receipts (1899-1907)
- 1 / 7 Vanderbilt Timber (1903-1909)
- 1 / 8 Oakland Manufacturing (1904-1905)

#### Series III. Personal Papers

- 1 / 9 Personal (1906, 1927-1928)

## **Provenance**

It is unknown how these documents were acquired, but were assigned MSID #1172 by the library at an unspecified time.

## **Bibliography**

O'Donnell, W.J. (1929, October 27). “Once Famous Breweries Here are Little More than Memories.” [clipping, no newspaper title]