



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
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
research.center@thehenryford.org

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).
- ACQUISITION:** Ford Motor Company Archives donation, 1964.
- 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.
- Finding aid prepared by Elyssa Bisoski, September 2011, and published in September 2011.
- 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 Marysville, 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:

"Childe Harold Wills: A Career in Cars," by M.D. Hendry, *Automobile Quarterly*, Vol. 2, (1966), 136-145.

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 Marysville, Michigan, with the Marysville 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 Marysville 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

Box no. **Description**

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

Ford Motor Company, 1920-1921
Walbridge, Aldinger Company, 1920-1922
C. H. Wills Account, 1924-1925
Brochures, circa 1920
Marysville Improvement Company - Correspondence, 1935-1938

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