

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞
for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ Rathbun-Jones Engineering Company Records, 1902-2012 ◀

MSS-268

Size: Approximately 1 linear foot

Provenance: Received from Louis Boehk, April 2013

Access: Open

Collection Summary: Collection contains photographs, catalogs, publications, and various miscellaneous materials from the Rathbun-Jones Engineering Company, which was founded in 1892 as the Acme Sucker Rod Company by Toledo mayor Samuel “Golden Rule” Jones

Subject(s): [Business and Commerce](#)

Related Collections:

Processing Note:

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Completed by: Tamara Jones, April 2013

Rathbun-Jones Engineering Company Records, 1902-2012

Historical Sketch

The Rathbun-Jones Engineering Company was founded by Samuel M. Jones, who arrived in Toledo in 1892 in the midst of a northwest Ohio oil boom. Having been granted a patent for an all-metal oil sucker rod, Jones established the Acme Sucker Rod Company in an empty factory on Segur Avenue near Field Street. In addition to sucker rods, the factory produced the Acme gas engine, a simple, reliable, single-cylinder engine powered by natural gas. In 1895, Jones hired George J. Rathbun, Sr., a recent graduate of Cornell University, as an engineer. Jones changed the company name to the SM Jones Company in 1902. The following year, he authorized the construction of a new factory between Spencer Street and the Miami and Erie Canal (the present-day Anthony Wayne Trail), which would enable the expanding business to produce larger engines.

In 1904, Jones passed away suddenly. In addition to directing the growth of SM Jones, he had been serving as mayor of Toledo since 1897, and it is possible that the responsibilities of both positions were a factor in his unexpected death. By 1908, construction of the new factory on Spencer Street was complete and the engine department was spun off as the Rathbun-Jones Company, with George Sr. as president and major stockholder. His brother Edward Sr., who joined the company that same year, helped with engine design and sales. To better compete in the industry, Rathbun-Jones partnered with the Ingersoll-Rand Company, which served as the company's engine sales representative for several years. Engines produced by Rathbun-Jones were used in power plants, pumping stations, and boats, and were powered by gas, diesel, and even sewer gas.

The company prospered from 1908-1940, although it, like many other businesses, was hit hard by the Great Depression. During World War II, the State Department took over the company in order to produce engines for Russia, but no engines or parts were ever ordered. The company's fortunes began to decline after the war, when more dependable high-speed engines were developed and power plants began using boilers and turbines rather than engines. Some of the last Rathbun-Jones engines were shipped to India in 1949, and the company was reduced to providing spare engine parts instead. In the late 1950s, Rathbun-Jones partnered with Production Corp of Mentor, Ohio, which designed medium-sized steel and aluminum processing lines. An agreement made in the early 1960s resulted in Production Machinery buying out the Rathbun-Jones stockholders over the next few years, with the final payment being made in 1968. With this, Rathbun-Jones ceased to exist as a company, and its property is now owned by the Toledo Zoo. While many of its engines exist as parts of museum pieces, it is not known how many, if any, are currently in operation.

Source: Rathbun, William T. *The Rathbun-Jones Engineering Co.*, 1999 (this document is located in box 1, folder 1)

**Rathbun-Jones Engineering Company
Records, 1902-2012**

Scope and Content Note

The Rathbun-Jones collection consists of six series. **Biographical/Historical Files** contain information on the life of company founder and Toledo mayor Samuel M. Jones, as well as the history of Rathbun-Jones and the materials used to write the company history. **Marketing/Sales Materials** contain catalogs promoting the various engines produced by Rathbun-Jones. Many of these catalogs were produced by Ingersoll-Rand, which also sold engines manufactured by Rathbun-Jones. **Photographs** is the largest series and consists mostly of photographs of engines and their components, as well as plants using Rathbun-Jones engines. Most of these engines are either unidentified or the photographs contain minimal identifying information. Because of this, engine photographs have been separated into those that were identified and those that were not. This series also contains a small number of photographs of people (mostly employees); plants; and ships; as well as a scrapbook of photographs of engines and the plants they were installed in. The majority of the photographs are originals, but some photocopies and printed scans are included. **Publications** consist of magazine and newspaper articles about the company and its engines. **Technical Files** contains instructions for operating the engines of the 26th Ward sewage treatment plant in New York City, two books of mechanical drawings, and two illustrations of Rathbun engines. The final series, **Miscellaneous**, contains the obituaries of Edward Rathbun, Jr. and William Rathbun; a booklet containing a list of engine numbers and Lend Lease orders for the Soviet government; a list of engines installed in various plants and ships; two memoranda of agreement between George Rathbun and the SM Jones Company; a nameplate from the Rathbun-Jones factory; and the constitution and by-laws of the S.M. Jones Brotherhood, which also contains a fee schedule for hospitalization benefits.

While most of the materials are contained within their respective series, some items (e.g. correspondence and newspaper articles) can be found in more than one series.

**Rathbun-Jones Engineering Company
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Folder List

Box	Folder	Item
		SERIES 1: BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION
1	1	Company History and Supplemental Historical Materials, 1902, 1905-1908 (photocopies), 1999, n.d.
1	2	Samuel Jones Biographical Information, 1979, 1983, 1988, 2008, n.d.
		SERIES 2: MARKETING/SALES MATERIALS
1	3	Catalogs – Ingersoll-Rand, 1922, 1924, n.d.
1	4	Catalogs – Price-Rathbun and Rathbun-Jones, n.d.
		SERIES 3: PHOTOGRAPHS
1	5	Engines – Identified
1	6	Engines – Unidentified, n.d. (folder 1)
1	7	Engines – Unidentified, n.d. (folder 2)
1	8	Engines – Unidentified, n.d. (folder 3)
1	9	People, ca. 1909, 1936, 1960, n.d.
1	10	Plants, n.d.
3	-	Scrapbook – Plants with Rathbun Engines Installed
1	11	Ships, n.d.
1	12	Miscellaneous, n.d.
		SERIES 4: PUBLICATIONS
2	1	Magazine Articles, 1915, 1940, 1945, n.d.
2	2	Newspaper Articles, 1944, 1954, 1960, 1963, 1979, n.d.
		SERIES 5: TECHNICAL FILES
2	3	26 th Ward Sewage Treatment Plant (New York City) – Operating Instructions for Dual Fuel Engines
2	4	Engine Illustrations, n.d.
2	5	Mechanical Drawings, 1913-1916, 1921, 1930, n.d.
		SERIES 6: MISCELLANEOUS
2	6	Edward Rathbun and William T. Rathbun Obituaries, 1999, 2012; Richard H. Stein Tribute by Larry Massey, 1995
2	7	Engine Numbers, 1935-1936, 1940-1941, n.d. and Lend Lease Order for Soviet Government, 1943
2	8	Lists of Engine Installations, 1919-1939
2	9	Memorandum of Agreement, 1902, 1903
2	10	Nameplate, n.d.
2	11	S.M. Jones Brotherhood Constitution and By-Laws and Hospitalization Schedule, n.d.