



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Jon and Jennifer Hanson Watch and Clock Collection

NMAH.AC.1122

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2008

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Jon and Jennifer Hanson Watch and Clock Collection
Date:	1931-1954 undated
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1122
Creator:	Hanson, Jon Hamilton Watch Company.
Extent:	11.7 Cubic feet (8 boxes including photographs and negatives)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Photographic prints and negatives documenting the interior operations of the Hamilton Watch Company primarily in the 1930s and 1940s.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by Jon Hanson in 2008.

Provenance

Acquired by a clock and watch collector in 1969 when Hamilton closed its Lancaster plant and later sold by his estate.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

- E. Howard Clock Company Records (AC0776)
- Seth Thomas Clock Company Records (AC0627)
- James Arthur Clock and Watch Collection (AC0130)
- National Company (NATCO) Atomic Clocks Records (AC0547)
- Harold Lyons Atomic Clocks Collection (AC0701)
- Warshaw Collection of Business Americana (AC0060)

Processing Information

Processed by Kiley Orchard (intern), 2008, Christopher Ruggiero (intern), 2008, and Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist, 2008.

Preferred Citation

Hamilton Watch Company Photographs, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

The collection is open for research use.

Researchers must handle unprotected photographs with gloves.

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

Hamilton Watch Company, established in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1892, was known for its manufacture of high quality wrist and pocket watches. Broadway Limited, its first series of pocket watches, was nicknamed "the watch of railroad accuracy," and Hamilton soon became associated with the railroad industry. The company also supplied wristwatches to the United States Armed Forces in the 1910s. Hamilton continued its association with the military during World War II when it stopped production of watches for consumers in order to provide the armed forces with one million timepieces. The company was responsible for the Ventura, the world's first electric (battery-powered) watch, and in 1970, the world's first digital watch.

In 1969, Hamilton closed its factory in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, signaling the end of its American manufacturing operations. All production moved to the facilities of the Buren Watch Company in Switzerland, a company that Hamilton had acquired three years before. The Hamilton brand is currently owned by the Swatch Group and carries two product lines, American Classic and Khaki.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of approximately 760 photographs and negatives created by the Hamilton Watch Company and documenting its employees, equipment, materials, and factory in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Many photographs depict the company's research and development efforts. There are also images of the Hamilton Watch Company's work in fuse assembly for bombs during WWII. The photographs are mainly organized by factory department or location. A number of these photographs were created by the advertising department and include identification numbers, location of the image, name of the photographer, and the identification of people in the photograph, as well as release forms for those pictured. If not located with the photographs, these items, as well as additional information, can be found in the corresponding folders. Negatives in poor condition were scanned. There are also five glass plate negatives.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in one series.

Series 1, Photographic Prints and Negatives, 1931-1954, undated

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Assembly-line methods
- Bombs
- Chronometers
- Clocks and watches

Factories -- Pennsylvania
Fuses
Horology
Manufacturing processes
World War, 1939-1945 -- Industries

Types of Materials:

Account books -- 20th century
Advertising
Annual reports
Blueprints
Business records
Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 1940-1950
Price lists

Container Listing

Series 1: Photographic Prints and Negatives, 1931-1954, undated

Box 1	Assembly casing, 1953, undated
Box 8, Folder 1	Assembly casing, undated Notes: Scanned image, AC1122-0000004.tif
Box 1	Assembly line, 1941, undated
Box 8, Folder 2	Assembly line, 1941, undated
Box 8, Folder 3	Assembly line, undated Notes: Scanned images, AC1122-0000001.tif, AC1122-0000002.tif, and AC1122-0000003.tif
Box 1	Automatic department, undated
Box 8, Folder 4	Automatic department, undated
Box 1	Balance and flat steel, undated
Box 8, Folder 5	Balance and flat steel, undated
Box 2	Balance staff department, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 6	Balance staff department, 1943, undated
Box 2	Balance wheel, undated
Box 8, Folder 7	Balance wheel, undated Notes: Scanned images, AC1122-0000005.tif and AC1122-0000006.tif
Box 2	Boiler house, undated
Box 2	Cafeteria, undated
Box 2	Chemical research laboratory, undated
Box 2	Chronometer assembly, undated
Box 8, Folder 8	Chronometer assembly, undated Notes: Scanned image, AC1122-0000007.tif
Box 2	Credit union, undated

Box 8, Folder 9	Credit union, undated
Box 8, Folder 10	Credit union, undated Notes: Scanned images, AC1122-0000008.tif and AC1122-0000009.tif
Box 2	Crystal tool laboratory, 1943
Box 2	Crystallography laboratory, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 11	Crystallography laboratory, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 12	Crystallography laboratory, undated
Box 8, Folder 13	Crystallography laboratory, undated Notes: Scanned image, AC1122-0000010.tif
Box 2	Dial, undated
Box 3	Dial department, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 14	Dial department, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 15	Dial department, undated Notes: Scanned images, AC1122-0000011.tif and AC1122-0000012.tif
Box 3	Dixie room, undated
Box 3	Engineering department, 1931, undated
Box 8, Folder 16	Engineering department, 1931, undated
Box 3	Escape department, 1931, undated
Box 3	Factory (air view), 1954, 1946, 1952, 1945, undated
Box 8, Folder 17	Factory (air view), 1945, 1946, 1954, 1952, undated
Box 4	Finishing department, 1931, 1943, 1941, undated
Box 8, Folder 18	Finishing department, 1943, 1941, 1931, undated
Box 4	First aid room, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 19	First aid room, 1943, undated
Box 4	Friction jewellery, 1932, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 20	Friction jewellery, 1932, 1943, undated

Box 4	Fuze assembly, North plant, 1943
Box 4	Hairspring, undated
Box 7, Folder 1	Hairspring, glass negatives, undated
Box 8, Folder 21	Hairspring, undated
Box 8, Folder 22	Hairspring, undated Notes: Scanned images, AC1122-0000013.tif and AC1122-0000014.tif
Box 4	Hairspring manufacture, 1949
Box 8, Folder 23	Hairspring manufacture, 1949
Box 4	Jewel department, 1943, 1948, undated
Box 7, Folder 2	Jewel department, glass negative, undated
Box 8, Folder 24	Jewel department, 1948, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 25	Jewel department, undated Notes: Scanned image, AC1122-0000015.tif
Box 5	Jewels, 1947, undated
Box 7, Folder 3	Jewels, glass negative, undated
Box 5	Library, 1945, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 26	Library, 1943
Box 5	Machine shop, 1931, 1949, 1943, 1941, undated
Box 8, Folder 27	Machine shop, 1943, 1949, 1931, 1941, undated
Box 5	Material sales, 1953, undated
Box 5	Metrology laboratory (standards section), 1949, 1948, undated
Box 8, Folder 28	Metrology laboratory (standards section), 1948, 1949, undated
Box 5	North plant, 1943
Box 8, Folder 29	North plant, 1943
Box 5	Oil laboratory, 1948, 1941, 1943, 1946, undated

Box 8, Folder 30	Oil laboratory, 1946, 1948, 1941, 1943, undated
Box 6	Pallet arbor, 1947
Box 6	Pallet fork, undated
Box 8, Folder 31	Pallet fork Notes: Scanned image, AC1122-0000016.tif
Box 6	Pillar plate, 1947, undated
Box 8, Folder 32	Pillar plate, 1947, undated
Box 6	Screws, 1947, 1946, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 33	Screws, 1947, 1946, 1943, undated
Box 8, Folder 34	Train wheels, undated
Box 6	Unassembled parts, undated

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