

## **Fred H. Colvin Collection**

Kelvin Smith Library: Special Collections Research Center

Collection Dates: (1892-1965)

Quantity: 6.5 linear feet

Restrictions: The Special Collections Research Center is open to any interested researcher upon presentation of a valid CASE ID or other valid official identification card. The Center is open to other researchers by appointment only.

Acquisition: The collection was donated to the Case Archive of Contemporary Science and Technology by Fred H. Colvin in 1965.

### **Biography: Fred H. Colvin (1867-1965)**

Fred H. Colvin was born in Sterling, Massachusetts, on October 5, 1867. After completing grammar school in 1883, he started learning the machinist's trade as an apprentice at the Rue Manufacturing Company in Philadelphia. Colvin worked at Rue Manufacturing for ten years during which time he began writing articles for a number of technical periodicals. His talent as a writer led to a prolific career as editor, author and co-author of many publications. Colvin's tenure in technical publishing corresponded to the golden age of the machine tool industry in America. In 1894, he became the first editor of the trade journal **Machinery**, in New York. In 1907 he joined the Hill Publishing Company (later McGraw-Hill) as associate editor and then editor of the **American Machinist** and served in that position until his retirement in 1937. After retirement he continued his active connection with the paper as editor emeritus and continued contributing to the McGraw-Hill catalog of machine tool reference works. His best known work is The American Machinists' Handbook published and revised from 1908-1945 which he co-authored with Frank Stanley. Colvin played important roles in the American armament efforts in World War I and World War II. His autobiography, Sixty Years with Men and Machines, appeared in 1947. A volume of poetry, Safety Valve, was published in 1952. Illness and death in 1965 left his final work History of the American Machine Tool Industry unfinished.

Awards:

Worcester Reed Warner gold medal for "promoting efficiency and humanity in industry." 1942

The Stevens Institute of Technology honorary degree of Mechanical Engineer, 1944

## **Scope and Content Note:**

The Fred H. Colvin Collection consists primarily of correspondence, clippings, typescripts and photographs relating to history and development of the machine tool industry and to Colvin's career as an editor, author and co-author in the fields of technical writing, poetry and history. The bulk of this collection consists of material collected by Colvin for his unpublished History of the American Machine Tool Industry.

The papers are arranged in three series:

- Series I: Correspondence on general and specific subjects, arranged alphabetically by correspondent within a subject group
- Series II: The writings of Fred H. Colvin, both literary and technical, including his notes and source material for his works
- Series III: Photographs and glass plate negatives consisting of images of machines used as illustrations and images of Fred H. Colvin, his home, family and colleagues.

## **Boxlist:**

### **Series I: Correspondence: Boxes 1-2**

#### **Box 1**

Folder 1: General Correspondence. 1911-62. A-E

Folder 2: General Correspondence. 1911-62. F-Z

Folder 3: Correspondence relating to the Warner Medal. 1942

Folder 4: Correspondence relating to the Warner Medal. 1942

Folder 5: Correspondence relating to Honorary Degree of Mechanical Engineer from Stevens Institute of Technology, 1944. 1944-48

Folder 6: Correspondence and some associated material relating to the World Engineering Congress in Tokyo, October-December, 1929. 1927-29; 1953

Folder 7: Scrapbook with material related to the World Engineering Congress in Tokyo, 1929.

Folder 8: Unbound material related to the World Engineering Congress in Tokyo, 1929.

**Box 2:**

Folder 1: Correspondence relating to Colvin's activities in World Wars One and Two. 1917-20; 1940-45

Folder 2: Correspondence relating to Safety Valve. By Fred H. Colvin (poetry). 1952-55

Folder 3: Correspondence relating to Colvin's poetry. 1918-30

Folder 4: Correspondence relating to Sixty Years with Men and Machines. By Fred H. Colvin. 1947-53

Folder 5: Correspondence relating to the transfer of The Fred H. Colvin Collection to the Case Archive of Contemporary Science and Technology. 1962-65

Folder 6: Correspondence with Unda Hamren (close friend and literary supporter). 1953-60

Folder 7: Correspondence relating to Income Tax. 1929-56

Folder 8: Correspondence relating to and including miscellaneous household receipts. 1952-59

Folder 9: Clippings removed from the correspondence files

**Series II: Written Works: Boxes 3-11****Box 3**

Folder 1: Articles written by Colvin under the name John R. Godfrey

Folder 2: Articles by Colvin on the role of the foreman

Folder 3: Articles by Colvin on Aviation, Automobiles, Labor Relations and Politics

Folder 4: Articles by Colvin on Machinery and Railroads

Folder 5: Colvin's reminiscences; miscellaneous manuscript fragments and notes

Folder 6: Poetry written by Colvin under the name Loring Roper

Folder 7: Poetry written by Colvin under the name Loring Roper

**Box 4:**

Folder 1: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. A-Bt  
general

Folder 2: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. Bu-Ci  
general

Folder 3: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. Cl-De  
general

Folder 4: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. Do-E  
general

**Box 5:**

Folder 1: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. F  
general

Folder 2: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. G-Gl  
general

Folder 3: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. Gl-J  
general

Folder 4: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. K  
general

**Box 6:**

Folder 1: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. L-M  
general

Folder 2: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. N-R  
general

Folder 3: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. S  
general

Folder 4: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**. T-Y  
general

**Box 7:**

Folder 1: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Aviation

Folder 2: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Automobiles

Folder 3: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Industrial

Folder 4: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Machine Tools  
I

Folder 5: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Machine Tools  
II

Folder 6: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Machine Tools  
III

Folder 7: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Machine Tools  
IV

**Box 8:**

Folder 1: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Measurement

Folder 2: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Numerical  
Control and Automation

Folder 3: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Railroads

Folder 4: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Miscellaneous

Folder 5: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry.**  
Miscellaneous

Folder 6: Material collected by Colvin for **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**.  
Miscellaneous

**Box 9:**

Folder 1: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript Foreword

Folder 2: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript Chapter one: from the beginning

Folder 3: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Lathes"

Folder 4: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "The master tools of industry"

Folder 5: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Gearing"

Folder 6: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Planners, shapers, slotters"

Folder 7: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Screws and screw ends"

Folder 8: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Machine tool beginnings"

Folder 9: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Development of steam power"

Folder 10: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Automatic screw machinery"

Folder 11: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Drilling, boring, and reaming"

Folder 12: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Milling"

Folder 13: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Grinding"

Folder 14: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Early American machine industry"

Folder 15: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Automobiles"

Folder 16: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Management"

Folder 17: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry**, manuscript "Measurement"

**Box 10:**

Folder 1: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Notes on a new book

Folder 2: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Notes on Cincinnati Milling Machine

Folder 3: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Outline of contents

Folder 4: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Chapter drafts

Folder 5: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** The story of measurement

Folder 6: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Chapter notes I

Folder 7: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Chapter notes II

Folder 8: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Correspondence 1957-60

**Box 11:**

Folder 1: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** From the beginning

Folder 2: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Chapter drafts

Folder 3: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Chapter drafts

Folder 4: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Chapter drafts

Folder 5: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Philadelphia and machine tool development

Folder 6: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Automobiles

Folder 7: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Automation

Folder 8: **History of the American Machine Tool Industry** Machine tools

**Series III: Photographs and Glass Plate Negatives: Boxes 12-13**

**Box 12: Photographs**

Folder 1: Machines. Aircraft. 1882-1929

Folder 2: Machines. Arbor press designed by Fred H. Colvin. July 1, 1900

Folder 3: Machines. Automobiles. 1898

Folder 4: Machines. Bicycle. no date

Folder 5: Machines. Engines. 1903 and no date

Folder 6: Machines. Gear cutters used in 1841 and 1843 machine shops. ca. 1890

Folder 7: Machines. Henry Ford Museum images. 1959

Folder 8: Machines. Historic machine shops; scenes from an old shop. no date

Folder 9: Machines. Home and specialty workshops. ca.1880-1950

Folder 10: Machines. Lathes. 1896-1937

Folder 11: Machines. Locomotives. no date.

Folder 12: Machines. "Machine Tools of Industry – How They Have Changed" print and negative of typescript and illustrations. no date

Folder 13: Machines. The Mechanics Fountain by Douglas Tilden. 1901

Folder 14: Machines. Milling machines. ca. 1903-1945

Folder 15: Machines. Modern tool making machines. ca. 1956-1958

Folder 16: Machines. Planers used in 1836 and 1855. ca. 1890

Folder 17: Machines. Plum bob weights. no date

Folder 18: Machines. Slotter. no date

Folder 19: Machines. WWI Winchester Army Company, men on break. 1917

Folder 20: Personal. Colleagues. ca. 1916-1960

Folder 21: Personal. Events. Banquet in honor of Charles A. Lindbergh. New York, June 16, 1927

Folder 22: Personal. Events. Worcester Reed Warner medal award ceremony. December, 1942

Folder 23: Personal. Events. Stevens Institute of Technology honorary degree. October 28, 1944

Folder 24: Personal. Events. Franklin Institute silver award dinner. February, 1956

Folder 25: Personal. Events. Franklin Institute golden key dinner. 1958

Folder 26: Personal. Family automobiles. ca. 1915-1960

Folder 27: Personal. Family photographs. ca. 1942 and no date

Folder 28: Personal. Portraits of Fred H. Colvin. 1892-1964

Folder 29: Personal. Publicity photographs of Fred H. Colvin. ca.1912-1958

Folder 30: Personal. Home of Fred H. Colvin "Squanset" ca.1930-1960

### **Box 13: Glass Plate Negatives**

Folder 1: Machines. Machine gear. no date

Folder 2: Machines. Arbor press designed by Fred H. Colvin. July 1, 1900

Folder 3: Machines. Drill press (Silver and Gray). no date

Folder 4: Machines. Grinding machine. no date

Folder 5: Machines. Horizontal drilling machine (Silver and Gray) no date

Folder 6: Machines. Indexing head plain miller (Wm. Mason, Taunton, MA) no date

Folder 7: Machines. Index plate, large. (Corlas Engine Co.) no date

Folder 8: Machines. Lathes, blocked up engine lathe note vertical frame at left in day, bend at right.  
no date

Folder 9: Machines. Lathes, special machines note vertical forma t left in day, bent at right.  
no date

Folder 10: Machines. Machined parts. no date

Folder 11: Machines. Milling machines. no date

Folder 12: Machines. Milling machines in use in 1843 (Silver and Gray) no date

Folder 13: Machines. Milling machines, boring mill (Silver and Gray) no date

Folder 14: Machines. Milling machines (Silver and Gray) 1895

Folder 15: Machines. Planer (Silver and Gray) 1895

Folder 16: Machines. Planer (Silver and Gray) 1895

Folder 17: Personal. Birthplace, Sterling, MA. no date

Folder 18: Personal. Shop room, 214 Pembroke Place, August 3, 1889

“Where I worked 1883-1892”

Folder 19: Personal. Snow plow in blizzard of March 12, 1888

Folder 20: Personal. Charlie in group. no date

Folder 21: Personal. “I’m not a monkey” two children seated in a stairwell. no date

Folder 22: Personal. “Checkers” man and boy playing checkers. no date

Folder 23: Personal. “Checkers” man and boy playing checkers. no date

Folder 24: Personal. “Taxed and untaxed” Cathedral and private home. no date

Folder 25: Personal. “Clouds on water, coming home from races” sailboat, October 3, 1901

Folder 26: Personal. “Mother and Henry in auto” 1901

Folder 27: Personal. “Mother and Henry in auto” 1901

Last updated on 3/15/2010