Smithsonian
*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

# Guide to the Robert Scofield Condon Engineering Papers, circa 1924-1973

NMAH.AC.0428

David Haberstich

1994

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## Collection Overview

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|---|---|
| **Repository:** | Archives Center, National Museum of American History |
| **Title:** | Robert Scofield Condon Engineering Papers |
| **Date:** | circa 1924-1973 |
| **Identifier:** | NMAH.AC.0428 |
| **Creator:** | Condon, Robert B.<br>Condon, Robert Scofield, 1896-1973 (engineer) (Creator) |
| **Extent:** | 3 Cubic feet |
| **Language:** | English . |
| **Summary:** | A collection of correspondence, photographs, and copies of patents issued to inventor Robert Scofield Condon. |

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Robert Condon November 5, 1991.

### Provenance

All materials apparently in author's personal collection until his death, when they become the property of his son, the donor.

### Related Materials

Objects accompanying these archival materials were acquired by the Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering (now Division of Work and Industry) , also donated by the inventor's son.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by David Haberstich, 1994.

### Preferred Citation

Robert Scofield Condon Engineering Papers, ca. 1924-1973, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

Rights situation needs clarification.

## Biographical / Historical

Robert Scofield Condon, born in Bloomington, Illinois, March 5, 1896, attended Bloomington, Ill., Normal School, and was a schoolteacher for several years to earn money for college tuition; he was graduated as

a mechanical engineer from the University of Illinois, 1924. He married Catherine Behren in 1924, but she died in 1958. Condon was employed by the Kearney & Trecker Corp., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1924-1929, then the Gleason Gear Works, Rochester, New York, 1929-1936. He was one of eighty engineers when he joined the engineering department of the Gleason Gear Works, but was one of only two remaining in 1934. The Condons spent fifteen years in Rutland, Vermont (1936-1946), where he was a founder of the Fibre Can Machinery Corp., which was later sold to the Continental Can Co. He was employed by the Continental Can Corp. from 1946 to 1960 (the Rutland plant closed in the early 1950s, but Condon continued working for the firm in other locations). After his retirement in 1960, he continued to work on projects and did consulting work. His last project was the small "Marvel" pencil pointer (sharpener). Documents in the papers bear the name and address, "Robert S. Condon Laboratories, 112 Cindy Lane, Berlin, Connecticut 06037."

Condon's second wife was Ilza de Souza. He died on April 22, 1973, leaving his son, Robert B. Condon, and two grandchildren.* The professional papers in this collection apparently were in Robert S. Condon's possession until his death, when his son acquired them and donated them to the Smithsonian in 1991.

* An obituary appeared in the Bennington Banner, April 26, 1973. The donor provided notes from this obituary, with additional biographical material and a collection inventory

## Scope and Contents

The approximately 3 cubic feet of material contain copies of patents issued to Robert Scofield Condon for pencil lead pointers, pencil sharpeners, milling machines, gear cutting machines, and similar devices, as well as correspondence related to the patents from the United States Patent Office and with attorneys. Photographs depict Condon designs and inventions. The collection includes a very interesting example of Condon's actual pencil sharpener attached to a photograph, showing the pencil sharpener in use.

## Arrangement

The collection is divided into six series.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1936-1942, 1961-1962

Series 2: Patents, 1931-1973

Series 3: Subject Files, 1955-1965

Series 4: Bills and receipts, 1946-1948

Series 5: Articles, 1924-1927

Series 6: Photographs, 1945

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Engineers -- 1920-1980
Mechanical engineering -- 1920-1980
Pencil pointers
Pencil sharpeners

Types of Materials:

Photographic prints

Photographs -- 20th century
Photographs -- Black-and-white negatives -- Acetate film
Professional papers -- 20th century

Names:

Continental Can Co.
Fibre Can Machinery Corp. (Rutland (Vt.)

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence, 1936-1942, 1961-1962

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|---|---|
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Correspondence, 1936 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Correspondence, 1936-1938 |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Correspondence, 1937 |
| Box 1, Folder 4-5 | Correspondence, 1937-1939 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Correspondence, 1938 |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Correspondence, 1939 |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Correspondence, 1940-1942 |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Correspondence, Robert P. Lewis, 1961-1962 |

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# Series 2: Patents, 1931-1973

## Subseries 2.1: Correspondence, 1946-1973

*Box 2, Folder 1*

## Subseries 2.2: United States Patents, 1887, 1931-1972

| | |
|---|---|
| Box 2, Folder 2 | D105,372 Ironing machine cabinet, 1937 |
| Box 2, Folder 3 | D133,193 A milling machine, 1942 |
| Box 2, Folder 4 | D133,970 A milling machine, 1942 |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | D138,206 An abrasive cutoff machine, 1944 |
| Box 2, Folder 6 | D139,404 Milling Machine, 1944 |
| Box 2, Folder 7 | 1,817,036 Rate changing device, 1931 |
| Box 2, Folder 8 | 1,881,999 Machine for finishing gears, 1932 |
| Box 2, Folder 9 | 1,911,435 Gear testing machine, 1933 |
| Box 2, Folder 10 | 1,976,984 Gear cutting machine, 1934 |
| Box 2, Folder 11 | 1,971,598 Hydraulic control and operating mechanism, 1934 |
| Box 2, Folder 12 | 1,979,870 Method of and machine for grinding gears, 1934 |
| Box 2, Folder 13 | 2,006,790 Machine for producing gears, 1935 |
| Box 2, Folder 14 | 2,008,128 Dressing mechanism, 1935 |
| Box 2, Folder 15 | 2,078,124 Mechanism for removing burrs from gears, 1937 |
| Box 2, Folder 16 | 2,080,760 Valve, 1937 |
| Box 2, Folder 17 | 2,099,674 Machine for grinding gears, 1937 |
| Box 2, Folder 18 | 2,111,170 Machine for finishing gears, 1938 |
| Box 2, Folder 19 | 2,168,818 Fluid packing, 1939 |
| Box 2, Folder 20 | 2,192,539 Transmission or the like, 1940 |
| Box 2, Folder 21 | 2,286,063 Transmission or the like, 1942 |

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| Box 2, Folder 22 | 2,363,230 Vise, 1944 |
| Box 2, Folder 23 | 2,383,910 Milling machines, 1945 |
| Box 2, Folder 24 | 2,953,042 Indexing mechanism, 1960 |
| Box 2, Folder 25 | 3,090,358 Sharpening device for pencil leads, 1963 |
| Box 2, Folder 26 | 3,515,187 Pencil lead pointer, 1970 |
| Box 2, Folder 27 | 3,659,637 Pencil lead pointer, 1972 |
| Box 2, Folder 28 | 1887, 1936-1958 |

## Subseries 2.3: Foreign Patents, Brazil, Dispositivo apontador para grafita de lapis, 1963

*Box 2, Folder 29*

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## Series 3: Subject Files, 1955-1965

| | |
|---|---|
| Box 3, Folder 1 | Adirondack Bowl Inc.-Promissory note, 1960 |
| Box 3, Folder 2 | Adirondack Bowls Inc.-Mr. Rice, 1959-1960 |
| Box 4, Folder 1 | Adirondack Bowl Inc.-Mr. Rice, 1955-1962 |
| Box 3, Folder 3 | Baribeau & Sons, Inc., 1960-1965 |
| Box 3, Folder 4 | Bowl-Carbide T. |
| Box 3, Folder 5 | Bowls-Drawings |
| Box 3, Folder 6 | Bowl machine-Large, 1956-1963 |
| Box 3, Folder 7 | Bowls-Patents, 1957-1962 |
| Box 3, Folder 8 | Bowl prices |
| Box 3, Folder 9 | Bowls-Saw calculations and records, 1959 |
| Box 3, Folder 10 | Bowl-7 ½" machine #2, 1956 |
| Box 3, Folder 11 | Bowl--#2 gouger |
| Box 3, Folder 12 | Ryerson & Son Inc., 1959-1962 |
| Box 3, Folder 13 | Sander, 1956-1960 |
| Box 3, Folder 14 | Sander-Outside |
| Box 3, Folder 15 | Sanders-Product Literature |
| Box 3, Folder 16 | Sanding-Inside |
| Box 3, Folder 17 | Saws-Oval Bowl Saw |
| Box 3, Folder 18 | Saws-6" oval bowl saw and oval bowl gouger |
| Box 4, Folder 2 | Hand obsolete drawings |
| Box 4, Folder 3 | Hand painter obsolete pictures, processing, inventory, calculator |
| Box 4, Folder 4 | Instant plastic electric details |
| Box 4, Folder 5 | Old instant new plastic details |

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| Box 4, Folder 6 | Old instant engineering |
| Box 4, Folder 7 | Instant cutter body |
| Box 4, Folder 8 | Instant detail drawings |
| Box 4, Folder 9 | Instant plastic electric |
| Box 4, Folder 10 | Fixture locating cutter body |
| Box 4, Folder 11 | Instant pictures and obsolete small motor housing |
| Box 4, Folder 12 | Marvel-detail drawings and photos |
| Box 4, Folder 13 | Marvel lead pointer prototype |
| Box 4, Folder 14 | Marvel-obsolete drawings |
| Box 4, Folder 15 | Marvel-operation sheet |
| Box 4, Folder 16 | Marvel-tools |
| Box 4, Folder 17 | Pencil sharpener records |
| Box 4, Folder 18 | Drawings of various inventions |

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## Series 4: Bills and Receipts, 1946-1948

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|---|---|
| Box 5, Folder 1 | Bills and receipts, 1947 |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Insurance receipts, 1947-1948 |
| Box 5, Folder 3 | Licenses and concessions for Fox Movie Flash, 1946-1947 |
| Box 5, Folder 4 | Photo supply receipts, 1947 |
| Box 5, Folder 5 | Printing supply receipts, 1947 |
| Box 5, Folder 6 | Rent receipts, 1947 |
| Box 5, Folder 7 | Salary receipts, 1947 |

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## Series 5: Articles, 1924-1927

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|---|---|
| Box 6, Folder 1 | Report by Condon, Determining Gear Tooth Sizes through the Use of Graphs<br>Notes: Original and carbon copy, latter in a binder, 1 sent to Machinery Magazine |
| Box 6, Folder 2 | Report, "Improving a Small Spur Gear by Cutting It"<br>Notes: 2 copies, 1 sent to Machinery Magazine |
| Box 6, Folder 3 | Paper by Condon, Research Engineer, Kearney and Trecker Corporation, Milwaukee, WI, A Selection of Spur Gear Tooth Sizes with Respect to Both Strength and Wear<br>Notes: 15 pp., original and carbon copy, each in a report binder |
| Box 6, Folder 4 | Compilation of articles, 1926-1927 |
| Box 6, Folder 5 | Comparison of Compressive Stress Allowance and other topics, 1924-1926 |
| Box 6, Folder 6 | The Relation of Load to Wear on Gear Teeth, 1926 |
| Box 6, Folder 6 | The Design of Gear Tooth Forms, 1924-1926 |
| Box 6, Folder 7 | Instant lead pointer, housing drawings for the base, top, guide plate and bottom plate |

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## Series 6: Photographs, 1945

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|---|---|
| Box 7, Folder 1-3 | Photoprints and negatives of R.S.C. designs (approx. 50) |
| Box 7, Folder 4-6 | Photoprints, Fibre Can Machinery Corp. (approx. 65) |
| Box 8, Folder 1-4 | Photoprints of Continental Can Corportion projects (approx. 65) |
| Box 8, Folder 5 | Milling drill, boring machine negatives |
| Box 8, Folder 6 | Fibre Can Corporation machinery negatives, 1945 |
| Box 8, Folder 7 | Unidentified negatives |
| Box 8, Folder 8 | Unidentified machinery |
| Box 8, Folder 9 | Marvel lead pointer |

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