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Finding Aid

➤Holden Rightmyer/American Swiss Company Papers 1933-1946◀
MSS-148

Size: .25 lin.ft.

Provenance: Gift of John H. Rightmyer, Toledo, OH

Access: open

Related Collections:

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Completed by: Daphne Thompson, July 2000

Biographical Sketch

As a young person, Holden Rightmyer of Toledo was forced to quit high school and support his family after his father moved out. He held numerous jobs, including working at Tiedtke's Department Store, and even ran his own bus line for several years. He then began his career as a tool and die maker, eventually working for the Willys-Overland Corporation. But he had to quit this job because of poor health. Rightmyer then took a drafting course at the YMCA, and after completing the class he landed a job as a draftsman with the American Swiss Company on Fernwood Avenue in 1928. The untimely death of the company's chief engineer opened the door for Mr. Rightmyer, who then became the chief engineer in 1929.

During the Depression, the American Swiss Company was acquired by W. W. Knight. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the four principals of the company were: Adolph Fredrick Subert, president; Jim Fast, vice president; Jack Dunkel, purchasing agent; and Mr. Rightmyer, chief engineer. The company went from a workforce of 100 people to nearly 500 employees. Its primary product was door latches for automobiles, especially for the Ford Motor Company in Detroit. But the company also manufactured for Chrysler, Packard and some other industries.

In the late 1940s, the Knight family hired Russell Johnson as executive vice president to operate the business and orchestrate its sale. The business was sold to Standard Products of Cleveland in 1948. For many years, Holden Rightmyer maintained a residence in Toledo with his family, but worked out of Standard Products offices in Cleveland and Detroit.

Despite being too old to serve in World War II, Rightmyer nonetheless served his country by using his engineering knowledge to improve weaponry. He redesigned a bomb rack to correct problems that kept the bombs from being deployed. He also modified the standard issue gun of the period to remove unnecessary weight and make it easier for soldiers to carry.

Mr. Rightmyer quit the Standard Products Company in 1952 and became a manufacturing representative for several small tool and die makers in Toledo. Rightmyer would visit auto manufactures to see what products they needed and then oversee that the production of those products. Rightmyer died of cancer in 1955.

Scope and Content Note

This collection of patents by Holden Rightmyer documents his various inventions in automobile door latches for the American Swiss Company. There are thirteen different patents represented in the collection. The patents are arranged in chronological order and by patent number, and include drawings of the devices and instructions for manufacturing the latches.

Folder List

Box	Folder	Arrangement
1	1	Door latch patents, 1933, 1936
	2	H. W. Rightmyer patents, 1933-1946
	3	Door latch mechanism, 1934
	4	Deck lid locks, 1934
	5	Operating mechanism for window regulators and door latches, 1937
	6	Combined window regulators and door latch operators, 1940
	7	Flush door latch structures, 1940
	8	Vehicle and automobile door latch structures, 1940, 1941
	9	Latching devices, 1941
	10	Door latch structures, 1942
	11	Automobile door latch patents, 1935-1942
	12	Vehicle door latch patent, 1935-1946
	13	Patents to American Swiss Company, 1933-1944