



Smithsonian

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

## Guide to the Philadelphia Typewriter Company Records

NMAH.AC.0123

NMAH Staff

undated

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Philadelphia Typewriter Company Records
<b>Date:</b>	1886-1902
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0123
<b>Creator:</b>	Philadelphia Typewriter Company (Author) Watkins, J. Elfreth (John Elfreth), 1852-1903 (Author)
<b>Source:</b>	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Mechanisms (Collector)
<b>Extent:</b>	0.3 Cubic feet (1 box )
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Chiefly correspondence of John E. Watkins, a key organizer and officer of the Philadelphia Typewriter Company.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Immediate source of acquisition unknown.

### Provenance

Transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Mechanisms (now the Division of Work and Industry), October 15, 1984.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by NMAH Staff, undated

### Preferred Citation

Philadelphia Typewriter Company Records, 1886-1902, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

The Philadelphia Typewriter Company was organized July 25, 1886, to manufacture typewriters designed by Byron A. Brooks. A year later, he sold his shares to the Philadelphia Typewriter Company (then under the management of John Elfreth Watkins, president, and John C. Edwards, both of Washington, D.C.; William H. Travis, secretary; and Edward F. Smith, treasurer, both of Philadelphia, Pa., and Cyrus Adler of Baltimore, Md.). They organized and operated the Philadelphia Typewriter Manufacturing Company, which was briefly called the "Moto-Cycle Manufacturing Company."

### **Sources**

According to C.P. Keane and J. Emmerick, eds., "Marvyn Scudder Manual of Extinct or Obsolete Companies" (Vol. I, p. 968), the Philadelphia Typewriter Company went out of existence in 1900 when its stock lost its value.

Watkins was later a curator of Transportation at the Smithsonian Institution; he "accepted a salaried position...building up the technological collections pertaining to the transportation industry." (Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XIX, 1936, p. 539.)

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## Scope and Contents

The records contain correspondence chiefly of John Elfreth Watkins, a key organizer and officer of the company. Watkins was also a curator of Transportation at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and later "accepted a salaried position...building up the technological collections pertaining to the transportation industry." The correspondence also concerns the organization and operation of the Philadelphia Typewriter Company.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

Typewriters -- 1880-1910

### Types of Materials:

Business records -- 1880-1910

Correspondence -- 1880-1910

### Names:

Alder, Cyrus

Brooks, Byron A.

Edwards, John C.

Moto-Cycle Manufacturing Company

National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Mechanisms

Smith, Edward F.

Travis, William H.

### Places:

Philadelphia (Pa.)

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## Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Agreements, memoranda, and correspondence regarding patents and formation of a typewriter company, Moto-Cycle Manufacturing Company. November 1, 1886-1890.
Box 1, Folder 1A	Undated agreements; records of financial estimates for the Moto-Cycle Manufacturing Company; a list of promoters of the company.
Box 1, Folder 2	General correspondence, October 4, 1886-December 31, 1889.
Box 1, Folder 3	General correspondence, January 2, 1890-December 31, 1889.
Box 1, Folder 3A	General correspondence, April 1890-December 18, 1890.
Box 1, Folder 4	General correspondence, January 24, 1891-December 28, 1892.
Box 1, Folder 5	General correspondence, January 11, 1893-May 6, 1902.
Box 1, Folder 6	Miscellaneous undated correspondence, notes, and memoranda