



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of American History*  
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## Guide to the John G. Vasquez papers

NMAH.AC.0942

Alison Oswald

2007

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## Collection Overview

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Repository:</b> | Archives Center, National Museum of American History                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Title:</b>      | John G. Vasquez papers                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | NMAH.AC.0942                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Date:</b>       | 1942 - 2005                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 1 Cubic foot (5 boxes)                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Vasquez, John G.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Summary:</b>    | Papers document independent inventor John G. Vasquez. The papers include drawings, sketches, correspondence, notebooks, photographs, and prototypes for two of Vasquez's inventions. |

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Lillia Vasquez, widow of John G. Vasquez, 2007.

### Processing Information

Processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, and Adrienne Cain (intern), 2007.

### Preferred Citation

John Vasquez Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

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## Biographical / Historical

John George Vasquez was born in Meriden, Connecticut, on February 22, 1916 to Italian immigrants, John and Sebastiana (Larosa) Vasquez of Canicattini Bagni, Sicily. In the late 1920s, John apprenticed as

a barber, which became a favorite lifelong hobby. He was later recognized as a "Master Barber." Vasquez graduated from Hartford Public High School and attended the University of Connecticut.

In 1941, Vasquez married Lillia B. Schultz (b. 1920) of Wilmington, Vermont. They raised five children of their own: John E. Vasquez, Benedict R. Vasquez, Lewis P. Vasquez, Constance I. Sullivan, and Joseph D. Vasquez. Additionally, Vasquez and his wife were foster parents to at least fifty children in the State of Connecticut. The Vasquezes lived in Hartford until 1959 when they moved to Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Vasquez had a successful career designing and tool making at Pratt & Whitney Tool and Die Company of West Hartford. While working at Pratt & Whitney, John filed his first patent for a combined ash tray, and he began recording his thoughts, dreams, ideas and inventions in pocket-size notebooks. Vasquez holds three United States patents: Combined Ash Tray and Holder for Smokers' Articles, 1945 (#D142,753); a Multiple Compartment Handbag, 1947 (#2,429,856); and Magnetic Retainer, 1950 (#2,521,885). Vasquez completed his career as a blueprint supervisor at Pratt & Whitney with over 30 years of service. John G. Vasquez died on January 6, 2006.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers document the work of independent inventor John G. Vasquez and include drawings, sketches, correspondence, notebooks, photographs, and a prototype of Vasquez's invention, the Magnetic Retainer.

**Series 1, Inventions and Ideas, 1942-2005**, is divided into two subseries: Subseries 1, Chronological, 1942-2005 and Subseries 2, Miscellaneous, 1948-2003. The majority of the inventions and ideas consist of one file folder per invention/idea and contain sketches and/or notes. Many of the inventions/ideas are signed and dated by Vasquez. The random ideas folder contains a letterhead for "John G. Vasquez, inventor, designer of practical ideas for improved living." Subseries 2, Miscellaneous, 1948-2003, is comprised of numbered lists of ideas. In some instances, the lists contain small sketches.

**Series 2, Notebooks, 1960s-1970s, undated**, consists of fourteen 3" x 5" spiral bound notebooks maintained by Vasquez to record his thoughts, dreams, ideas and inventions. The notebooks contain statistics, facts, newspaper clippings, motivational phrases, and other data such as how much energy an appliance uses or the qualities of a "good shop man."

**Series 3, Patents, 1945-1956**, is divided into two subseries: Subseries 1, United States Patents, 1945, 1947, and Subseries 2, Poor Man's Patents, 1955, 1956. The patents are arranged chronologically by patent number and there is one file folder of poor man's patents. A "poor man's patent" is when an inventor writes a description of his/her invention and mails it to themselves or someone else by regular or certified mail to protect one's invention. Unfortunately, this method does not protect an invention.

**Series 4, News clippings, 1948, 1981**, contain three newspaper articles from the Hartford Daily Courant about Vasquez.

**Series 5, Photographs, 1948, undated**, contains three black-and-white photographs; two document Vasquez, the other features his Multiple Compartment Handbag (United States Patent #2,429,856) of 1945.

**Series 6, Artifacts, 1945 and 1947**, contains two prototypes: a Magnetic Retainer (United States Patent #2,521,885) 1947, and a Combined Ash Tray and Holder for Smokers' Articles, 1945 (United States Design Patent #D142, 753).

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## Arrangement

Collection organized into six series.

### **Series 1: Inventions and Ideas, 1942-2005**

Subseries 1, Chronological, 1942-2005

Subseries 2, Miscellaneous, 1948-2003

### **Series 2: Notebooks, 1960s-1970s, undated**

### **Series 3: Patents, 1945-1956**

Subseries 1, United States Patents, 1945, 1947

Subseries 2, Poor Man's Patents, 1955, 1956

### **Series 4: News clippings, 1948, 1981**

### **Series 5: Photographs, 1948, undated**

### **Series 6: Prototypes, 1945 and 1947**

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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:

Inventions  
Inventors

Types of Materials:

Notebooks  
Patents -- 20th century  
Photographs -- 20th century  
Sketches

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Inventions and Ideas , 1942 - 2005

#### Subseries 1: Chronological , 1942 - 2005

|                  |                                                                                                    |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 1  | Index of inventions and ideas , [undated]                                                          |
| Box 1, Folder 2  | Close line cleaner, 1942                                                                           |
| Box 1, Folder 3  | Air brakes for aircraft carrier landings , 1943                                                    |
| Box 1, Folder 4  | Cigars equipped with mouth piece , 1943                                                            |
| Box 1, Folder 5  | Lawn mower sharpening rig , 1943                                                                   |
| Box 1, Folder 6  | Revolving tie rack and step thread , 1943                                                          |
| Box 1, Folder 7  | Scissor sharpening clamp-flat , 1943                                                               |
| Box 1, Folder 8  | Telescope indicator hand , 1943                                                                    |
| Box 1, Folder 9  | Random Idea: Not Named , 1943 January 15                                                           |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Penance prayer enumerator, logs last confession dates , 1943 January 2<br><a href="#">Image(s)</a> |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Dovetail measuring vernier , 1943 January 6                                                        |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Double end lathe , 1943 January 20                                                                 |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | Combination slide edge and moveable protractor , 1943 February 2                                   |
| Box 1, Folder 14 | Combination slide edge and moveable protractor , 1943 March 4                                      |
| Box 1, Folder 15 | Stay in file handle locking system , 1943 February 10                                              |
| Box 1, Folder 16 | Mill two flutes simultaneously , 1943 February 14                                                  |
| Box 1, Folder 17 | Adjustable V and block gage , 1943 February 16                                                     |

- Box 1, Folder 18      Alphabetical playing card games, like rummy = spell word game, poker = vowels are high cards , 1943  
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 19      Vert shaper with rotating spin , 1943 February 19
- Box 1, Folder 20      Turn buckles with handle extension wrench , 1943 March 1
- Box 1, Folder 21      Thread chasers feeding radially , 1943 March 4
- Box 1, Folder 22      Typewriter-continuous line or dotted line , 1943 March 4
- Box 1, Folder 23      Smoker's pipe with cooling handle , 1943 March 15
- Box 1, Folder 24      Transparent shoe box , 1943 March 27  
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 25      Two and three grinding wheels-simultaneous, 1943 March 27
- Box 1, Folder 26      Scale end shock absorber , 1943 March 27
- Box 1, Folder 27      Crouton made from stale bread and cam for each width of tooth on back side and conveyor system in lapping, , 1943 March 29
- Box 1, Folder 28      Combination clothes pants hangers and bed back rest on back side of sheet, 1944
- Box 1, Folder 29      Tent ash tray, log cabin ash tray , 1944  
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 30      Compass/protractor pivot pin , 1944 February 1
- Box 1, Folder 31      Two-in-one band saw for log cutting , 1944 March 12
- Box 1, Folder 32      Hydraulic jacks folding type , 1944 March 20
- Box 1, Folder 33      Combination gear and pulley driver , 1944 March 24
- Box 1, Folder 34      Bullet shell with rifling grooves through round bore , 1944 April 14
- Box 1, Folder 35      Electricity, 1944 April 25
- Box 1, Folder 36      Rivers multi-power electric generator dams , 1944 April 26

Box 1, Folder 37      Check net pipe tap , 1944 April 27

Box 1, Folder 38      Grinding wheel true wheel radius dresser , 1944 April 29

Box 1, Folder 39      Pipe plugs, pipe tobacco wrapped in cigar wrapper , 1944 November 17

Box 1, Folder 40      Oil, grease seals , 1944 November 28

Box 1, Folder 41      Turning tool holder, 1944 December 12

Box 1, Folder 42      Grinding taper holes in stationary parts , 1944 December 12

Box 1, Folder 43      The truly safe safety pins, 1945 July 24

Box 1, Folder 44      Amendment: US Patent Office (for cabinet magnets) , 1947 February 26

Box 1, Folder 45      Random magnet idea , 1947 May 15

Box 1, Folder 46      Liquid tight and lock screws (studs) , 1948 May 20

Box 1, Folder 47      Tobacco tippy stand , 1948 May 24

Box 1, Folder 48      Bolt with cemented rubber and thin metal washer (anchor) studs , 1948  
November 9

Box 1, Folder 49      Mailing service-kiddie grams/kiddie mail , 1954

Box 1, Folder 50      Hypot-scale, 1954 February 4

Box 1, Folder 51      Air conditioner , 1954 March 8

Box 1, Folder 52      Sander with replaceable sanding cloth mesh, 1954 May 4

Box 1, Folder 53      Magna letter/magna word game, 1954 May 4

Box 1, Folder 54      Magna ball game, 1954 May 5

Box 1, Folder 55      Non-clog file , 1954 May 11

Box 1, Folder 56      Perforated metal file/cutter , 1954 May 11

Box 1, Folder 57      Magnetic hinge door closure , 1955 January 28



|                  |                                                                                                      |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 58 | Pill pulverizer , 1955 February 18                                                                   |
| Box 1, Folder 59 | In sequence blade , 1960 June 22                                                                     |
| Box 1, Folder 60 | Suggestions for shavers , 1960 June 22                                                               |
| Box 1, Folder 61 | Solar energy calculations, 1981 February 9                                                           |
| Box 1, Folder 62 | "Air-Gen Scoop" , 1981 March 4                                                                       |
| Box 1, Folder 63 | Organizing toolbox decals for drawers , 1992 June 3                                                  |
| Box 1, Folder 64 | Flex-Hammer-use coil spring for handle , 1996 July 22                                                |
| Box 1, Folder 65 | Comments on weather, 1997                                                                            |
| Box 1, Folder 66 | "The Lifter-Upper Cone" , 1998 October 22                                                            |
| Box 1, Folder 67 | Make your own "instant" pension , 1999 April 11                                                      |
| Box 1, Folder 68 | Deck library stand, 2001                                                                             |
| Box 1, Folder 69 | Lightweight arthritic helper tools , 2003                                                            |
| Box 1, Folder 70 | Multi-tool, 2004 August 3                                                                            |
| Box 1, Folder 71 | Idea: the hidden saw tool handle , 2004 September 19                                                 |
| Box 1, Folder 72 | Potato holder when peeling a potato (attach to countertops or sinks) , 2004 November                 |
| Box 1, Folder 73 | 6" x12" mirror to rearview; steam cookers for home; sock stretcher; Velcro replacement , 2004 - 2005 |
| Box 1, Folder 74 | The single golf club with moveable weight on the shaft , 2005 October 5                              |
| Box 1, Folder 75 | 3 and 4 sided picture frames, 2005 October 23                                                        |
| Box 1, Folder 76 | Idea: "Angular Carpenter's Square" , undated                                                         |
| Box 1, Folder 77 | Idea: combination=screwdriver, file, scissors , undated                                              |
| Box 1, Folder 78 | Idea: combination hacksaw and file , undated                                                         |

|                  |                                                              |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 79 | Idea: combination-A ball point pen and a nail file , undated |
| Box 1, Folder 80 | Idea "Flex-Hammer" , undated                                 |
| Box 1, Folder 81 | Idea: "Meteor" Spring Hammer , undated                       |
| Box 1, Folder 82 | Idea: Rubber coated woodscrew, nails , undated               |
| Box 1, Folder 83 | Random ideas, undated                                        |

### Subseries 2: Miscellaneous , 1948 - 2003

|                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Box 4, Drawer 2  | Miscellaneous , 1948       |
| Box 1, Drawer 84 | Miscellaneous ideas , 1996 |
| Box 1, Drawer 85 | Miscellaneous ideas , 1997 |
| Box 1, Drawer 86 | Miscellaneous ideas , 1998 |
| Box 1, Drawer 87 | Miscellaneous ideas , 199  |
| Box 1, Drawer 88 | Miscellaneous ideas , 2000 |
| Box 1, Drawer 89 | Miscellaneous ideas , 2001 |
| Box 1, Drawer 90 | Miscellaneous ideas , 2002 |
| Box 1, Drawer 91 | Miscellaneous ideas, 2003  |

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## Series 2: Notebooks , 1960s-1970s, undated

*Box 2, Folder 1-3*

[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 3: Patents , 1945 - 1956

*Box 4, Folder 1*

### Subseries 1: United States Patents , 1945, 1947

Box 4, Drawer 1;                    Multiple Compartment Handbag, United States Patent #2,429,856 , 1945  
Box 1, Folder 92

Box 1, Drawer 93                Magnetic Retainer, United States Patent #2,521,885, 1947  
[Image\(s\)](#)

### Subseries 2: Poor Man's Patents , 1955, 1956

*Box 4, Folder 3*

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## Series 4: : News clippings , 1948, 1981

*Box 1, Folder 94*

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## Series 5: Photographs , 1948, undated

*Box 1, Folder 95*

[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 6: Prototypes, 1945, 1947

Box 5                      Combined Ash Tray and Holder for Smokers' Articles , 1945

Box 3                      Magnetic Retainer prototype, 1947

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