



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Servodyne Corporation Records

NMAH.AC.0839

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2016

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Servodyne Corporation Records
Date:	1955-1971
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0839
Creator:	Servodyne Corporation (Creator)
Source:	Gunnarson, John (Donor) National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Information, Technology and Society (Collector)
Extent:	1 Cubic foot (3 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Servodyne Company attempted to develop a prototype of the household microwave. The business records cover the operations and meetings of the company, as well as the corporation's financial troubles and liquidation following its bankruptcy in 1968. Also included are design details and photographs of the ovens.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by John A. Gunnarson in 2003.

Provenance

Collection transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Information, Technology and Society (now the Division of Work and Industry) in 2003.

Separated Materials

A prototype microwave is in the Division of Work and Industry. See Accession 2003.0107.01.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Holly Nelson.

Preferred Citation

Servodyne Corporation Records, 1955-1971, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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 / Historical

John Gunnarson, a former employee of Raytheon, formed the Servodyne Company (1960), which made prototypes of the microwave oven. The company sought to bring microwave technology into the home for everyday use in a time when microwaves and their safety were under scrutiny. Developed by Gunnarson, Roger F. French, and Donald R. Lester, this prototype utilized klystrons instead of the magnetrons used by competitors. The company applied for a patent in 1966, but the oven was never successful. Servodyne Company struggled with financial issues and leadership changes, and the business folded in 1968 due to lack of funding. The liquidation process lasted until 1971.

Scope and Contents

Records of the company that developed an early microwave oven. The business records include documents such as Board of Directors meeting minutes, stockholder meeting minutes, correspondence, legal documents, financial papers, publications, photographs, drawings and specifications, and other business papers. Also included in the collection are newspaper and magazine clippings featuring stories about the safety and use of microwave ovens.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into six series.

Series 1: Minutes, 1961-1968

Series 2: Correspondence, 1961-1968

Series 3: Legal Documents, 1965-1966

Series 4: Financial Materials, 1960-1965

Series 5: Publications, 1955-1971

Series 6: Photographs, 1955, 1971

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Microwave equipment industry
Microwave ovens

Types of Materials:

Articles -- 1950-2000
Correspondence -- 1950-2000
Design drawings -- 1950-2000

Financial records
Minutes

Names:

Gunnarson, John
National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Information, Technology and Society

Container Listing

Series 1: Minutes, 1961-1968

Box 1, Folder 1 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes and Notes, 1961-1965

Box 1, Folder 2 Stockholder Meeting Minutes and Notes, 1961-1968

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1961-1968

Box 1, Folder 3	Liquidation, 1966-1976
Box 1, Folder 4	Outstanding Invoices, 1965
Box 1, Folder 5	Various Topics, 1962-1967
Box 1, Folder 6	Notices for Board of Directors and Stockholder Meetings and Employees, 1961-1968

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Series 3: Legal Documents, 1965 - 1966

Box 1, Folder 7 Articles of Amendment and Documents, 1965

Box 1, Folder 8 Patent Application, 1966 January

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Series 4: Financial Material, 1960 - 1965

Box 1, Folder 9

Financial Papers, 1960-1965

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Series 5: Publications, 1955 - 1971

Box 1, Folder 10	Conference Paper, "A New Look at the Electronic Oven" by R.V. Prucha, 1965 May 18-19
Box 1, Folder 11	Conference Paper, "Microwave Power for Home Appliances" by Roger F. French, Servodyne, 1964 May 19-20
Box 1, Folder 12	"Construction and Evaluation of a Kit-Form Microwave," U.S. Department of Health, 1971 May
Box 1, Folder 13	Article, "Microwave Power for Appliances," by Roger F. French, 1955-1971
Box 1, Folder 14	Non-Servodyne Advertisement Pamphlets, 1955-1971
Box 1, Folder 15	Magazine and News Clippings, 1955-1971
Box 1, Folder 16	Magazine News Clippings, 1955-1971

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Series 6: Photographs, 1955-1971

Box 2, Folder 3	Oven in Home, 1955-1971
Box 2, Folder 2	Picture of Tube from "Microwave Power for Home Appliances," by Roger F. French, 1955-1971
Box 2, Folder 3	Servodyne Microwave Exterior and Interior Pictures, 1955-1971
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Box 3, Folder 1	Drawings (Products and Parts), 1955-1971
Box 3, Folder 2	Equipment Records, 1955-1971
Box 3, Folder 3	Purchase Specifications (Parts and Vendors), 1955-1971
Box 3, Folder 4	Register of Visitors, 1955-1971