Appendix—
United States Watch Company (Waltham, MA)
History and Watch Production

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This is an appendix to an article of the same title published in the October 2007 issue of the NAWCC Bulletin.

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Detailed U.S. Watch Co. History Year-by-Year

1885: On February 25 the Massachusetts Legislature approved the corporation’s name change from Waltham Watch Tool Company to “The United States Watch Company” (see Figure A). On May 26 Waltham Weekly Record reported the company voted to accept an act of the Massachusetts Legislature changing the company’s name. The October 22, 1886, Waltham Daily Tribune had a long article documenting the company’s startup history from 1883 through 1886. On June 10 Emil C. Hammer joined the company as treasurer, and the company increased its capital from $7,000 to $50,000. At the annual meeting Hammer was chosen treasurer and Vander Woerd was chosen general superintendent. On July 20 the company voted to increase its capital to $100,000. The following directors were chosen: E. C. Hammer, C. V. Woerd, T. F. Hammer, T. B. Eaton, and A. E. Hammer. The directors chose the following company officers: Thomas B. Eaton, president; Emil C. Hammer, treasurer; C. E. Edgecomb, clerk; and C. Vander Woerd, superintendent.

1886: Charles Vander Woerd received three patents for watch stem winding and setting mechanisms, and speculation was the mechanism would be incorporated into the first grade of the company’s new watches. Machinery was set up in the factory. The October 22

The company obtained land from the city of Waltham on Charles Street and began construction of the initial wing of the factory—a three-story, single-wing building 25 x 100 foot long. At the rear of the building is a two-story wooden building used as a carpenter’s shop and gilding room. Later the company planned to enlarge the factory’s frontage to 240 feet.

1886: Charles Vander Woerd received three patents for watch stem winding and setting mechanisms, and speculation was the mechanism would be incorporated into the first grade of the company’s new watches. Machinery was set up in the factory. The October 22

**Figure A.** Massachusetts Secretary of State Corporate Records for United States Watch Company. Note company’s formation (name change) and dissolution dates.
**Waltham Daily Tribune** article outlined the factory’s operations. Factory operations were divided into three departments: jeweling, escapement, and finishing under C. P. Eaton; plate and pinion room under W. H. Graves; and machine shop and press room under G. Nutting. On April 1 the city of Waltham deeded three acres of city land to the United States Watch Co. for its factory; Charles Vander Woerd handed Mayor Stone a check for $2396.01 for the full price of the land. On October 1 U.S. Watch Co. completed its first watch: 16-size 3/4-plate stem wind and stem set open face movement, and stated that the watch will be kept by the company. Hammer eventually carried the watch. In September the city of Waltham taxed U.S. Watch Co. $405 compared to $14,525 for American Waltham Watch Co. By October the factory had 57 employees.

**1887:** The January 19 *Waltham Daily Tribune* reported U.S. Watch Co. delivered the first watches for sale to George Whitford: a 16-size plain seven-jewel movement with an expansion balance in a 2-1/2 oz. silver case. The January 21 *Waltham Weekly Record* noted “Here’s to the Success of U.S.W. Co.!” On January 28 the company modified completed watches from plain to expansion balances. In April the company formally introduced the new watch in the *Jewelers’ Circular* and ran advertisements until November (see Figure 3). At the July annual meeting, Board of Directors re-elected the current officers. In December *Jewelers’ Circular* reported the company was making a new watch to fit standard 16-size cases and also was developing 18- and 6-size watches. Charles Crossman noted in his book “Charles Vander Woerd severed this connection with the company.” Granville Nutting became superintendent, and A. M. Saul came from Springfield, MA, and became master watchmaker.

The 1887 factory map provides general information about the factory layout: The basement contained the press room; the first floor had a machinery room, including a 25-horsepower engine with a rope belt out to a back building that contained the gilding room, balance room, and carpenter’s shop. The second floor contained “material making,” and the third floor was the finishing department, storage, and office (see Figure B).

**1888:** In June *Jewelers’ Circular* reported the company’s announcement of 16-size in seven grades both gilt and nickel finish and 18-size open face and hunting models in several grades. The Dome Model initial replacement was a 16-size 3/4-plate open face movement that fit in a standard case. (See Figure 2B.) Employees laid off in the fall of 1887 when the Dome Model was discontinued were brought back, and tooling for the new models was completed and installed in the factory. The factory had a good work force, and more workers were expecting to be hired soon. *Waltham Free Press* reported the following activities.

**August 10:** U.S. Watch factory was running at full capacity and could not keep up with orders and noted the hiring of four new hands in various departments.

**August 24:** The city of Waltham taxed U.S. Watch Co. $650 compared to $15,679 for American Waltham Watch Co.

**October 19:** A notice highlighted factory news—job moves, noontime employee athletic activities, and work being pushed forward to meet the steady watch demand.

**October 26:** The U.S. Watch petitioned the Board of Alderman to suspend the city of Waltham its plan for building the new city horse stable adjacent to the factory.

**November 2:** A notice of Board of Alderman Hearing on U.S. Watch Co.’s opposition to the new city stable.

**November 9:** The company made three announcements: (1) It was behind on orders and was seriously considering erecting another building or adding onto the present one to meet the production requirements. (2) A new 18-size hunting case model had been placed on the market and it was well received. (3) A 6-size ladies’ watch would be introduced shortly, and tools were being constructed for it. New factory employee hiring and job changes were announced.

**1889:** The January 4 *Waltham Free Press* announced former superintendent Charles Vander Woerd passed away in California. The June 14 issue reported results of annual meeting where the following officers were chosen: Thomas B. Eaton, president; Emil C. Hammer, treasurer; James E. Cox, clerk, and directors Emil C. Hammer, Thomas B. Eaton, T. F. Hammer, A. E. Hammer; and Granville Nutting, superintendent. The annual inventory of stock was taken the prior week. In August *Jewelers’ Circular* advertised that the company was taking orders for the new 6-size movement (see Figure 9), and the company was listed in the Jewelers’ *Circular* business directory with the other watchmaking companies—interesting because the company had been making watches for three years and finally got its

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**Figure B.** Factory lot and map from September 1887.
name added to the list. The September Jewelers’ Circular reported that watch output was 75 watches per day and should increase to 110 watches per day by October and that the factory would be enlarged the following spring. The August 30 Waltham Free Press noted the city of Waltham taxed U.S. Watch Co. $1052 compared to American Waltham Watch Co. $16,283. The October 11 issue reported new employee hiring and job changes in the factory and a number of other factory activities: The company announced plans to make its own dials, more hands were added to the plate and pinion departments, 6-size ladies’ watches were introduced, and the company was “enjoying a great spurt of prosperity, which promises to increase rather than diminish.” The October issue referenced an article from The Watchmaker, Jewelers, and Silversmith by Ambrose Webster from the American Watch Tool Co. in which he compared plant value and daily output of most watch companies. United States Watch Co. plant was valued at $100,000, and its daily output was 50 watches compared to American Waltham Watch Company plant value of $3,000,000 with daily output of 1,500 watches.

1890: The January 4 Waltham Free Press wrote, “...the United States Watch Company, a growing concern not to be sneezed at,” January 15 announced factory moves and workers returning from illnesses, and January 30 noted, “The plant has cost Mr. Hammer about $350,000 but the general verdict is, that we have got the watch.” Factory capacity has been enlarged and can promptly fill orders for a variety of 16-size, 18-size, and 6-size watches in different case configurations. The January Jewelers’ Circular reported, “The Trade pronounces the United States Watch Co.’s ladies watch among the finest on the market” and “...1st lot of 1000 6-size movements..., delivered and remaining 5000 of the lot are spoken for... Another lot of 15,000 will be at once commenced.” The company placed an advertisement in February’s Jewelers’ Circular announcing that 1889 was a successful year and thanked jobbers for their support. Another later article commented that the company had contracted to enlarge the factory by adding a 50 x 70-foot central building four stories tall that would cost $100,000, including machinery, and raise the plant’s value to $500,000. Current watch production was 100 watches per day, and the company had contracted for delivery of 200 watches per day. The March Jewelers’ Circular reported, “United States Watch Co. announce that the 6-size hunting movement...literally won the hearts of the trade.” Waltham Free Press reported a number of factory activities: March 7: Fred W. Nutting, employee and nephew of Grandville Nutting, passed away at age 24; March 13: The company announced its withdrawal from the Watch Manufacturers’ Association; and April 9: A variety of new hiring and job moves at the factory were announced. The April Jewelers’ Circular reported that the company had begun construction of eight of their famous automatic screw machines, and several departments were to be strengthened—immediately doubling the machine capacity needed to obtain sufficient materials to increase production to 200 watches per day. An advertisement in the May Keystone provided additional details on the company’s latest 18-size offering. The July Jewelers’ Circular reported that the company held its annual stockholders’ meeting and elected the following officers for the coming year: Thos. B. Eaton, president; E. C. Hammer, treasurer; J. E. Cox, clerk; and E. C. Hammer, T. B. Eaton, T. F. Hammer, G. Nutting, and A. E. Hammer, directors. The July 14 Waltham Free Press reported that a new 45-horsepower engine was installed in the factory, new machinery was being obtained as soon as possible, 90 watches per day was the record for the prior month, and a variety of job moves and hirings. The plan was to increase production to 125 watches per day by October. The August Jewelers’ Circular reported that the company produced 97 watches per day in June, the largest monthly average. Advertisements in the September and November Keystone proclaimed the company’s attitude to sell to the “retailer” as well as “Non-Associated Jobbers” and promised orders will receive prompt attention from home office. The October 8 Waltham Daily Free Press noted factory hiring and employee changes, and the October 14 edition reported the arrival and installation of a new Mosler safe in the office—the company now had three safes. The October 22 edition highlighted “Injunctions Granted: The U.S. Watch Co. Cannot use Waltham.” The November Jewelers’ Circular reported, “In the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, on October 21st, Judge Holmes issued an order restraining the United States Watch Company from advertising their product as “Waltham watches.” The action of the court was upon an application by the American Waltham Watch Company.” The November Keystone reported 132 employees were turning out 500 watches per week.

1891: The Waltham Daily Tribune documented the company’s activities during the year. January 10: Polo team was holding its own in the watch league, and the company was receiving letters daily from Dueber Watch Co. employees in Canton, OH, looking for jobs. January 13: “hands at the U.S. Watch Co. factory presented ex-Superintendent Nutting with a beautiful gold watch... prior to his departure from them last Saturday, Paymaster Cox presented Mr. Nutting with a silk watch guard at the same time.” January 15: The company had the most employees in its history and was ordering machinery to increase production to 200 watches per day. January 17: The company placed a large order of dials from Waltham Dial Co. January 26: Production was 90 watches per day and hoped to increase to 100 watches per day by the next month.
March 3: A. E. Bentley, the manager of Illinois Watch Co., was hired by the company to manage the Chicago office. March 28: The factory would have a baseball team this season. May 25: The company announced it would run its factory five days a week during June. Hands wondered how long their vacation would be in July. June 16: The company announced that it had held its annual meeting the prior Saturday and re-elected Thomas B. Eaton, president; E. C. Hammer, treasurer; A. J. Bishop, clerk; and Thomas B. Eaton, E. C. Hammer, and A. J. Bishop, directors. Directors were given authority to locate a new factory site if the city of Waltham refused to sell the company additional land to expand the factory. July 22: Waltham Daily Tribune reported, “... no general changes at the U.S. factory and Mr. Crafts is to retain the position that he has so acceptably filled. The U.S. Factory folks are to push their new 18-size open face movement for the market as speedily as possible. President Eaton... will devote his entire time for the present to the company's interests, and he is to be here daily for some time to come.... Mr. Johnson, late Superintendent at the Aurora Factory, will enter service of U.S. Watch Company....”

September 8: Waltham Daily Tribune contained a long article documenting the various companies in Waltham and devoted one and one-half columns on the U.S. Watch Co. history. The Keystone carried a number of articles and advertisements: February noted Superintendent Nutting and Foreman Neal have left the company and gone to Standard Watch Co. as Superintendent and assistant superintendent; the April issue reported the company is manufacturing 100 movements a day with 160 employees; the August issue announces “Orders now received for early fall deliveries”... “Full line of 16 size open face, and 6 and 18 size hunting case both gilt and nickel”; the November issue noted George F. Johnson has been appointed master watchmaker.

1892: The January 20 Jewelers’ Circular reported that the company “...respectfully calls attention to its line of 18-size hunting movements in gilt and nickel, from 7 to 16 jewels, fully adjusted... The company will also place on the market in the early spring an 18-size full plate open face movement.” The February 10 Waltham Daily Tribune noted the company’s factory would start on full time beginning February 23. On March 30 Jewelers’ Circular reported L. T. Fields joined the company as a salesman from a Boston jobbing house, and the April 20 edition noted “... factory is running steadily. The new 18-size movement will be in readiness for delivery about July 1.” The September 28 Jewelers’ Circular contained an advertisement for the new 18-size open face movement (stem wind and lever set) in a nickel and gilt finish with a variety of jeweling and regulator configurations. The Keystone articles provide details of the company’s activities: the March issue reports O. E. Davis, traveler for U.S. Watch Co., is in New York State and reports doing a good business; advertisements in April and May issues report increasing daily watch production: 1890—60 watches —— 120 watches per day, and 1892 so far 160 watches per day and states “If your jobber does not carry them send your order to the factory at Waltham, Mass and it will receive prompt attention.” Other Keystone articles offer details on the company: June notes O. E. Davis is on the road and reports “business is immense”; July records company is steadily increasing the number of employees, plans to double work space, and posted a notice stating summer vacation is canceled due to large numbers of orders; the August issue notes “...The output was never brighter for this Company than at present.” It reported the results of annual meeting and same officers re-elected from 1891. It also reported Charles Berry will represent U.S. Watch Co. in New England as an agent through Messrs. Whiftd & Johnson allowing Mr. O. E. Davis sell in New York and the South, and Foreman Brady left the company to work for Standard Watch Company. September Keystone contained a short article “…is turning out some usually handsome products, which cannot fail to catch abundant trade from the retailer” and referenced an advertisement on same page that outlined the company’s new offering: 18-size open-face watch and noted highest grades contain Matheson’s Patent Regulator. It ran the same advertisement in October. In November was a short note “…factory is adding to its work force and steadily increasing its product.” The December issue noted “... E.C. Hammer has returned to his Boston office after passing summer and fall in New Hampshire; business at both American Waltham Watch and United States watch factories was brisk and both are running at full capacity to fill holiday orders, O. E. Davis has returned home after a successful business trip.”

1893: The Keystone reported some company activities: January issue reported the company is busily filling orders and having the best trade in the company’s history, and O. E. Davis is getting ready to start again traveling in a few days, and February issued noted Western agent, Bentley has returned to his home in Chicago. November issue notes “Waltham News says: The United States Watch Co. has placed in the market a new movement which has been designated No. 79. The movement is an eighteen size, has seventeen jewels in gold settings, and is accurately adjusted. A double sunk dial completes the list of merits of the timepiece, which is especially intended for the railway service and other uses requiring more than ordinary accuracy.” The June 21 Jewelers’ Circular commented that the company treasurer’s report showed the most promising year in the company’s history. At the annual
meeting the following officers were chosen: Thos. B. Eaton, president; E. C. Hammer, treasurer; J. E. Cox, clerk; and E. C. Hammer, Thos. B. Eaton, T. F. Hammer, A. J. Bistrup, and A. E. Hammer, directors. The August 2 Jewelers’ Circular reported that the company resumed work after a two-week vacation with a full work force. Employees were pleased because they feared the company would extend vacation at least another week due to general business depression. However, both piece and day hands were notified of a 15 percent wage reduction during “present stagnation only” and were promised that wages would be restored when times improved. On October 11 the company announced it would run on three-quarters time until further notice; this step was taken rather than lay off employees.

1894: The January 24 Jewelers’ Circular reported Manager A. E. Bentley moved his office from 312 Venetian Building to room 318 on the same floor and now occupied an entire floor. On April 13 the Waltham Daily Free Press reported Emil C. Hammer had died unexpectedly on a business trip and continued with a long obituary notice. He was the sole owner, both as treasurer and director, and his loss would have a significant impact on the company. He had invested approximately $600,000 in the company. The April 18 Jewelers’ Circular had a long obituary and a lithograph of Emil C. Hammer. The May 9 edition reported the company has been granted permission by Pennsylvania legislature to open a branch office, and the May 16 Jewelers’ Circular reported that the stockholders recently met and decided to continue running the factory. There were less than 100 hands employed at the factory, but the new management hoped to increase that number in the future. In June at the annual meeting, the stockholders elected the following officers: T. B. Eaton, president and superintendent; J. J. McGrath, vice president; J. E. Cox, clerk; and Thorval F. Hammer, Alfred E. Hammer, G. Lootz, T. B. Eaton, and J. E. Cox, directors. The June 20 Jewelers’ Circular provided additional details regarding the stockholders’ meeting; a new position was created for John J. McGrath, who was from New York and had handled considerable amounts of watches. The factory also would be closed for the month of July. On October 17 the company reported the business outlook was encour-
1895: The January Waltham Daily Free Press's front-page story was "The United States Watch Co. factory is to be sold within a year to settle up the estate of the late E. C. Hammer (see Figures Ca and Cb). When Mr. Hammer died a few months ago he left no will consequently the plant has got to be disposed of." The Waltham Evening News reported the story and concluded the article with "The factory, however will not be closed." At the June annual meeting the following officers were elected: T. B. Eaton, president; T. F. Hammer, treasurer; A. E. Hammer, clerk; James E. Cox and G. Lootz, directors; and T. B. Eaton, superintendent. United States Watch Co. will match American Waltham Watch Co.'s 15 percent price reductions on certain 6- and 16-size grade watches. On October 9 the city of Waltham taxed U.S. Watch Co. $818 and American Waltham Watch Co. $23,498.

1896: The January 3 Waltham Daily Tribune reported two key employees, William M. Matheson and Charles Carey, left U.S. Watch Co. to work for E. A. Locke, who was starting up Columbia Watch Co. On January 13 James E. Cox succeeded T. B. Eaton as superintendent, and Chas. E. Berry succeeded W. M. Matheson as master mechanic. T. B. Eaton continued as president. On February 4 a special meeting of stockholders was held at the factory, and stockholders voted unanimously to petition the Massachusetts Legislature to dissolve the corporation; this was a necessary step to settle the late Emil C. Hammer's estate (see Figure Cb). President Eaton indicated there would be a subsequent reorganization of the business, and he further stated that the factory would continue to operate. The corporation was dissolved by an act of the legislature on May 12. In November President Eaton commented about the improving watch trade: "With the return of prosperity to the land the old rate of wages must inevitably come back, in as much as the price of all commodities will be increased per force of a stimulated demand. Watches which are sold for almost next to nothing now, will advance in price with all other articles, and then we shall expect to see the wages of watch factory employees restored at the earliest moment."

1897: The September 8 Jewelers' Circular reported O. E. Davies, who had worked for seven years with the company and three years as manager for the New York office, left the company. B. Veit, 68 Nassau St. will carry watches on commission. On September 22 the company issued a new price list and reported an improvement in business.

1898: In May T. H. and A. E. Hammer came to the factory to install new management: A. E. Bentley became the new general manager and C. E. Berry became superintendent. The Waltham Free Press wrote, "The prospects of the United States Watch Co. are said to be very encouraging." The city of Waltham taxed the U.S. Watch Co. $400 compared to $29,311 for American Waltham Watch Co. U.S. Watch Co. sales must have dropped significantly as its tax rate had fallen over 50 percent since 1895.

1900: The city of Waltham valued the U.S. Watch Co. factory at $25,000 and its property taxes were $350.

1901: On April 18 the Philadelphia Watch Case Company purchased the United States Watch Company factory for $125,000. At the time of sale the factory employed 50 hands. On May 18 Philadelphia Watch Case Company purchased the Suffolk Watch Company factory for $60,000. On May 25 Thoralve Hammer, former owner of U.S. Watch Co. factory, passed away, and on May 31 his funeral was attended by former president Thomas B. Eaton, former manager J. E. Cox, and present general manager Bentley. On May 27 the United States Watch Co. was incorporated in New Jersey with a $1,000,000 capital. The stock was divided into 10,000 shares. The incorporators were John Lowber Welch, Theophilus Zurbrugg, E. T.
Stotesbury, Walter Hastings, and Howard L. Roberts. On May 31 factory expansion began with the construction of a three-story plus basement 15 x 50-foot central building and a three-story 20 x 100-foot wing. The new company planned to move the Columbia Watch Co. machinery and employees to the expanded factory with a combined work force of approximately 200 operators. It was stated that the work force probably would increase to 300 before the end of the year. Elmer Neal, former foreman of the train and machine departments, was appointed superintendent.

Two former U.S. Watch Co. employees William Matheson, Suffolk superintendent, and Henry Mullen, foreman, returned to U.S. Watch Co. Mr. Matheson became an assistant superintendent to Neal, and Henry Mullen took over the train department. On July 1 it was announced that during the July shutdown, machinery from Suffolk Watch would be shipped, set up, and be ready for the employees at the end of the vacation. On August 13 the front main extension was almost complete; on August 31 the new 80-foot chimney was completed, and on September 10 the new engine for the factory was installed. On September 14 the new boiler arrived and was set in place. By October 26 the factory was nearly completed and machinery had been installed. On October 30 the finishing equipment was moved into the new wing, and on November 13 the big fire pump was given a successful test for insurance inspectors. It could shoot a stream of water 25 feet over the 80-foot smokestack. The system consisted of an 80,000-gallon water tank, connections to a second powerful pump for additional pressure, and 13 hose attachments in various parts of the factory. The completed factory was compact; each wing extended 100 feet out from the central section containing the entrance and clock tower. A third smaller wing extended back behind the clock tower. The power plant was housed in a separate building behind the factory. See Figure 4a original factory and Figure 4b (photograph from 2000) enlarged factory. The factory building’s front exterior has remained unchanged since early 1901; the rear wing and power plant have since been torn down. In 1989 the factory was placed on the National Registry of Historic Buildings No. 89001494.

1904: The December 20 Daily Free Press-Tribune front-page headline article was “U.S. Watch Co. Factory leased to E. Howard Company” (see Figure D). The factory was transferred to Keystone Watch Case Co. under a 25-year lease filed in Middlesex County Registry of Deeds on December 19; the annual factory rent was to be $25,000. The U.S. Watch Co. deeded the land and building to E. Howard Watch Co. General Manager Snow of E. Howard Watch Co. reported the production of U.S. Watch Co. watches will be discontinued and manufacture of higher quality Howard watches will continue exclusively at the factory. The present factory’s equipment is anticipated to be adequate. Mr. Zurbrugg was president of United States Watch Co. and also president of Keystone Watch Case Co. No factory management changes were planned.