



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Alexander Binder Company records

NMAH.AC.1100

Ann Abney

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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:	Alexander Binder Company Records
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1100
Date:	1903-1965 (bulk 1921-1955)
Extent:	6 Cubic feet (6 boxes)
Creator:	Alexander, Clinton B. Work and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI Clinton B. Alexander Binder Company (Washington, D.C.)
Language:	English
Summary:	Collection documents the business records of the Alexander Binder Company, as well as the inventions and creations of Clinton B. Alexander. The collection includes business receipts and forms, pamphlets, drawings, trade literature, notes, patents, correspondence, and material samples.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection was donated at some time before 1980 and has no acquisition information, thus rendering this archive as "found in collection."

Provenance

Collected for the Museum by the Division of Work and Industry (then known as the Division of Engineering and Industry). Transferred to the Archives Center in 2007.

Processing Information

Processed by Laura Fielding (intern), March, 2009; supervised by Alison Oswald, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Alexander Binder Company Records, 1921-1965, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning intellectual property rights. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Clinton B. Alexander was an inventor and entrepreneurial businessman from Washington, D.C. during the twentieth-century. He was born in 1873 in Clearfield, Pennsylvania, where he worked as a mining engineer, moving to Washington D.C. after 1900. From 1915 to 1965, he began to patent and sell various items for businesses and record keeping, such as a plumb adjuster, paper puncher, tape splice, as well as the loose leaf binder. The loose-leaf binder was his most successful invention improvement and was sold under the name Autaset Company and Autolock Company. He also sold his other inventions under the company name The Alexander Instrument Company. Both of these companies—The Autaset Company/Autolock Company and the Alexander Instrument Company—formed part of the Alexander Binder Company. The Alexander Binder Company was located at 467 C St. NW, Washington, D.C. It was a small family business for its entire existence. Both Clinton Alexander's wife (Maria Dixon Alexander) and son (William B. Alexander) are recorded as helping with the business and the patenting process. In February of 1966, Clinton B. Alexander died, and the Alexander Binder Company ceased to exist.

Scope and Contents

The Alexander Binder collection consists of 7.5 cubic feet of records and business materials which were created between the 1910s and 1965. Most of the collection deals with the binders sold under the Autaset Company and the Autolock Company names. There is also material covering the inventions created and sold under the Alexander Instrument Company. Business and sales information and materials from competitor companies are also included. The vast majority of this collection is textual material, especially business ephemera used to improve the business or sales records between Mr. Alexander and his suppliers and customers. The biggest customer of the Alexander Binder Company was the Aluminum Company of America, now known as Alcoa. However, the Alexander Binder Company sold frequently to companies outside of the United States as well. Along with these sales and business documents, there are material samples, such as grommets, extenders, fabric samples, printing plates, and sample binders from both the Autaset Company and its competitors.

Series 1, Correspondence, 1920-1935, contains correspondence by the Alexander Binder Company about loose leaf binders as well as correspondence with suppliers that the Alexander Binder Company worked with, such as G.H Mansfield and Company, Murphy Specialty Company, and United Screw & Bolt Corporation.

Series 2, Company Forms and Printing Plates, 1921-1954, undated, contains both business letters and information sent out concerning the investment account book, one of the more heavily publicized uses for the loose-leaf binders. It also contains the printing plates and associated materials that were used by the company for all of the various products sold by the company, ranging from the Plummet Adjustor to the Crescent Accounting System.

Series 3, Advertising and Sales Materials, 1912-1965, is divided into four subseries: Subseries 1, Advertising Materials, 1912-1941; Subseries 2, Catalogs, 1916-1921, undated; Subseries 3, Orders, Receipts, Shipments, 1913-1964; and Subseries 4, Sales Materials, 1916-1966. Materials include various marketing books and sales ephemera that Clinton B. Alexander collected to improve the sales and

marketing of his products as well as orders, receipts, and shipments that the Alexander Binder Company or one of its subsets received from customers.

Subseries 1, Advertising Materials, 1912-1941, consists of documents that Clinton B. Alexander used to advertise his products. To increase sales, Alexander collected both advertising materials from his suppliers and his competitors as well as books that pertained to business marketing. Also included in this subseries are advertisements that Alexander used for his own products, such as the Crescent Accounting System.

Subseries 2, Catalogs, 1916-1921, includes catalogs from suppliers such as the Lantham Machinery Company and the Dietzgen Supply Company, as well as the Autaset Company. Clinton B. Alexander collected catalogs of various companies, particularly those of his suppliers in order to create catalogs of his own that could successfully market his products.

Subseries 3, Orders, Receipts, Shipments, 1913-1964, consists of all of the orders and sales made by the Alexander Binder Company and its subsets during the period of its existence. This includes not only sales of loose-leaf binders, but also sales of plumb adjusters and tape splices.

Subseries 4, Sales Materials, 1916-1966, contains sales materials that Clinton B. Alexander procured and to improve marketing his products. Included are various sales strategies as well.

Series 4, Drawing, Patterns, and Instructions, 1916-1959, consists of Clinton B. Alexander's drawings, patterns, and instructions concerning his inventions. These materials focus mostly on his loose leaf binder inventions, but also deal with how to create shipping boxes and parts for the machines used to create his products.

Series 5, Patent and Trademark Materials, 1912-1941, consists of all of the patent and trademark materials that Clinton B. Alexander used while inventing. Included is a certificate of copyright for his book, *The Crescent Accounting System for Investments and Income Tax* (1936) as well as trade names that he considered while starting his company.

Series 6, Competitors, 1931-1939, contains samples and related material for the creation of loose leaf binders as well as correspondence with the supplying companies. The samples are mostly fasteners and screws that were used in loose leaf binders.

Series 7, Binder Samples, 1918, 1931, 1933, 1956, undated, contains samples of binders created by the Alexander Binder Company under the Autaset Company and AutoSet Company names. It also includes binders that were created by competitor binder companies, such as the Walcott-Taylor Company and the Cesco Company.

Series 8, Articles and Publications, 1909-1947, consists of articles and publications pertaining to business development, in particular, documents such as "how to" guides, knowledge journals, and printed material from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Arrangement

Collection organized into eight series.

Series 1, Correspondence, 1920-1935

Series 2, Company Forms and Printing Plates, 1921-1954, undated

Series 3, Advertising and Sales Materials, 1912-1965, undated

Subseries 1, Advertising Materials, 1912-1941

Subseries 2, Catalogs, 1916-1921, undated

Subseries 3, Orders, Receipts, Shipments, 1913-1964

Subseries 4, Sales Materials, 1916-1966

Series 4, Drawings, Patterns, and Instructions, 1916-1959

Series 5, Patent and Trademark Materials, 1912-1941

Series 6, Competitors, 1931-1939

Series 7, Binder Samples, 1918, 1931, 1933, 1956, undated

Series 8, Articles and Publications, 1909-1947

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Engineers
- Inventors
- Office equipment and supplies
- Office equipment and supplies industry

Types of Materials:

- Advertisements
- Brochures
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Sales records
- Samples

Names:

- Work and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1920-1935

Box 1, Folder 1	Supplier Correspondence, 1920-1931
Box 1, Folder 2	Supplier Correspondence, 1932
Box 1, Folder 3	Supplier Correspondence, 1934
Box 1, Folder 4	Supplier Correspondence, 1935

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Series 2: Company Forms and Printing Plates, 1921-1954, undated

Box 1, Folder 5	Papers regarding materials used in binding and developing shop manufacturing practice, 1921 February - 1950 July
Box 1, Folder 6	Crescent Investment Accounting System and ring binders, 1933 February - 1955 February
Box 1, Folder 7	Materials relating to search for manufacturer of snap fasteners, 1934 January 14 - 1934 July 30
Box 1, Folder 8	Crescent Accounting System folders, 1936
Box 1, Folder 9	Materials relating to search for paper to use as index sheets, 1951 June 27 - 1954 March 9
Box 1, Folder 10	Materials relating to search for manufacturing of fasteners and binder board (1 of 2), 1953 April - September
Box 1, Folder 11	Materials relating to search for manufacturing of fasteners and binder board (2 of 2), 1953 April - September
Box 1, Folder 12	Crescent Accounting systems, 1937 August - 1952 July
Box 1, Folder 13	Account books, 1954
Box 1, Folder 14	Capital Account Book, 1954
Box 1, Folder 15	Investment Account Book, 1954
Box 9, Folder 2	Plummet Adjustor printing plates, undated
Box 9, Folder 3	Tape Splice cut printing plates, undated
Box 10, Folder 1	Crescent Accounting System (associated loose materials), undated
Box 10, Folder 2	Crescent Accounting System printing plates, undated
Box 11, Folder 1	AutoLock binder (associated loose materials), undated
Box 11, Folder 2	AutoLock printing plates, undated
Box 12, Folder 1	AutoSet Plummet Adjustor and Alexander Little Giant, undated

- Box 12, Folder 2 Investment and Accounting printing plate, undated
- Box 13, Folder 1 Crescent Accounting System (associated loose materials), undated
- Box 13, Folder 2 Crescent Accounting System printing plates, undated

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Series 3: Advertising and Sales Materials, 1912-1965

Subseries 3.1: Advertising Materials, 1912-1941

- Box 1, Folder 16 Advertisement cards (suppliers and competitors), 1912-1924
- Box 1, Folder 17 *Direct by Mail Advertising, Profit Making Up-to-date, Letters as Business Builders, Business Short Cuts*, 1915, 1933
- Box 1, Folder 18 Competitors and suppliers advertisements, circa 1920s-1930s
- Box 1, Folder 19 Advertisement ideas, 1930s
- Box 1, Folder 20 Crescent Financial advertisements, 1941
- Box 1, Folder 21 Little Giant Tape Splice and Plummet Adjustor (postcards), undated
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 22 Autolock Binder Company advertisements, undated
- Box 1, Folder 23 Autolock and Thonglock Loose Leaf binders (pamphlets), undated
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 1, Folder 24 Business letterhead samples, 1934

Subseries 3.2: Catalogs, 1916-1921

- Box 2, Folder 1 *Machinery Catalogue*, 1916?
- Box 2, Folder 2 *Power Press Catalogue*, 1920
- Box 2, Folder 4 *Autoset Catalogues*, undated
- Box 2, Folder 5 *Dietzgen Supply Catalogue*, undated

Subseries 3.3: Orders, Receipts, Shipments, 1913-1964

- Box 2, Folder 6 Miscellaneous, 1913-1930
- Box 2, Folder 7 Orders, tape splice and plummet adjusters, 1921
- Box 2, Folder 8-9 Data for purchase of drill press and topping device, 1923
- Box 2, Folder 10 Shipments - loose leaf binders and instruments, 1931 January-April

Box 2, Folder 11	Shipments - loose leaf binders and instruments, 1931 May-December
Box 2, Folder 12	Keys for lock binder, 1932 January 14 - 1932 April 6
Box 2, Folder 13	Shipments - loose leaf binders and instruments, 1932 January 5 - 1932 October 21
Box 2, Folder 14	Shipments - loose leaf binder and instruments, 1933
Box 2, Folder 15	Orders - loose leaf binders and instruments, 1934
Box 2, Folder 16	Orders - loose leaf binders and instruments, 1935 February - 1935 May
Box 2, Folder 17	Orders - loose leaf binders and instruments, 1935-1936
Box 2, Folder 18-19	Loose leaf binders, tape splicers and plummet adjusters, 1936
Box 3, Folder 1	Business orders for loose leaf binders, tape splice and plummet adjusters, 1937
Box 3, Folder 2	Business orders for loose leaf binders, tape splice and plummet adjusters, 1938
Box 3, Folder 3	Loose leaf binder, tape splice and plummet adjuster, 1939
Box 3, Folder 4-5	Orders, 1940
Box 3, Folder 6-7	Loose leaf binder, tape splice and plummet adjuster accounts, 1941
Box 3, Folder 8-9	Loose leaf binders and tape splices, 1942
Box 3, Folder 10	Orders, 1943
Box 3, Folder 11	Loose leaf binder shipments, 1944
Box 3, Folder 12	Instruments - tape splice and plummet adjusters orders filled, 1945
Box 3, Folder 13	Binders and loose leaf orders filled, 1945
Box 3, Folder 14	Crescent forms - binders and instrument orders filled, 1945
Box 3, Folder 15	Tape splicers and plummet adjusters, 1946

Box 3, Folder 16 Orders - tape splice, plummet adjuster forms, 1947

Box 3, Folder 17 Orders - tape splice, plummet adjuster forms, 1948

Box 3, Folder 18 Tape splice and plummet adjuster sales, 1949

Box 4, Folder 1 Final order from Aluminum Company of America, 1949

Box 4, Folder 2 Tape splice and plummet adjuster, 1950

Box 4, Folder 3 Tape splices shipped, 1951

Box 4, Folder 5 Sale of tape splices and plummet adjusters, 1953

Box 4, Folder 5 Tape splices and plummet adjusters, 1953

Box 4, Folder 6 Tape splices plumb bob adjusters, 1958

Box 4, Folder 7 Tape splices shipped, 1954

Box 4, Folder 8 Tape splices shipped, 1955 January 26 - 1955 August 23

Box 4, Folder 9 Tape splice and plumb bob adjusters sales, 1956 February 14 - 1956
December 7

Box 4, Folder 10 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1958 January 7 - 1965 August 9

Box 4, Folder 11 State Highway Commissions, Tape splice, 1950, 1952

Box 4, Folder 12 Tape splicers, 1958

Box 4, Folder 13 Chain splicers, 1960

Box 4, Folder 14 Tape splicers, 1962

Box 4, Folder 15 Plumb bob adjusters, 1964

Box 4, Folder 16 Order book, 1915-1927

Subseries 3.4: Sales Materials, 1916-1966

Box 4, Folder 17 Sales strategies, 1931-1932, 1924

Box 4, Folder 18	Correspondence, 1965-1966, 1933
Box 4, Folder 19	Sales letters (examples), 1932, 1923, 1925
Box 4, Folder 21	Supply inventory for Alexander Binder Company, undated
Box 4, Folder 22	Sales book (example), 1914

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Series 4: Drawing, Patterns and Instructions, 1916-1959

Box 5, Folder 1	Method, 1919, 1916
Box 5, Folder 2	Material specifications for AutoLock binder, 1918 October 4
Box 5, Folder 3	Metal hinge method, 1917, 1918, 1920 Image(s)
Box 5, Folder 4	Bound volume of product specifications, 1921 February 1
Box 5, Folder 5	Patterns for metal, 1919, 1921, 1927
Box 5, Folder 6	Shipping box patterns, 1927
Box 5, Folder 7	Patterns and drawings for foot press die base, 1932
Box 5, Folder 8	Drawings and method, 1932-1933
Box 5, Folder 9	Drawings, 1933
Box 5, Folder 10	Drawings and instructions, 1933-1934
Box 5, Folder 11	Materials relating to new AutoLock loose leaf binder, 1933 November - 1954 November Image(s)
Box 5, Folder 12	Instructions and method, 1939, 1921, 1934, 1938
Box 5, Folder 13	Crescent Account System instruction and drawings, 1935, 1937, 1939
Box 5, Folder 14	38" tape splice instructions and drawings, 1931, 1946, 1944, 1948
Box 5, Folder 15	Materials relating to manufacture of tape splices, 1941 April - 1949 October
Box 5, Folder 16	Instructions and method, 1952
Box 5, Folder 17	Tape splice instructions, 1957, 1956, 1959
Box 5, Folder 18	Box patterns and samples, 1959

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Series 5: Patent and Trademark Materials, 1903-1941

Box 5, Folder 19	Patent materials for plummet adjuster and slack adjuster, 1929, 1916, 1948
Box 5, Folder 20	Alexander, C.B., patents (copies), 1915-1933, 1903 Image(s): Patents
Box 5, Folder 21	List of trade names, 1912
Box 5, Folder 22A	Certificate of copyright, 1936 December 28
Box 5, Folder 22B	Certificate of copyright registration, 1941
Box 5, Folder 44	Autoset loose leaf binders, trademark, 1912
Box 5, Folder 45	Rob Roy loose leaf binders, trademark, 1921-1922
Box 5, Folder 46	Casings and method of making same, 1922-1926
Box 5, Folder 47	Semi-permanent loose leaf, 1921-1922
Box 5, Folder 48	Loose leaf binders, 1922-1925
Box 5, Folder 49	Connector for repairing metallic measuring tapes, 1931-1932

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Series 6: Competitors, 1931-1939

Box 5, Folder 22	Correspondence, 1931-1939
Box 5, Folder 23	Correspondence and samples (eyelets, screws, post extenders, grommets) of the Stimpson Company, 1935
Box 5, Folder 24	Snap fastener samples and catalogue, 1934
Box 5, Folder 25	Dot fastener sample and correspondence, 1934
Box 5, Folder 26	Fastener (miscellaneous), 1934
Box 5, Folder 27	Brass nut samples, 1934
Box 5, Folder 28	Extender screw examples, 1934
Box 5, Folder 29	Unidentified samples, undated
Box 5, Folder 30	Upholstery samples, 1935

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Series 7: Binder Samples, 1956, 1931, 1933, 1918, undated

Box 6, Folder 1	AutoSet special file equipment with hole punch, No. FB-4, undated
Box 6, Folder 2	AutoSet blank binder with memo routing, undated
Box 6, Folder 3	AutoSet special file with hole punch, undated
Box 6, Folder 4	AutoSet AutoLock binder, undated
Box 6, Folder 5	B and D Standard, undated
Box 6, Folder 6	Cesco Company, undated
Box 7, Folder 1	AutoLock binder, undated
Box 7, Folder 2	AutoLock binder, undated
Box 7, Folder 3	AutoLock binder, undated
Box 7, Folder 4	AutoLock binder, undated
Box 7, Folder 5	Binder (with extenders), undated
Box 7, Folder 6	Binder (blank), undated
Box 7, Folder 7	AutoLock binder, 1956 January 19
Box 7, Folder 8	AutoLock binder, undated
Box 7, Folder 9	AutoLock binder, undated
Box 7, Folder 10	Autoset special file equipment binder, undated
Box 7, Folder 11	Autoset binder No. 5211, undated
Box 8, Folder 1	AutoLock binder, undated
Box 8, Folder 2	AutoSet Company binder, undated
Box 8, Folder 3	Prototype, 1931 April 2
Box 8, Folder 4	Prototype with notes, 1918 October 4

Box 9, Folder 1

Proposed drawings for AutoLock binder, 1933 December

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Series 8: Articles and Publications, 1909-1947

Box 9, Folder 31	Business Development Company (handbooks), 1910s
Box 9, Folder 32	<i>Financial Handbook: The Art of Promotion, Advertising and Selling; The Art of Financiering: Knowledge and Business and Finance</i> , 1910, 1909
Box 9, Folder 33	<i>Knowledge</i> , 1924, 1920, 1923
Box 9, Folder 34	Contacts, Bell Telephone Company, undated
Box 9, Folder 35	Brochures about eyeleting machinery of Southworth Brothers and Stimpson Company, 1925
Box 9, Folder 36	Miscellaneous clippings and publications, 1924, 1926, 1918
Box 9, Folder 37	<i>The Office Economist</i> , 192
Box 9, Folder 38	Notes from American Society of Civil Engineers Yearbook, 1921
Box 9, Folder 39	<i>American Society of Civil Engineers Yearbook</i> , 1921
Box 9, Folder 40	Contacts from American Society of Civil Engineers Yearbook, 1926
Box 9, Folder 41	<i>American Society of Civil Engineers Yearbook</i> , 1926
Box 9, Folder 42	Printing and advertising clippings, 1933, 1926
Box 9, Folder 43	<i>United States Service Journal</i> , 1947

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