Finding Aid for

C. HAROLD WILLS PAPERS, 1899-1939
Accession 418

Finding Aid Published: September 2011

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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 418

CREATOR: Wills, C. Harold (Childe Harold), 1878-1940

TITLE: C. Harold Wills papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1899-1939

QUANTITY: 3 cubic ft. and two oversize folders.

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

ABSTRACT: C. Harold Wills was an early associate of Henry Ford who later left Ford Motor Company to form his own automobile company, the C. H. Wills Company (later Wills Sainte Claire, Inc.). These papers mainly focus on Wills activities after leaving Ford Motor Company and include personal financial statements, business records and newspaper clippings.
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: Materials are open for research

COPYRIGHT: Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).


RELATED MATERIAL: Related collections in other repositories: Additional papers may be found at the Wills Sainte Claire Auto Museum in Marysville, Michigan. http://www.willsautomuseum.org/

PREFERRED CITATION: Item, folder, box, accession 418, C. Harold Wills papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Collection processed by Benson Ford Research Center staff, November 1978.

DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Original collection inventory list prepared Benson Ford Research Center staff and published in November 1978.

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Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Childe Harold Wills (1878-1940) was an early associate of Henry Ford, having worked with him as a draftsman prior to the 1903 founding of the Ford Motor Company. He remained with the Ford Motor Company until 1919 and played a large part in shaping its success during those years. In his function as chief designer and engineer, as well as metallurgist, he not only designed cars, but helped create the machines and materials, specifically new steel alloys, that made mass production possible. He helped develop the use of vanadium steel for commercial purposes and was one of the first to introduce molybdenum steel into the automobile industry. He was deeply involved with the manufacturing of Liberty Engines during World War I and is credited by some as having designed the familiar Ford script trademark from a child’s lettering kit.

Wills left Ford as a millionaire to embark upon a plan which included forming his own automobile manufacturing company (the C. H. Wills Company, later Wills Sainte Claire, Inc.) and developing a planned community in Maryville, Michigan, for its employees. The Wills Sainte Claire automobile was produced only from 1920 to 1927 when the company went into receivership. However, the town of Marysville did benefit from his interest. Wills and another former Ford employee, John R. Lee, formed the Marysville Land Company, which not only platted the town but also brought in industry by encouraging firms such as Detroit Edison, Illinois Tool Works, and Morton Salt to locate plants in the city.

After the failure of his own automobile company, Wills joined the staff of Chrysler Corporation as a chief metallurgist in 1933. He remained in that position until his death in 1940.

Source:

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers focus primarily on C. Harold Wills’ activities after leaving the Ford Motor Company in 1919. The papers mainly include information on his activities in Maryville, Michigan, with the Maryville Land Company, the C. H. Wills Company and Wills Sainte Claire, Inc. Documents dating from his earlier Ford and later Chrysler years include personal financial statements, business records, records pertaining to his work in metallurgy with John Hornsey, and scrapbooks of newspaper clippings.

Series I, Personal papers, 1899-1939, includes correspondence and personal financial accounts of Wills. These papers range in date from his Ford years to his final years at Chrysler, providing an overview of his finances throughout his career.

Series II, Business records, 1908-1938, contains business correspondence and documentation for the Maryville Land Company, the C.H. Wills Company and Wills Sainte Claire, Inc. These provide a picture of the various interrelated enterprises in which Wills was engaged at Marysville. The documents include annual statements to stockholders, deeds, office files and...
brochures. The records document the demise of the C. H. Wills Company, reorganization into Wills Sainte Claire, Inc and the ultimate downfall of that second organization as well. The records on the Marysville Land Company explain how land was acquired, how houses and factories were built, and the efforts made to fill them.

Series III, The Hornsey-Wills iron reduction process records, 1906-1927, are concerned mainly with the Hornsey-Wills Iron Reduction Process (alternately called the Hornsey Iron Process) for the recovery of high quality iron from ore. John Hornsey was a metallurgist employed by Wills. He alone or in conjunction with Wills developed the process whereby reduction of iron from its oxide takes place at a temperature far below the melting point of the metal resulting in both a saving of fuel and a purer product than had been commonly produced in blast furnaces. Most of Series III is taken up with records of experiments conducted at Marysville and elsewhere to determine the effectiveness of the Hornsey-Wills Process when applied to a variety of ores. Included also is a group of blueprints and sketches depicting the Hornsey-Wills Process and its components.

Series IV, Scrapbooks, 1919-1922, consists of a group of six scrapbooks. These contain, for the most part, newspaper clippings which tell of Wills’ resignation from Ford, speculate on his future plans, and finally announce his intentions to produce a new car of his own design. Specific articles tell of the development of Marysville, of the land boom in the area, update developments leading toward the introduction of the Wills Sainte Claire automobile, and finally cover the introduction itself.
ARRANGEMENT

Items are arranged chronologically within series.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate
Wills, C. Harold (Childe Harold), 1878-1940
Hornsey, John
Lee, John R.
Ford Motor Company
C. H. Wills Company
Wills Sainte Claire, Inc.
Marysville Land Company

Subjects
Automobile industry and trade -- Michigan
Automobiles -- Design and construction
Industrial designers
Mechanical engineers
Metallurgy

Geographic
Marysville (Mich.)

Genre and Form
Financial records
Patents
Scrapbooks
Technical drawings
CONTAINER LIST

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**SERIES I - PERSONAL PAPERS**

**Box 1**
- Canceled Notes, 1899-1919
- Personal Account Book, 1913-1919
  - A-G
  - H-Z
- Securities Record (Stocks, Bonds, Real Estate), 1913-1919
- Miscellaneous Financial Notations, 1914-1916 and undated
- Bills and Credit Memos, 1916
- Income Tax Return, 1918
- Marysville Land Company - Canceled Notes, 1920-1925
- Marysville Savings Bank - Canceled Checks, January-June, 1927
- Correspondence
  - General, 1923-1925
  - Insurance
    - 1923
    - 1924
    - 1925
  - Patent Agreements
    - 1935
    - 1936
    - 1937-1939

**SERIES II - BUSINESS RECORDS**

**Box 2**
- Wills Realty Company - Warranty Deed, 1919
- Probate Court Decrees, 1908-1917
- Affidavits of Land Ownership, 1911-1930
- Marysville Land Company
  - Organization, 1919-1920
- John R. Lee
  - 1919
  - 1920
  - 1922-1923
  - Undated
- Correspondence
  - General
    - A-B, 1919-1920
    - C-Z, 1920-1923
  - Aluminum Manufacturing, Inc.
    - 1919
    - 1920
Box 3

C. H. Wills Company, 1923
Wills Sainte Claire, Inc.
1923-1927
1928-1934
"Body File," 1924-1925

SERIES III - HORNSEY-WILLS IRON REDUCTION PROCESS RECORDS

Box 3 (Continued)

Iron Production Correspondence
1925
1926-1927

Patent Papers
Case Hardening Process (A. W. Machlet), 1906-1920
Iron Reduction and Miscellaneous, including Hornsey, 1916-1925

The Hornsey Iron Process, circa 1925
Hornsey Wills Iron and Steel Process - Report of Experimental work, circa 1925
"The Hornsey Wills Process. . ." (draft) by J. Kent Smith, circa 1925
Iron Reduction by Hornsey-Wills Process - Clippings, circa 1924
Hornsey Iron Process - Heat Balance, 1925
Reduction Tests - Alabama Ores - Reports, March-April 1925
Test on Alabama Granules after Reduction - Flow Sheet, November-December 1925

Box 4

Reduction Test Reports
Chilean Ores, 1925
German Ores, 1925
Japanese Ores, 1925
Michigan Ores, 1925-1927
New York Ores, 1927

Iron Reduction Tests
Log,
January -April 1925
May-July 1925
August 1925 - August 1927

Handwritten notes, circa 1925

Ore Tests at Marysville - Summary for 1925
Hornsey Iron Process - Analysis of Ores Tested, 1926
Report on Quenching Granules in Water, 1925
Magnetic Separation Tests
Reports, 1925-1926
Graph of Results, 1925
Sample Analyses, undated
Detroit Testing Laboratory
Test Results, 1924-1927

Box 5
Test Results, 1925
Steel from Hornsey Iron - Test Results by J. Kent Smith, 1924
Steel produced from various ores
   Analyses by J. Kent Smith, 1925
   Analyses by Hoskins Manufacturing Company, 1925
Miscellaneous Test Results, circa 1925
Plant Construction
   Cost Estimates, circa 1925
   Alles-Chalmers Catalogs, 1914-1925
Equipment Catalogs
   The Iron Age, December 31, 1925
   The Blast Furnace & Steel Plant, January 1926
"Report on Iron Reduction Experiments" - Minnesota School of Mines, 1925
U.S. Department of Interior - Bureau of Mines - Printed Reports, 1923-1924
"The Reactions in the Blast Furnace" - Kremann and Potts, undated

Oversize folder 1-2
The Hornsey-Wills Process - Blueprints and Drawings, 1922-27 and undated

SERIES IV - SCRAPBOOKS
Box 6
Scrapbook No. 1, 1919-1920
Scrapbook No. 2, 1919-1920
Scrapbook No. 3, 1920-1921
Scrapbook No. 4, 1921
Scrapbook No. 5, 1921
Scrapbook No. 6, 1922