



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

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Robert Scofield Condon Engineering Papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0428
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1924-1973
<b>Extent:</b>	3 Cubic feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Condon, Robert B. Condon, Robert Scofield, (engineer), 1896-1973
<b>Language:</b>	English

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## 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, 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

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## 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.

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## 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.))

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## Container Listing

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

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
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
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

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**

- Box 6, Folder 1      Report by Condon, Determining Gear Tooth Sizes through the Use of Graphs  
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"  
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  
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

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 Corporation 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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