James Arthur Clock and Watch Collection

NMAH.AC.0130
NMAH Staff
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: James Arthur Clock and Watch Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0130
Date: 1743-1967.
Extent: 15 Cubic feet (32 boxes)
Creator: New York University
Arthur, James, 1842-1912 ((machine shop owner))
Language: English.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Collection donated by New York University, 1964.

Ownership and Custodial History
Arthur's collection of clocks and watches was administered by New York University (NYU) until 1964, when the collection was sent to the Smithsonian on a permanent loan.

Processing Information
Collection partially processed by Archives Center staff. A container list for series 1-4 available. Series 5 to 10 are unprocessed.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions on Access
Portions of this collection are stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to access it.

Conditions Governing Use
Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical Note

James Arthur owned and operated a New York machine shop for patent models. He came to the United States from Scotland in 1871. Fourteen years later he established Arthur Machine Works in New York City for the construction of original and special machinery. He was a skillful, ingenious, highly trained mechanic. While not technically a clockmaker or a watchmaker, he was especially interested in horology and timekeeping devices. From boyhood, clocks and watches were his hobby and he was a discriminating collector.

For more than forty years, he collected watches and clocks from many countries and periods. Arthur was quick to recognize any features of a clock or watch that gave it a distinctive character. His fondness for the fine points of the machinery did not blind him to distinctions of form and beauty in the cases, to originality in the maker, or to the historical significance of the work. He was devoted to the science no less than to the art of timekeeping. Arthur's collection contained some 1,200 watches, 300 clocks, and numerous accessories.

Scope and Contents

These records contain material on the Arthur collection of clocks and watches. Includes publications, inventories, manuscripts, reports, photographs, advertisements, catalogues, newspaper clippings, patents, and business records; correspondence files of NYU curators concerning the administration of the collection; a watch record book of sales of Ezekiel Jones, carried on bookkeeping, 1822 and 1825; and a copy of the Smithsonian-NYU permanent loan agreement, 1964.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into 10 series.

Series 1, Correspondence, 1937-1964 (bulk 1950-1957)
Series 2, Subject Files
Series 3, Organizations
Series 5, Patent Specification (Unprocessed)
Series 6, Horological Pamphlets and Articles, 1743-1947 (Unprocessed)
Series 7, Miscellaneous, 1825-1966 (Unprocessed)
Series 8, Clock Makers Directory, 15 volumes (Unprocessed)
Series 9, Press Clippings about watches and clocks (Unprocessed)
Series 10, Photographs (Unprocessed)
Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Clocks and watches
- Collectors and collecting
- Horology
- Models (Patents)
- Watches

Types of Materials:
- Advertisements
- Business records -- 19th century
- Clippings
- Inventories
- Manuscripts -- 19th century
- Patents
- Photographs -- 1850-1900
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Press releases
- Publications
- Reports
- Sales catalogs

Names:
- Jones, Ezekiel
Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence

Subseries 1.1: Alphabetical by correspondent, 1937-1964 (bulk 1950-1957)

Box 1, Folder 1  Adam, Professor Thomas R., 1951-1957
Box 1, Folder 2  American Antiquarian Society, 1951-1953
Box 1, Folder 3  American Book Company, 1952
Box 1, Folder 4  The American Horologist and Jeweler, 1953
Box 1, Folder 5  Avery, Amos, 1954-1955
Box 1, Folder 6  Anderson, Gunnar B., 1952
Box 1, Folder 7  Antiques Journal, 1951-1952
Box 1, Folder 8  Antiquarian Horological Society, 1954-1955
Box 1, Folder 9  Associated Merchandising Corporation, 1951
Box 1, Folder 10  Attinson, Bernard, 1952
Box 1, Folder 11  Miscellaneous "A", 1952-1957
Box 1, Folder 12  Baer, Dean William B., 1951-1953
Box 1, Folder 13  Barny, (Mr.), 1951-1953
Box 1, Folder 14  Barr, Miss Jean B., 1951-1953
Box 1, Folder 15  Benis, Dr. Anthony, 1951-1956
Box 1, Folder 16  Bedini, Silvio A., 1950-1955
Box 1, Folder 17  Bertele, Dr. H. Von, 1953-1957
Box 1, Folder 18  Bird, Harrison K., General, 1952-1955
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<th>Birnbaum, Harry, 1951-1952</th>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 20</td>
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<td>Bulova Watch Company, 1951-1956</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 24</td>
<td>Cannici, Harry S., 1951</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 25</td>
<td>Chalifoux, Elizabeth, 1955-1956</td>
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<td>Cossaart, Mollie, 1951</td>
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<td>Cossidente, Alfred G., M.D., 1951-1955</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous &quot;C&quot;, 1950-1957</td>
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<td>Clock and Watch Description, correspondence regarding, 1939-1964</td>
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<td>Darlington, Dr. Henry, 1952-1954</td>
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<td>Dennis, Faith, 1954</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 45</td>
<td>Miscellaneous &quot;E&quot;, 1952-1957</td>
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<td>Farewell, Frank S., 1952</td>
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<td>Field, Sampson R., 1952</td>
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<td>Fried, Henry B., 1951-1955</td>
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<td>Fuchs, J.S., 1951-1953</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous &quot;F&quot;, 1953-1957</td>
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<td>Garner, Malcolm, 1952-1956</td>
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<td>Box 2, Folder 14</td>
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Box 2, Folder 24  Hering, Doris W., 1952
Box 2, Folder 25  Hoffacker, Ethel, 1952-1953
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Box 2, Folder 27  Horan, Joseph J., 1955
Box 2, Folder 28  Hubschman, Adolph S., 1950
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Box 2, Folder 35  Miscellaneous "I", 1954-1957
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Box 2, Folder 38  Kavanaugh, Edward, 1951
Box 2, Folder 39  Kendrick, Martin J., 1954
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Box 2, Folder 43  Kingsland, Frances R., 1951
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Box 2, Folder 45  Krohn, August and Christina., 1951
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Box 2, Folder 47  Miscellaneous "K", undated
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Box 4, Folder 13  Swiss Watch Repair Parts Information Bureau, Inc., 1951-1954
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Box 5, Folder 9  Stencils, undated

Box 5, Folder 10  Watches, undated

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