



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the James Knights Co. Records

NMAH.AC.0847

Wendy Shay

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Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
archivescenter@si.edu
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	James Knights Co. Records
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0847
Date:	1951-1981
Extent:	0.6 Cubic feet (1 box) 1 Film reel
Creator:	James Knights Co.
Language:	English
Summary:	Collection documents proposed legislation regulating the import and export of watch components. Also included is a film entitled "Crystals for the Critical".

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Collection donated by Gary Van Cleave in 2002.

Ownership and Custodial History

Collection transferred from the Division of History of Technology (now known as the Division of Works and Industry) to the Archives Center in 2003.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

Walter Guyton Cady Paper, 1903-1974 (NMAH.AC.0046)

Virgil Eldon Bottom Collection, 1936-1983 (NMAH.AC.0148)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Wendy Shay, September 2004.

Preferred Citation

James Knights Co. Records, 1951-1981, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research research access. Special arrangements required to view materials in cold storage. Using cold room materials requires a three hour waiting period. Contact the Archives Center at 202-633-3270. Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs and negatives.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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Historical

The James Knights Company of Sandwich, Illinois was founded in 1942 to develop and manufacture crystal-controlled oscillators. In creating the company, James Knights and Leon Faber were responding to the enormous demand for frequency control in military radio and telephone communications during World War II. Faber, a utility company employee, had previous experience making quartz crystal control units for amateur radio enthusiasts, also known as "hams." James Knights owned a local electrical supply store.

After the war James Knights produced crystal units for military aircraft radios. The firm became a subsidiary of CTS (Chicago Telephone Supply) in 1964 and the company name changed to CTS Knights. In addition to supplying crystals for use in military applications, the company manufactured crystal oscillators for use in a variety of other electronic devices including computers. During the early 1970s, the company was interested in the use of crystals in watches and clocks. The paper documents in the collection focus primarily on this effort.

The company continued to produce crystal units as a division of CTS, now a global electronics firm, until 2002 when it was shut down.

Scope and Contents

The collection comprises internal company documents primarily concerning the company's efforts in producing crystals for watches. Documents include correspondence with customers, suppliers, potential and active partners, technical specifications and notes, reports, financial records, and market research. One large file contains correspondence and memoranda relating to proposed legislation regulating the import and export of watch components.

The company produced the 1951 film, *Crystals for the Critical*, as a marketing and employee relations tool. It documents all aspects of the work of the James Knights Company.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Clocks and watches

Types of Materials:

Business letters

Financial records

Memorandums

Motion pictures (visual works)

Notes

Specifications

Container Listing

Box 1	Watch/Module Study: Reports, 1973-1974
Box 1	Pricing Sheets and Yield Reports, 1976
Box 1	Marketing and Sales, 1976
Box 1	Taiwan Plant, 1976
Box 1	RCA, 1972-1973
Box 1	Timex, 1973-1981
Box 1	Government Relations, 1976
Box 1	International Trade Commission Questionnaire, 1977
Box 1	1977 Planning goals, 1977
Box 1	Piezoelectric Vibrators, 1970-1976
Box 1	Clippings, 1973-1974
Box 1	Miscellaneous, undated
Box 1, Item RV847.1; Reel OF847.1	Crystals for the Critical <i>1 Reel (16mm silent color camera original reversal, 1,700 ft.)</i> A detailed moving image tour through the James Knights Company. Includes scenes of office work, testing, and all of the steps in the process of manufacturing a crystal from rock to finished product. Intertitles introduce each step.