

# WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

30 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts

## ARCHIVES

Robert W. Stoddard  
Sound Recording  
1999.143

Processed by William F. Carroll, C.A.  
November 1999

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### Collection Information

Abstract : The Wyman-Gordon Company was established in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1883, primarily as a provider of forgings for local industries. During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Wyman-Gordon has become an increasingly important source for forgings for the transportation industries, from bicycle parts, through automobile and airplane parts, and today is one of the leaders in providing specialized forgings for the aerospace industry. Robert W. Stoddard was President of the company from 1955 to 1967.

Finding Aid : Finding Aid in print form is available in the Repository.

Preferred Citation : Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Provenance : Donated by Paul Fahlstrom, November 1999.

MARC Access : Collection is cataloged in MARC under the following subject headings (lsh, aat, tgm, gmgcp)

Wyman-Gordon Company.

Forging industry – Massachusetts – Worcester.

Forging industry – Massachusetts – Grafton.

Forging industry.

Stoddard, Robert W. (Robert Waring), 1906-1984.

Sound recordings (lsh)

## Historical Background

Horace Wyman and Lyman Gordon, two young graduates of Worcester Polytechnic Institute established the Worcester Drop Forging Company in 1883. Forging is one of the principal methods of forming metal objects, and, in simplest terms, is accomplished by heating the metal to the plastic state, and hammering or pressing it into the desired shape.

The fledgling company, ultimately to become the Wyman-Gordon Company, initially forged loom parts for the Crompton-Knowles Loom Company in Worcester, as well as hardware, firearms parts, agricultural implements, machine tools, and other items. With the advent of the “bicycle craze” starting around 1890, the demand for forged bicycle parts – sprockets, pedals, chains – offered the company the entry into the transportation field, which ultimately became its principal business. Wyman-Gordon began forging knuckle couplers for railroad cars at about the same time, and began experiments in heat treating of the forgings as a means to toughen the couplers and make them resistant to fracture.

However forging of railroad car couplers was a short-lived venture. The casting industry had advanced technologically to the point that stronger and more durable couplers could be more economically cast than forged, and in less than a decade the coupler business was lost. However at about the same time the development of the automobile created new demands for forged metal items, particularly crankshafts. With its experience in forging techniques and in heat treatment, Wyman-Gordon soon became the principal source for automobile crankshafts in the United States, supplying well over 50% of the market.

During the 1910s, the airplane had become a reality, and provided a new demand for forged metal items, as engine parts, crankshafts, and body parts. World War I aircraft carried a significant number of parts forged at Wyman-Gordon. In order to expand its operations into the rapidly developing aircraft industry, Wyman-Gordon entered a merger with Ingalls-Shepard Forging Company of Harvey, Illinois, in 1919. The automobile crankshaft forging was transferred to the Illinois plant, and the Worcester plant expanded its operations into the aircraft field, continuing research and development of techniques for forging non-ferrous metals.

With the rapid development of the aviation industry as the jet age arrived came more demands for forged parts. The Wyman-Gordon Company in 1946 developed a new facility in Grafton for its heavy press program, a technique of forging in which the metal was shaped by pressure rather than by hammering, an essential technique in the forming of parts from new light-weight alloys which were necessary to the coming aerospace age.

Robert W. Stoddard became President of the company in 1955 and served in that capacity until succeeded by Joseph Carter in 1967.

### Scope and Content

The collection consists of a single 10 in. 33 1/3 rpm sound disc, with recording on one side only, entitled Talk to Wyman-Gordon family by Robert W. Stoddard, President. Recorded in late 1950s to early 1960s.

### Series Description

The collection consists of a single sound recording, and is a single series: Sound recordings.

Robert W. Stoddard Sound Recording  
1999.143  
Series 1, Sound recordings.

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	1999.143.1.1	Sound recording "talk to the Wyman-Gordon family" by Robert W. Stoddard, n.d. Sound disc, 33 1/3 rpm., 10 in., recorded on one side only.