



Finding Aid for

**SELDEN PATENT LAWSUIT COLLECTION,  
1898-1955 (BULK 1900-1925)**

**Accession 86.1.1704**

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## OVERVIEW

**REPOSITORY:** Benson Ford Research Center  
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**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 86.1.1704

**CREATOR:** Henry Ford (Organization). Benson Ford Research Center

**TITLE:** Selden Patent Lawsuit Collection

**INCLUSIVE DATES:** 1891-1955

**BULK DATES:** 1900-1925

**QUANTITY:** 2.2 cubic ft. (5 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** The materials are in English

**ABSTRACT:** The Selden Patent Lawsuit Collection contains documents, correspondence, and financial reports relating to George B. Selden's patent for road vehicles and the Electric Vehicle Company v. Ford lawsuit.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The collection is 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:** Portions of the collection donated by Henry Austin Clark, Jr. in 1986. Additional collection material purchased by The Henry Ford in 1986.
- ALTERNATE FORMS:** Selected material from the 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=Selden%20Patent%20Lawsuit%20Collection&years=0-0&perPage=10&pageNum=1&sortBy=relevance>
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material held by The Henry Ford:  
- Selden v. Ford Patent Lawsuit Collection, 1904-1915, Accession 20
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 86.1.1704, Selden patent lawsuit collection, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Benson Ford Research Center staff, August 1988 and updated in October 2005.
- Collection consists of material from two separate accessions. Material in the Subject File series was donated to The Henry Ford by Henry Austin Clark, Jr. Materials in the Lantern Slides series was purchased by The Henry Ford.

DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Original collection inventory list prepared and published by Benson Ford Research Center staff in August 1988 and updated in October 2005.

Finding aid prepared by Elyssa Bisoski, December 2011, and published in December 2011.

Finding aid revised and republished by Brian Wilson, November 2016. Full accession number added along with additional information regarding the source, processing and extent of the collection material.

Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

## HISTORICAL NOTE

George Baldwin Selden was born on September 14, 1848 in Clarkston, New York, the son of a well-to-do local lawyer. He attended local public schools, the University of Rochester, and graduated from Yale University after a brief enlistment in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was admitted to the New York bar in 1871 and joined his father's law firm. Selden turned his attention to mechanical design and in 1879 he filed a patent application for a self-propelled "road engine." In 1895 he was granted a final patent. The most unique feature of his patent was its effort to cover all self-propelled wheeled vehicles built in the United States in 1879. Selden was never able to manufacture automobiles himself and in 1899, the Columbia and Electric Vehicle Company, later called the Electric Vehicle Company, in New Haven, Connecticut, purchased the patent rights from Selden for cash and future royalty payments.

By 1903, several automobile manufacturers, including some of the successful early companies such as the Winton Motor Carriage Company, Olds Motor Works, and Packard Motor Car Company, recognized the validity of Selden's patent and agreed to pay the Electric Vehicle Company a royalty of 1.25% for each vehicle manufactured with proceeds distributed to Selden, the Electric Vehicle Company, and eventually a national association of automobile manufacturers. Also in 1903, the royalty paying companies established the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers (ALAM) in conjunction with the Electric Vehicle Company in an effort to control automotive competition and issued licenses to new companies.

In 1903, Henry Ford applied to the ALAM for a license but was turned down by the selection committee primarily because it was believed that Ford Motor Company was an assembly company rather than a manufacturing company. Henry Ford decided to fight the patent and continued to produce vehicles. Ford was then sued by the ALAM, George B. Selden, and the Electric Vehicle Company for patent infringement. Ford appealed a 1909 decision upholding Selden's patent and in 1911 a federal appellate court decided in favor of Henry Ford and effectively ended Selden's legal claim to a patent covering all motor vehicles. After Selden's death in 1922, the ALAM reorganized as a national advocacy group for automobile manufacturers and endured through several name changes including the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, and the Automobile Manufacturer's Association.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Selden Patent Lawsuit collection consists of two series, **Subject Files** and **Lantern Slides**. Materials in these two series were obtained from separate sources and combined by staff of The Henry Ford into a single assembled collection.

The **Subject Files series**, 1891-1955 (2.0 cubic ft.), includes correspondence, clippings, British, French, and American patent copies and financial reports. Researchers should note that material in this collection was gathered from various sources and includes a wide variety of general information about the early automobile industry. Of special interest are the annual reports, audits, national automobile show planning and cost reports, royalty summaries, and other financial

records of automobile manufacturer's organizations such as the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers and a wholly-owned holding company, the Association Patents Company, the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, the Automobile Board of Trade, and the Automobile Manufacturer's Association.

The **Lantern Slides series**, circa 1904-1909 (0.2 cubic ft.), consists of 56 glass lantern slides. As a co-plaintiff in the infringement lawsuit filed against Henry Ford and Ford Motor Company, Selden's attorneys used the lantern slides to illustrate early automobile development and the part George B. Selden played in that process. The slides also illustrate engine and motor vehicle development in Europe and the United States at the turn of the century.

## **SUBJECT TERMS**

### Names, Personal or Corporate

Ford, Henry, 1863-1947

Selden, George Baldwin, 1848-1922

Ford Motor Company

Electric Vehicle Company (Hartford, Conn.)

Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers (U.S.)

National Association of Automobile Manufacturers

Automobile Board of Trade

National Automobile Chamber of Commerce

Automobile Manufacturers Association

### Subjects

Auditors' reports

Automobiles--Design and construction

Automobiles--Exhibitions

Automobiles--History

Automobiles--Motors

Automobiles--Patents

Automobile industry and trade

Financial statements

Ford Motor Company--Trials, litigation, etc

Patent infringement

Patents suits

### Genre and Form

Lantern slides

## CONTAINER LIST

**Box no.**                      **Description**

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### Box 1

#### SUBJECT FILES

A. Fleury and Sons correspondence, 1891  
Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers  
  Reports and accounts  
    Correspondence, 1905  
    January-June, 1909  
    July-December, 1909  
    January 1909-February 1910  
    January-June 1910  
    July-December 1919  
    January 1911-April 1913  
  Royalty reports, 1903-1905  
  Royalty reports and financial statements  
    January 1, 1903-September 30, 1904  
    November 7, 1904  
    November 30, 1905  
    October 1904-December 31, 1906  
    June 30, 1906  
    December 31, 1907  
    August 15, 1908  
    December 31, 1908  
    April 1909  
  Suit costs, 1906  
Association Patent Company  
  Minutes, 1905  
  Reports and accounts, 1905-July 1912  
  Reports and accounts January-July 1912  
  Audit, June 3, 1913  
Automobile Board of Trade  
  Audit, June 26, 1913  
  Audit, July 31, 1914  
American Manufacturing Association Audits  
  June 30, 1935  
  June 30, 1936  
  June 30, 1937  
  June 30, 1938  
  June 30, 1939

### Box 2

Boyriven, Ltd., correspondence  
British Patent Office  
  Edmund Allyne and Le Dree Pomeroy, 1900

Hubert Baker, 1897  
Alfred Boulton, 1901  
William Cox, 1901  
Middleton Crawford, 1903  
Frederick de Veulle, 1902  
George Dorris, 1900  
George Ellis, 1903  
Auguste Grivel, 1898  
Elie Lacoste and Emile Battman, 1902  
Henry H. Lake, 1901  
Paul Lemaire, 1898  
Paul Montaubon and Ernest Marchandier, 1901  
Henry Pearson, 1901  
John Ridley, 1901  
Charles Sangster, 1902  
G. W. D. Scott, 1903  
Henry Spurrier, 1902  
William Starley, 1902 (2 folders)  
Frederick Strickland, 1902  
Rear axle listing, 1899-1910  
Budd Manufacturing Company, field men's report, 1928  
*A Chronicle of the Automobile Industry*, 1946  
Clippings  
    Automobile advertising, undated  
    Automobile manufacturing, 1942-1950  
    Automobile pioneers, 1940-1955  
    Henry Ford and Ford Motor Company, 1940-1953  
    Rochester, New York, 1922-1948  
    George Selden, 1910-1948  
    U.S. War Effort, 1940-1945  
Cowles suit  
    Marks and Clerk (London) correspondence  
        October 1928  
        November 1928  
        Undated  
    Schiff and Bueren (Berlin) correspondence  
        October 1938  
        November 1928  
Drawings of motors and early automobiles

**Box 3**

Electric Vehicle Company, witnesses, 1929  
Fay, Jesse B., Patent Attorney, report of rear axle patents, 1912  
Ford, Henry, museum collections, clippings, 1928  
Ford, Henry, Packard Motor Car Suit, 1928

French Patent Office

M. Brasier, 1903  
M. Chabouche, 1899-1900 (3 folders)  
F. Charron, Girardot, Voigt, 1902  
Compagnie Francaise de Voitures Electromobile, 1902  
Albert de Dion, 1893  
A. De Dion, G. Bouton, 1899  
Pope Manufacturing Company, 1899  
Societe des Etablissements and Malicet et Blin, 1903  
Societe E. Henriod, 1902

General Motors, yellow cab design, 1928

German Patent Office, John Otto Donner, 1893

"La France Automobile," articles, 1901-1902

"La Locomotion," article, February 22, 1902

*Rotarian* magazine, August, September, November 1945

*Time* magazine, September 24, 1945

National Automobile Chamber of Commerce

Audits

July 31, 1914  
June 30, 1915  
June 30, 1916  
June 30, 1917  
June 30, 1918  
June 30, 1920  
September 2, 1921  
September 7, 1922  
September 11, 1923  
June 30, 1924  
June 30, 1925  
June 30, 1926  
June 30, 1927

**Box 4**

June 30, 1928  
June 30, 1929  
June 30, 1930  
June 30, 1931  
June 30, 1932  
June 30, 1932  
June 30, 1933  
June 30, 1934

Automobile show, 1928

Kardo Company report, 1915

National automobile shows report, New York and Chicago

September 16, 1932-March 1, 1933

1935

1936 (2 folders)  
1937  
1938  
1940  
Patent infringements  
1903-1905  
1914  
Selden, George B., photographs  
Selden, Henry, correspondence, 1937-1947  
Selden patent information  
U.S. Patent Office  
Walter C. Baker, 1898 and 1905 (2 folders)  
Alanson P. Brush, 1905  
John Demmler, 1911  
Louis E. Hoffman, 1906 and 1910 (2 folders)  
Frank B. Hopewell, 1900  
Thomas J. Lindsay, 1898 and 1905 (2 folders)  
Charles T. McCue, 1911  
Frederick C. Miller, 1905  
Louis P. Mooers, 1906 and 1909 (2 folders)  
Jules and Albert Niclausse, 1908  
C.T. Brock Sangster, 1902 (2 folders)  
Charles Schmidt, 1906, 1910 and 1912 (3 folders)  
George B. Selden, 1901  
Vacuum Oil Company, correspondence, 1929

**Box 5**

**LANTERN SLIDES**

Selden automobile  
George Selden seated, Henry Selden standing, circa 1905  
Road picture, circa 1905  
George Selden seated, circa 1905  
Hero's apparatus, undated  
La Premier Tourette de Lavis Renault, undated  
Rosenwald #116871, drawing of non-compression engine, circa 1877  
Otto and Langen free piston engine, undated  
Daimler motor and bicycle, circa 1885  
Otto and Langen four stroke single cylinder, undated  
Reithmann engine, circa 1872-1873  
Vertical gas engine, undated  
Brayton petroleum engine, undated  
Scott and Van Altena, undated  
Otto and Langen vertical gas motor, undated  
Diagram of cylinder action, undated  
Reithmann viertaktmotor, circa 1872-1873 (1 of 2 slides)  
Gas engine diagram, undated

**Box 5 continued:**

Saver's pumping engine, 1698  
Brotherhood's three-cylinder engine, undated  
Vertical two-cylinder engine, undated  
Diagram of two-cylinder vertical engine, undated  
Muller's Benz motor, undated  
Barnett gas engine, undated  
Selden and son in automobile  
Otto and Langen horizontal cylinder with left hand fly wheel, undated  
Barsanti and Matteucci engine, undated (1 of 3 slides)  
Lenoir's gas engine, undated  
Early vehicle gas engine, undated  
Duryea wagon motor, undated  
Barsanti and Matteucci engine (2 of 3 slides)  
Otto and Langen four cycle compression engine, undated  
Brown's gas-vacuum engine, circa 1826  
Otto and Langen erster betriebstahiger viertaktmotor, circa 1877-1878  
Barsanti and Matteucci engine (3 of 3 slides)  
Daimler zwillings motor, undated  
Otto and Langen erster versuchs-viertaktmotor, undated  
Daimler erster motor, 1884  
Reithmann viertaktmotor, circa 1872-1873 (2 of 2 slides)  
Otto and Langen erster belriebsreifer flugkolbenmotor, undated  
Newcomen's atmospheric engine, 1705  
Papin, 1705  
Engine suggested by Lenoir, undated  
Columbus Perambulator Company, Chicago, undated  
Benz three-wheeler, undated  
Early vehicle, undated  
George B. Selden road engine, 1895  
Truck, undated  
George B. Selden with vehicle, circa 1905  
Selden factory, undated  
Gas engine, undated  
Benz motor tricycle, 1885  
Lenoir carriage, 1860  
Benz gas vehicle, circa 1900  
Selden automobile,  
    Front view, circa 1905  
    Side view, circa 1905  
    Engine close-up, circa 1905