

# WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

30 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts

## ARCHIVES

Wyman-Gordon Company Records  
1999.142

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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.

Finding Aid : Finding Aid in print form is available in the Repository. Folder-level control.

Preferred Citation : Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Provenance : Donated by the Wyman-Gordon Company, Wallace Whitney, Jr., Vice-President, 1999.

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

Wyman, Horace.

Gordon, Lyman.

Gabis, Bill (William Joseph), 1942-

Wyman-Gordon Company.

Wyman-Gordon Company – Anniversaries, etc.

Worcester Drop Forging Company.

Forging.

Forging industry – Massachusetts – Worcester.

Forging industry – Massachusetts – Grafton.

Forging industry.

Forging industry – United States – Employees.

Forging machinery.

Forging industry – United States – History.

Tornados – Massachusetts – Worcester – 1953.

Natural disasters – Massachusetts – Worcester – 1953.

Gabis, Bill (William Joseph), 1942- – Wyman-Gordon and Worcester.

Motherwell, George W. – History of the Grafton Plant.

## 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.

The Wyman-Gordon Company has continued to expand its operations through mergers and acquisitions of subsidiaries, and is today one of the leading suppliers of high quality parts for the aerospace industry.

## Scope and Content

The Wyman-Gordon Company collection illustrates various aspects of the development and growth of the Wyman-Gordon Company from its establishment as the Worcester Drop Forging Company in 1883 through its centennial anniversary celebration in 1983.

A large part of the collection includes materials from company files and other sources brought together for the publication of the centennial history of the company, as well as the history of the Grafton Plant with background documentation.

Administrative records provide information about personnel changes in the company between 1964 and 1975, listing transfers, promotions, resignations, etc.

A significant part of the collection is documentation of the Wyman-Gordon Company's actions taken on behalf of its personnel affected by the Worcester tornado of 1953. A monograph outlines the company's response to its employees' needs following the tornado, and lists personnel affected and amount of assistance given each.

The collection includes a publication concerning estimation of costs of drop forging processes, and a paper concerning cost estimation procedures at the Wyman-Gordon Company.

The collection is described at folder level, and is arranged topically.

## Series Descriptions

Series 1: Administrative records: largely notices of personnel changes, 1967-1975.

Series 2: Worcester tornado: monograph of company's actions on behalf of affected employees, and listing of affected employees and help given.

Series 3: Grafton Plant: monograph written by George W. Motherwell on history and development of the facility.

Series 4: Wyman-Gordon Centennial publication: draft and edited copies of monograph written by William Gabis, Wyman-Gordon and Worcester, a history of the first 100 years. Includes photographs and biographical materials about Gabis.

Series 5: Publications: Includes published work and unpublished monograph about cost estimations for drop-forgings.

Wyman-Gordon Company Collection  
1999.142  
Series 1, Administrative records

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	1999.142.1.1	Memoranda: general notices announcing personnel changes, 1967, 1969.
1	2	1999.142.1.2	Memoranda; general notices announcing personnel changes, 1970.
1	3	1999.142.1.3	Memoranda: general notices announcing personnel changes, 1972, 1975.

Wyman-Gordon Company Collection  
1999.142  
Series 2, Worcester tornado

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	4	1999.142.2.1	Monograph: Wyman-Gordon Company actions to assist employees affected by the Worcester tornado, June 1953, 6 p.; with lists of employees affected by the disaster and the amount of assistance given by the company. Includes notices relative to assistance programs carried out by the company and by the Red Cross and other organizations.



Wyman-Gordon Company Collection  
1999.142  
Series 3, Grafton Plant

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	5, 6, 7	1999.142.3.1a-c	Monograph: <u>History of the Grafton Plant</u> / by George W. Motherwell, 1979 : 1 vol., typescript, with illustrations, and copies of letters and articles. 3 copies

Wyman-Gordon Company  
1999.142  
Series 4, Centennial history

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	8	1999.142.4.1a-e	Monograph: <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester</u> / by William Gabis, draft copies of the centennial history of the company. Typescript, 59 p. 5 items
1	9	1999.142.4.2	Memoranda: Notes re second printing of centennial book <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester.</u>
1	10	1999.142.4.3	Monograph: <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester</u> / by William Gabis. Photocopy of bound volume, 34 leaves.
1	11	1999.142.4.4	Memoranda: Notes, letters, memoranda, etc. re availability of <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester</u> / by William Gabis.
1	12	1999.142.4.5	Memoranda: Notes, memoranda, etc. on expenses incurred in publication of <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester.</u>
2	13	1999.142.4.6	Memoranda: Notes on award ceremony in recognition of Bill Gabis' authorship of the centennial publication.
2	14	1999.142.4.7	Draft copy: <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester</u> / by William Gabis. Typescript, 38 p.
2	15	1999.142.4.8	Editorial commented and corrected proofs of <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester</u> , with draft copy #2.
2	16	1999.142.4.9	Memoranda: Background and employee notes on Bill Gabis, author of <u>Wyman-Gordon and Worcester</u> , with examples of other of his works.

2 17 1999.1424.10 Draft copies: Wyman-Gordon and Worcester / by William Gabis, typescript.

Series 4, continued

2 18 1999.142.4.11 Memoranda: Information about photographs used in Wyman-Gordon and Worcester, with requests for additional prints.

2 19 1999.142.4.12 Biographical notes about William J. Gabis.

2 20 1999.142.4.13a-k Photographic prints (8 x 10 in.) of William J. Gabis, including documentation, negatives, etc. 11 items.

Wyman-Gordon Company Collection  
1999.142  
Series 5, Publications

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
2	21	1999.142.5.1	Bound volume: <u>Essentials of drop-forging accounting</u> / prepared by the Cost Committee of the American Drop Forging Institute, 1924. 140 p., forms, 26 cm.
2	22	1999.142.5.2	Typescript: <u>Estimating for the unusual forging</u> / Lester W. Smith, Chief Accountant, Wyman-Gordon Company, 1941. 4 p.