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Telechronometer Company of Rochester New York records 9576474

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Description is written in: English.

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Telechronometer Company (Rochester, N.Y.)
Title:	Telechronometer Company of Rochester New York records
ID:	9576474
ID:	MS#1630
Date [inclusive]:	1909-1913
Physical Description:	0.5 linear feet 1 floptop box
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Telechronometer Company of Rochester; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

The Telechronometer Company was , it appears, the first company to patent a system and device for charging for telephone use based on actual time usage, similar to the gas and electric meters of today. This was an important step in the early growth of the telephone industry, quoting one of the firm's promotional materials it "solved the rarte question." Up until some sort of metering was in place there was no practical way to charge for each call , this device created a new revenue stream for the nascent industry. Garrison Babcock, of Rochester, and Frederick Charles Stevens (1856-1916)¹, Senator and later Superintendent of Public Works for New York State, saw the potential of such a service and formed a company to develop and market the technology, which would serve as a useful and necessary accessory to the as yet undeveloped but expanding telephone industry.

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Biographical / Historical

Garrison Babcock filed a patent for his invention on June 14, 1909 and patent number 947781 was issued to him on February 1, 1910. This collection includes documents from 1909 through 1913 dealing with the development of this invention, the creation of the company, and its subsequent mergers. The company was not a manufacturing company its apparatus was built by General Electric, the firm licensed the Telechronometer to telephone companies throughout the country.

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Biographical / Historical

Interestingly an article in the June 1922 issue of Popular Mechanics (p. 833), states: "The first metered telephone service is now given in Everett, Wash., where about 6000 subscribers are paying for just the amount of talking they do." Evidently the magazine was either unaware of this invention, or it took time to reach remote areas, or did not succeed as planned.

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Summary

A small collection of archival material comprising correspondence, blueprints, documents, printed paper, ephemera.

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Arrangement

Not organized.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2012-08-04 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

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Restrictions on Access

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

2012-2013-M027: Source of acquisition--[source of acquisition]. Method of acquisition--Purchase; Date of acquisition--8/2/2012.

Processing Information

Papers processed, PTL 08/03/2012.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Telephone -- History
- Telecommunication -- History
- Rochester (N.Y.)
- Broadsides (notices)
- Advertising
- blueprints (reprographic copies)
- Receipts (financial records)
- Press releases
- Babcock, Garrison
- Telechronometer Company (Rochester, N.Y.)

Collection Inventory

Folder List:

Title/Description	Instances	
6 x 9 inch printed circular for the Telechronometer Co., undated	box 1	folder 1
Two blueprints measuring 12 Y, x 7 Y. inches, dated, May 29, 1909	box 1	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
One indicating a telephone circuit with the Telechronometer installed, the other without, both approved by Garrison Babcock.		
Three page carbon of a typed letter, legal folio, undated but circa 1910., undated	box 1	folder 3

Scope and Contents

"A new system is now on the market which will appeal strongly to everyone in the Telephone Field: The Telechronometer. As the word implies it is

a time meter which is a radical departure from existing methods of charge for services .. . " The letter describes the Telechronometer, and the reasons for adopting the system, amongst others it states that it would make the system fair and make party lines more efficient.

Two receipts dated 1910 from the Strong berg-Carlson Telephone Mfg. Co., (also of Rochester) for equipment., 1910	box 1	folder 4
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Bill from the General Electric Co., Lynn, Mass.	box 1	folder 5
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Scope and Contents

Works to the Telechronometer Co. for "Experimental and Developmental work in the making of 4 operative sample meters and 1 operative time switch in experimental form .. . " And one page typed letter from W. C. Fish, manager of the Lynn Works, dated June 26, 1910 which discusses contact with the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and discussing the above mentioned bill. These two documents provide a unique view into the costs and efforts of developing the initial prototypes and development of the apparatus.

Six page, legal folio, carbon copy of draft text, heavily annotated and emended in pencil, for a promotional booklet to the telephone operating companies of the United States	box 1	folder 6
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Scope and Contents

.. . desire of this company to make the Telechronometer do in the telephone field what the Watt meter has done for the development of electric lighting and power companies ... " Included is a page of financial statistics of expenses and revenues showing telephone operating companies the profitability of deploying the devices. This text also highlights that the company is not a manufacturing concern, but a developmental and sales organization (manufacture contracted to General Electric). The text is clearly targeted at potential franchisees: telephone operating companies.

Two large illustrated advertising broadsides(measuring approximately 11 x 17 inches) circa, 1910	box 1	folder 7
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Scope and Contents

Advertising the Telechronometer, the firm now had offices in Chicago, one targeted to subscribers asking them to contact their provider to install the meter on

their premises, the other highlighting the franchise requirements related to the metering system.

Nine page partially printed legal document in Russian, completed in manuscript, dated, 1915

box 1

folder 8

Scope and Contents

Granting patent rights #27832 to The International Telechronometer Company. The document notes that the application date January 25, 1909 preceded the granting of the patent by over five years.

A seven page carbon copy of a draft of an article or lengthy press release detailing the merger of the of the Telechronometer of Rochester and the North Electric Company of Cleveland, Ohio into the Telephone Improvement Company

box 1

folder 9

Scope and Contents

This document is of interest for a number of reasons including the role being played by F. C. Stevens, who became the president of the new enterprise. Stevens also calls for regulations for the new industry in order to have strong continued growth. The article continues with an overview of the history of the industry up to that point and then in a lengthy promotional section touts the advantages of the Telechronometer systems to various potential customers. Lightly annotated in pencil.

Eight pages of typed correspondence, some carbon copies, between R. W. Robbins and the North Electric Company dated 1912 including a proposal to build, supervise and move North Electric to a new facility in Galion, Ohio (80 miles southeast of Cleveland),, 1912

box 1

folder 10

Scope and Contents

It includes a basic description of the proposed site, technical aspects, power, rail access, etc. Accompanied by a letter summarizing these details from Garrison Babcock, to the Ways and Means Committee, on which F. C. Stevens sat.

Two letters from the new Telephone Improvement Company, located in Chicago, dated 1913 signed by F. C. Stevens., 1913

box 1

folder 11.

Scope and Contents

The letters request that the recipient as a "favor" underwrite at least \$50,000 of a stock offering. Stevens states that he was ill and unable to present the request in person and notes that he was

sending Garrison Babcock, the inventor of the Telechronometer, to meet with them.

Fifteen items, correspondence, telegrams, and ephemera, regarding the development of the company.

box 1

folder 12

Scope and Contents

It consists of correspondence from and to other telephone companies. One item concerns transcripts of articles from the Ft. Wayne, Indiana Gazette, December 1910 which describe how the telephone service would be rolled out, and cites testimonials from cities such as Chicago where the meters were in place who refuse to return to the old system. A letter from a vice-president at A IT refuses to provide the company with the results of their testing of the Telechronometer, stating the examination was for the use of their own internal subscribers.

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