Finding Aid for

SMITH SILO COMPANY RECORDS, CIRCA 1903-1978

Accession 76.16

Finding Aid Published: February 2022

Benson Ford Research Center
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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY:	Benson Ford Research Center The Henry Ford 20900 Oakwood Blvd Dearborn, MI 48124-5029 www.thehenryford.org research.center@thehenryford.org
ACCESSION NUMBER:	76.16
CREATOR:	Smith Silo Company
TITLE:	Smith Silo Company Records
INCLUSIVE DATES:	circa 1903-1978
QUANTITY:	0.9 cubic ft. (2 boxes)
LANGUAGE:	The materials are in English.
ABSTRACT:	A collection consisting primarily of photographs documenting concrete farm silos built by the Smith Silo Company of Paw Paw and Oxford, Michigan. Also included are patents obtained by the company from 1903-1937, as well as some drawings and product information.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: The collection is open for research.

TECHNICAL RESTRICTIONS: Use of original audio tapes contained in the collection is restricted. Access may be unavailable due to lack of appropriate software and hardware, or use copies may need to be produced unless otherwise noted. Researchers interested in this material should contact Benson Ford Research Center staff (research.center@thehenryford.org).

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).

ACQUISITION: Donated to The Henry Ford by Smith Silo Company, 1976.

ALTERNATE FORMS: Selected material from this collection has been digitized and is available online at: https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/search-results#advancedSearch=1&tab=artifact-results&s.0.in=collectionTitle&s.0.for=Smith%20Silo%20Company%20Records&years=0-0&perPage=10&pageNum=1&sortBy=relevance

RELATED MATERIAL: Related material held by The Henry Ford:
- Concrete Silo, 1914. Object ID 76.16.1. On exhibit in Henry Ford Museum. https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/114746
- Model of Silo, circa 1910. Object ID 76.16.2. On exhibit in Henry Ford Museum. https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/107160

PREFERRED CITATION: Item, folder, box, accession 76.16, Smith Silo Company Records, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION continued:

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Collection processed by staff of the Benson Ford Research Center, circa 1976, and by Brian Wilson, 2020.

Inventory and arrangement updated by Hilary Severyn, 2022.

DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Finding aid written by Brian Wilson, November 2020, and published in the same month.

Finding aid updated by Hilary Severyn, February 2022, and published February 2022.

Prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Hiram Smith patented the concrete stave silo in the early 1900s. The Smith Silo Company produced concrete stave silos, first in Paw Paw and then in Oxford, Michigan, from circa 1909 to circa 1979. Prior to Smith's concrete stave design, silos were primarily built using stacked and mortared wood, stone, or brick. The stave design, however, constructed silos similar in design to barrels: cement staves bound together by hoops of cable. Smith patented the design in 1907, and the first Smith Silo was erected outside of Paw Paw in 1909. In 1930, Smith Silo moved to Oxford in order to be closer to the gravel pits used for the cement staves. Under the direction of Warren Smith, the company grew to be one of the largest concrete silo manufacturers in the Midwest. In 1980, Warren's son Arthur sold the company, and the business finally closed in 1984.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Smith Silo Company Records consist primarily of photographic prints, patent applications, and some product literature on Smith Silos throughout the 20th century. Photographic prints make up the bulk of the collection and showcase production of silo components at the Smith factory, construction of silos, and completed silos located around the state of Michigan. Photographs were originally housed in two albums, but have been disassembled for storage. Album covers are included in the collection.

Patents represent the Smith Silo Company's intellectual property pursuits from 1903-1937, and include filings for silo components and production machinery. Patents were filed in both the United States and Canada, and are arranged by filing date.

Also included is an audio interview with members of the Smith Silo Company. There is no transcript for the interview. Please contact Benson Ford Research Center staff at research.center@thehenryford.org about access to the interview.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate
Smith, Hiram A.
Smith, Warren
Smith Silo Company

Subjects
Farms
Silos (Agricultural structures)

Geographic
Oxford (Mich.)
Paw Paw (Mich.)

Genre and Form
Audiocassettes
Blueprints (Reprographic copies)
Brochures
Letter (Correspondence)
Patents
Patent drawings
Photographs
Photograph albums
Photographic prints
Schematic drawings

CONTAINER LIST

Box no.	Description

Box 1

- Collection Inventory (Original document), Undated
- Patents
  - Patent Applications, 1903-1922
  - Molding Machines, 1913
  - Cylindrical Wall Structures, 1917
  - Devices for Erecting Silos, 1917
  - Molds, 1919
  - Trucks, 1921
  - Transfer - Trucks, 1921
  - Molds (Canadian), 1922
  - Vibrating Machines, 1926
  - Patent Application, 1935-1937
  - Stave Silos, 1937
- Drawings
  - Formed Milling Cutter, 1911
  - Castings, 1919
  - Silo Components, Undated
  - Plan View of Durability Silos, ca. 1947
- Brochures and Product Literature
  - Smith Silo Company, ca. 1931
  - Smith Silos, 1961
  - Interlocking Stave Silos, Undated
  - Concrete Stave Silos, Undated
- General
  - Correspondence - Mrs. Vogt, W.C. (Chain letter), 10 May 1935
  - Postcard, 17 June 1936
  - Major Silo envelope (empty), 1966
  - News Clipping - "A Smith Silo Rises in Ford Museum", 14 December 1978
  - News Clipping - Untitled, Undated
  - Audio Interview, undated (Interview conducted with members of the Smith Silo Company; two C60 audiocassette tapes; two duplicate tapes produced as access copies; NOTE: Access to original audio tapes is RESTRICTED - Please consult Research Center staff to discuss access to this material.)

Box 2

- Photographs and Slides
  - Smith Silo Slides, 1965
  - Silo Photographs, ca. 1941
  - Silo Photograph, Undated
  - Michigan Silo Co., Kalamazoo – Peoria Album, 1920s-1930s
    - Album Page and Blueprints, Undated
    - Album Pages (12 folders), 1920s-1930s
    - Album Cover, Undated
  - The F.C. Mason Company Photograph Album, 1930s-1960s
    - Album Pages (14 folders), 1930s-1960s
    - "The F.C. Mason Company" binder (empty), Undated