Hirzenhain Ironworks
In 1817 Georg Buderus took out a lease on Hirzenhain Ironworks in the Vogelsberg district. Its blast furnace and smelling house were renovated in 1831 and 1832, and in 1835-36 a "comptoir" building and a cupola furnace (for making cast-iron ware from foundry pig iron and scrap) were erected. When the German Customs Union was founded in 1834, J. W. Buderus Sons was one of the largest producers of pig iron in the area covered. This splendid steel engraving shows Hirzenhain Ironworks in the late 1840s.
Six illustrations from the earliest surviving specimen book, ca. 1845
The first inside page of the earliest Buderus specimen book to have survived bears the handwritten inscription: «Philipp Lehr. Ironwork- er, Moulder, 1859 St. Louis». The fact that the name «Lehr» occurs around Weilburg suggests that someone from the Lahn region took the book with him when he emigrated to the USA. The well-preserved copy (acquired by BBT Thermotechnik GmbH in 2004) comprises 54 numbered pages. However, since the highest page number is «68» this may originally have been a loose-leaf collection that was later bound in marbled card. Of the plates, 26 depict stoves and the remainder other cast-iron products from Audern Smithy and Christian, Löhnberg, Hirzenhaim, and Friedrich ironworks.
Buderus stoves in Schloss Weilburg
It was not only in bourgeois households that the skilfully cast stoves produced by J. W. Buderus Sons enjoyed huge popularity. In royal residences, too, such as Schloss Weilburg, they took the place of open fires and were sometimes set far out in the room, forming a prominent feature. Nor were they merely a necessary heating appliance; they also served as a decorative element in salons and reception rooms. These photographs of Buderus stoves in Schloss Weilburg were taken for the two-volume history of the company published in 1938.

Penal code of J. W. Buderus Sons
It was traditional for ironworks staff to be fined for misdemeanours of all kinds, the money being paid into the ironworks coffers. However, according to this «Penal code for ironworks employees» published by J. W. Buderus Sons, such fines went not into the ironworks coffers but into a «special fund» from which «at the discretion» of the proprietors financial aid was provided for «accidentally injured, needy» workers. However, «minor ills» did not qualify for benefit.
Ironworks certificate, 1841
The ironworks certificate pictured here relates to ironstone from the «Eisenkaute» pit in the Holzhausen district of the Hessen-Darmstadt hinterland. The hauliers who brought ironstone and charcoal from their respective sources to the ironworks, having made their delivery, were given such a certificate for presentation at the cashier’s office, where payment was handed over. Sometimes part of the payment was in kind, with carters receiving cast-iron products either for their own use or for resale. Hence on the back of the certificate illustrated here it is recorded that, in addition to cash, Jean Gleeuer took possession of a «Kroppe» 10 Pfund – a cast-iron cooking-pot weighing ten pounds.

Large Eremitage Stove
Surviving illustrations of the stoves produced by Justus Kilian suggest that the «Large Eremitage Stove» was the most elaborately decorated model.

Kilian Ironworks price list
The title-page illustration in this Kilian Ironworks price list shows, in the foreground, a whim shaft for extracting iron ore. At lower left, down in the valley, is Kilian ironworks itself. Visible in the distance, in the centre is Biedenkopf Castle.
Nassau foundry iron
Advertisement for Buderus foundry iron that appeared in issue 13-14 of the trade journal Stahl und Eisen [Steel and iron] in 1886. Eight years earlier (in 1878) Buderus had managed to produce a type of foundry iron that stood comparison with the best Scottish brands and was capable of replacing the tried and tested Nassau pig iron from charcoal-fired furnaces with a domestic product from coke-fired furnaces. «Nassau foundry iron», as Buderus Brothers called the pig iron produced at their Main-Weser Ironworks, was very suitable for manufacturing particularly thin-sided castings.

Lönholdt stoves
With the launch of foundry operations on the Main-Weser site, Buderus now had two foundries (the other being at Hirzenhain). Soon both the Lottar and Hirzenhain foundries were leading manufacturers of stoves. A key role in this was played by their starting to produce the so-called «Lönholdt stove» in 1881. Franz Lönholdt of Frankfurt had received his first patent for a «new type of regulator magazine stove» on 29 June 1880. His stove was an improvement on the American model; it had continuous firing. With the Lönholdt stove, Buderus had produced the first «perfectly-constructed stove» (as it was called) in Germany, thus launching on the market a product that quickly attained international popularity and renown.
Specimen book
A copy has survived of the specimen book of the foundry of the Main-Weser Ironworks that was printed ca. 1884, following the establishment of the family joint-stock company. The products illustrated in it range from the «Bayer or Loehnberger stove without attachment for wood and coal burning» to a «manhole cover with frame». But the emphasis is clearly on stoves, most of which probably stem from Christian Ironworks models. The range also includes a large number of cast-iron utensils for household use, agriculture, construction (window-frames especially), the bakery trade, and water supply. The foundry also produced waffle irons, weight-lifting gear, railings, banisters, candelabra, and signposts.