

Herschede Hall Clock Co.

Herschede Hall Clock Company Records, 1887-1964.

Historical Note:

Frank Herschede was born on July 30, 1857 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He operated a jewelry store at No. 9 Emery Arcade and began selling hall clocks in 1885. The clocks had imported mechanisms in locally manufactured cases. Herschede decided to exhibit his hall clocks at the South Carolina and West Indies Exposition, held in Charleston, SC in 1901. There his clocks won a gold medal, the first of several such awards. In 1902 the clock business was incorporated under the name of Herschede Hall Clock. Frank's brother, John A., acted as the general manager and salesman for the firm. Frank's son, Walter J., joined the business in 1902.

The Herschede Hall Clock Company moved to Plum Street in 1903. A few years later, the company began manufacturing its own clock movements. The cases and the movements won awards at several expositions and were sold across the country. In addition, the company supplied cases and movements to competitors. The company built a new plant at the corner of McMillan Street and Essex Place in 1913. The company also began offering a third melody, the Canterbury Chimes, in addition to the two tunes that had been offered from the beginning, the Westminster and the Whittington Chimes. During World War I, the clock mechanisms, which were the only ones made in the United States, were in high demand because the American market was cut off from European manufacturers. The Herschede Hall Clock Company also produced surgical and surveying instruments and compasses for the military. On September 15, 1922, Frank Herschede, the founder of the company, died at the age of 65, following an operation at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Walter succeeded his father as president and experimented with the production of radios and other items.

The company began selling electric clocks in 1926 under the name of the Revere Clock Company.

In 1929 the company employed about 300 workers and had sales of \$1.2 million. Four years later, annual sales would be reduced to \$187,000. Walter's sons, William Foy Herschede, Walter J. Herschede Jr., Richard L. Herschede, and Robert H. Herschede joined the company in the 1920s and 1930s. The company began manufacturing parking meters in 1936 and acquired the Karpark Corporation in 1938. During this time the Herschede plant was completely modernized. The old-fashioned long-line shafts used to drive the machinery were eliminated and individual electric motors were installed to power each machine.

During World War II, the production of clocks and parking meters was stopped, so the company obtained government contracts to produce observation instruments. William Foy Herschede organized the Panocular Corporation to make the lenses. After the war, demand was high for clocks, and production began again on consumer products. A Clock Service Center was established in 1948 to improve the efficiency of the company's repair service.

For the Herschede Hall Clock Company, the postwar period was not without problems. Union activity was increasing and in 1946 the first union contract was signed. A twenty percent excise tax was imposed on "luxury items" which included clocks, and competition became so severe in the parking meter industry that prices were forced down to levels which left little if any margin for profit.

The Korean War saw the reactivation of the Panocular Corporation as the firm began producing tank periscopes for the military. The company's other products faced stiff competition in the 1950s. It became apparent the less expensive European clocks would soon be underselling American-made

clocks, so the company began importing clock mechanisms, and complete clocks which were sold under the Herschede name. In 1959 the Rookwood Pottery Company was purchased. At one time, Rookwood Pottery had been the foremost art pottery in the county, and management felt that Rookwood might make a suitable companion sales item for their hall clocks.

Due to labor, taxes and other expenses, the Herschede Hall Clock Company began considering the possible advantages of moving the company to a new location. In 1960, the company moved into a new plant in Starkville, Mississippi, where it continued the manufacture of clock movements and cases as well as importing German clock movements. Panocular, Karpark and Rookwood also moved to Starkville. In 1962, Walter J. retired as president and was succeeded by his son, Richard. Walter J. Herschede died two years later at the age of 79.

In 1966, Robert Herschede, who had been the Vice President of Sales, became the last family member to be president of the Herschede Hall Clock Company. Under his guidance, the company developed a new product sold under the name "Motor Guide," which was an electrically powered, foot-operated outboard motor.

The company continued to have financial difficulties and was purchased by local Starkville businessmen in 1967. Richard Herschede stayed with the company as the vice-president and general manager. In 1972 the Herschede Hall Clock Company merged with Howard Furniture and Briarwood Lamps to form Arnold Industries, Inc.

(Sources: this collection, and newspaper clippings from the Cincinnati Historical Society files and from the Cincinnati Public Library's newspaper index.)

Scope and Content Note:

This collection consists of the records of the Herschede Hall Clock Company and its subsidiaries. It comprises four boxes (2 cubic feet) of materials. The collection begins with the clock businesses: Herschede Hall Clock Company, Revere Clock Co. and the Clock Service Center. These are followed by the other subsidiaries in alphabetical order: Jung Products, Karpark Corporation, Mar Lu, Panocular Corporation and Rookwood Pottery. Last are the oversized materials.

The bulk of the materials from the Herschede Hall Clock Company, Revere Clock Co. and Clock Service Center are financial statements, advertising and publicity, histories and photocopies of photographs. (The original photos are located in the Photographs Department.) The Karpark Corporation records include financial statements, patents, photocopies of photographs, and information about competitors. The collection has the record of incorporation, financial statements, and photocopies of photographs for the Panocular Corporation and several magazine articles in English, German or Italian about Rookwood Pottery. The records of the other subsidiaries are limited to financial information.

The records for the Herschede Hall Clock Company and its subsidiaries generally extend from the 1940 to 1964. The records for Rookwood Pottery include articles from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

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Herschede closed its doors in 1984. The reason becomes clear to you when you look at the pages from a clock kit catalogue like the ones below, from 1979 or 1980. Urgos had a great product for less than half the cost. The issue was price. Was a Herschede worth twice as much as an Urgos? If you look at the mechanisms and the dials, and you listen to the tubes, you would have to say "yes."



Below is a serial numbers chart for clocks made by Herschede, including mechanical and electric clocks sold under the Herschede, Revere, and General Electric brands. The chart is unfortunately incomplete and has some inaccuracies, but it should be useful to clock owners who wish to determine when their clocks were made.

1 -	66	1911
67 -	100	1912
101 -	141	1911
142 -	150	1912
151 -	200	1911
201 -	213	1912
214 -	234	1911
235 -	242	1912
243 -	246	1911
247 -	400	1912
401 -	536	1913
537 -	550	1914
551 -	602	1913
603 -	816	1914
817 -	1000	1915
1001 -	1491	1913

1492 -	1802	1914
1803 -	1852	1915
1853 -	2302	1914
2303 -	2600	1915
2601 -	2604	1916
2605 -	2664	1917
2666 -	2670	1915
2671 -	2750	1917
2769 -	2792	1916
2793 -	2801	1917
2806 -	2847	1916
2848 -	2900	1917
2901 -	3218	1915
3219 -	4233	1916
4234 -	5122	1917
5232 -	5556	1917
6057 -	6554	1920
7057 -	7337	1919
7361 -	7445	1917
7446 -	7454	1921
7455 -	7466	1919
7467 -	7475	1920
7476 -	7535	1919
7536 -	7559	1921
7560 -	7664	1925
7665 -	7700	1923
7701 -	7800	1920
7801 -	8800	1919
8801 -	10350	1920
10351 -	10354	1923
10355 -	10362	1924
10363 -	10400	1922
10401 -	10425	1921
10426 -	10450	1922
10451 -	10457	1926
10459 -	10477	1920
10478 -	10500	1922
10501 -	10534	1923
10535 -	10555	1925
10566 -	10575	1927
10651 -	10760	1920

10761 -	10813	1922
10814 -	10850	1925
10851 -	10900	1920
10901 -	11950	1921
11951 -	12076	1923
12077 -	12100	1922
12101 -	12155	1923
12156 -	12266	1922
12268 -	12350	1923
12351 -	12400	1921
12401 -	12600	1920
12601 -	12650	1921
12651 -	12800	1920
12801 -	12850	1921
12851 -	12950	1922
12951 -	13000	1924
13001 -	13500	1921
13501 -	13732	1922
13733 -	14016	1923
14017 -	14150	1922
14151 -	15000	1923
15001 -	15117	1921
15118 -	15350	1922
15351 -	15800	1923
15801 -	16204	1921
16205 -	16669	1922
16670 -	17600	1923
17601 -	18000	1924
18001 -	18450	1923
18451 -	18500	1924
18501 -	19000	1923
19001 -	19100	1924
20501 -	21700	1924
21701 -	22500	1923
22501 -	23400	1924
23401 -	23500	1925
23501 -	24700	1924
24701 -	24850	1923
24851 -	30000	1924
30001 -	32000	1925
32001 -	32009	1926

32010 -	32026	1927
32030 -	32050	1928
32051 -	32100	1925
32101 -	32105	1929
32106 -	32121	1926
32122 -	32200	1925
32201 -	32298	1926
32299 -	32415	1925
32416 -	32421	1927
32422 -	32486	1925
32490 -	32503	1926
32504 -	32505	1928
32506 -	32512	1929
32513 -	32750	1925
32751 -	33000	1926
33001 -	34000	1925
34001 -	34004	1926
34005 -	34012	1926
34013 -	34014	1927
34025 -	34027	1927
34034 -	34035	1926
34039 -	34040	1927
34045 -	34049	1927
34101 -	34121	1926
34257 -	34258	1926
34268 -	34272	1926
34282 -	34283	1926
34286 -	34290	1926
34294 -	34297	1926
34302 -	34304	1926
34323 -	34324	1926
34327 -	34329	1926
34363 -	34366	1926
34370 -	34372	1927
34395 -	34398	1927
34477 -	34480	1926
35001 -	35100	1927
35101 -	35300	1926
35301 -	35500	1927
35501 -	36000	1925
36001 -	36350	1924

36351 - 38400	1925
79101 - 99900	1928
99901 - 112500	1929
113001 - 215600	1930
250001 - 255700	1932
255701 - 261000	1933
261001 - 271381	1934
271382 - 285268	1935
285269 - 298323	1936
298324 - 313243	1937
313244 - 315745	1938
315746 - 325376	1939
347103 - 361368	1941
362135 - 384133	1942
386000 - 407326	1945
411077 - 424068	1946
424069 - 489768	1947
491000 - 506000	1948
512001 - 521535	1949
521536 - 539535	1950
539536 - 558535	1951
558536 - 564535	1952
564536 - 582535	1953
582536 - 595035	1955
595036 - 603965	1956
603966 - 604174	1958
604501 - 605000	1959
605001 - 605843	1961
605895 - 611902	1963
612446 - 616881	1964
616904 - 617405	1965
617406 - 620403	1966
620404 - 623403	1967
623404 - 625903	1968

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