

# Review of the Rockford Watch Company And It's Watches With Emphasis On Model Identification

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## Introduction

I am presenting Rockford Watch Company's watch movements in a way that should aid in their identification of models within each size group using readily identifiable physical characteristics, comparative comments, and photographic examples of each. This exercise should aid in the recognition of Rockford watch models by sight whether viewing the actual movement or strictly by photographs. It should be especially helpful for today's collectors as purchases are frequently being made on the internet where photographs are the only means of determining product quality and seller descriptions are often confusing or inaccurate.

Various examples of appropriate dials found on Rockford watches are shown to document what has been recorded. Likewise, I show examples of watch cases made by the Rockford Watch Case Company as they will certainly become more important in time as collectors begin to realize their rarity and importance in characterizing the company.

Serial numbers are not emphasized here, even though they are an important component of watch identification, because their historical records are still being scrutinized and features described herein are sufficient for the type of identification intended. Additional movement information such as grade, jewel count etc. can be found by referring to published and non-published sources (Chapter 149 database; Gilbert et. al, 2008; Frauenhoff, 2004; Trauring, 1972; Ehrhardt, 1976(c), Hoke, 1991, [www.PocketWatchRepair.com](http://www.PocketWatchRepair.com)) that contain serial number reference lists. Watch grades, found in these cited serial number lists, are based on number of jewels and design (ornamentation) of movement plates. I list grades of photographed movements for completeness and will not discuss this subdivision further.

I am proposing additional model types for lesser known and ungrouped movements.

## A Brief History

The Rockford Watch Company, located at 325 South Madison Rockford, Ill (Figure 1; the building, still in use today; Figure 2, houses small commercial businesses), was developed from the desire of businessmen to make

money and produce local jobs. Why watch production in Rockford? It was primarily the result of a man who already was specializing in the organization of watch companies. He was John C. Adams who lived in Chicago and had the opinion that he could duplicate the success of the Waltham Watch Company of Waltham, MA which was considered to be the major watch company of the time (1850). Rockford, Ill. was an ideal source of watch customers due to concentration of the railroad industry in the area. So, Adams came to Rockford in 1866 to start a watch factory. Local citizens did not embrace the proposal so he left town in disgust. However, the seed was sown and watch making was to become a reality. A publicity campaign was put into high gear in 1873 and in December 13, 1873, the local edition of the Rockford Journal (editor Hiram Enoch) mentioned that local capitalists were not promoting the city's industrial capabilities enough (Olson, 1971; Rockford Journal Feb 24, 1874 in Frauenhoff, 2004). By January 1874 several thousands of dollars were pledged by local business men and other locals. These business men and other Rockford citizens initiated the call to raise money due to civic pride and frustration about the lack of jobs. They saw other areas increasing in development and they also wanted to do the same (Olson, 1971). Competition was in play here. The RWC (Rockford Watch Company) was officially licensed on March 4, 1874 once \$150,000 had been pledged by 400 citizens (Olson 1971).



Figure 1, Rockford Watch Factory. (Industrial and Picturesque Rockford, 1891.)



Figure 3, Recent view of Rockford Watch Company building (courtesy of Larry Seikel).

One of the largest contributors (documented only as Freeport) was in contact with George D. Clark and a Mr. Wheeler. They were responsible for establishing the watch works from 1874 to 1876. Clark was in charge of construction of all machinery to be used in the plant, hiring and training the work force, and start up of the production line. Damascening machines were obtained from the U.S. Watch Company, Marion, N.J. and John Start during this time (AWCO 2002 webpage section on seminars, AWCO 2002 seminar.org). Devan (2004) indicates that the Cornell Watch Company provided employees and machinery to build watch making machinery. Once the Rockford Watch Company was established, Clark left town on December 1876 (Olson, 1971).

In early 1876 the factory had 57 employees that could produce 10 movements per day in 5 different grades. Rockford watches were a hot commodity throughout the country between the 1870's through the 1880's. Even the U.S. Naval Observatory was using Rockford watches as well as being recommended by the commander of the unit. (Olson 1971).

The RWC was the largest and most successful industrial complex in the region in 1891 (Brown and Rowe 1891). But, with the collapse of the National Association of Jobbers in 1891 and price cutting by other watch manufacturers (1893) the RWC had to reduce production and briefly suspend operations (Summar, 1986). In 1896 the RWC stock holders voted to declare insolvency and H. W. Price assigned all assets, liabilities, proceeds, etc. and power of attorney to Mr. Irwin French who headed a group of Chicagoans that made the purchase. In 1901 Mr. French disposed of the RWC assets to pay off debt and then distribute the remaining proceeds to stock holders (Olson, 1971). The RWC was sold and reorganized as Rockford Watch Company, Ltd. in 1901 and assigned as a subsidiary of the Illinois Watch Case Company, Elgin, Ill. (Olson, 1971, Summar, 1986 and Hoke, 91). Mechanization of other competitors and competition from the Swiss was a major cause for the demise of the company by the mid 1890's. There is no direct evidence of poor management however, Olson (1971) indicates that there were influences besides those just mentioned that assisted in the company's failure and, Summar (1986)

indicates that poor record keeping, basically the lack of good management, was part of the company's demise. However, the company kept producing high quality watches throughout its existence regardless of how it was managed except, possibly, for the very last year of operation. Lower quality watch movements of 0 size have been found stamped with the Rockford brand that do not come close to 'Rockford quality'. They are found as wrist watches and in ladies compacts (refer to Size 0 Model B below). This writer feels that these movements could have been made by an entirely different group of watchmakers and merely stamped with the Rockford logo in order to profit from the Rockford name.

The RWC, including RWC, Ltd., produced slightly less than one million watches during its 39 year history with half of all watches produced between 1902 and 1915. Many of them are found with private engravings. One reason for having produced so many watches with the engravings is that it was probably the best way to sell their items as a relatively young unknown company to more well known established eastern jewelers and mid west merchants (Olson, 1971).

There is a Swiss company that sells watches by the name of Rockford. However, these have no relation to the watches I am presenting here. Most of the Swiss watches are encountered when dealing with watches and other items that contain a smaller sized movement comparable to the zero (0) sized Rockford. These include wrist and ladies watches, and, other items (e.g. compacts) that occasionally appear on the market.

### **Model Characteristics Grouped By Size**

The main features of each watch model are described and grouped by movement size. I list those features that help identify one size group from another, that identify a model from another within the same size group or, identify a model from another model of different size groups. Characteristics that distinguish one movement out of a group are added to the other model descriptions of the same size for completeness. For example: key wind/stem wind is included in the descriptions for all 18s models even though it only aids in the identification of a few models. The one exception to this statement is with regard to case screw number for the 18s model 1 due to the paucity of movements studied.

Characteristics listed for all watch models are meant to give the reader a reasonable means of identifying each movement from one another by sight regardless of scale (size). This is considered the first major step when identifying a movement but it should not be considered the last. Further detailed scrutiny can determine other important features such as jewel count, finish and other detailed information. This can be done only when the movement is available to the researcher.

### **Terminology**

A few terms used in the Plate Descriptions section are described as they might be confusing without some explanation.

**Back Plate** – A plate that opposes the dial plate (e.g. main spring barrel plate). There may be more than one Back Plate within the Back Plate area.

**Back plate area** – The entire area of the movement that is seen when the dial plate is facing down.

**Bridge and Plate** - A bridge is generally one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) or less the width when compared to the length and is secured primarily on one end. A plate is generally greater than one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) the width when compared to the length and is secured equally throughout. Length is the distance of a centrally located line on a bridge or plate that extends from the outer edge of the movement toward the center at some unknown angle. An example of a bridge is the balance bridge. An example of a plate is the main spring plate.

**Flared** – I use this word to describe the curving outward of one side (edge) of the balance bridge as opposed to being fairly straight. It is not referenced to or compared with the other side of the bridge when used in the model descriptions presented below.

**Pillar or Dial Plate** – The plate in which a dial is attached.

**Potence** – A cup shaped part attached to the bottom of the back plate and containing the lower balance jewel.

### **Plate Descriptions**

All movements are shown with the dial plate facing down and oriented with the main spring area located roughly at the 6:00 position. The main spring barrel or arbor is easily located on all models and aids in rapid orientation for movement comparison. This orientation also makes it easier to determine whether a movement is

suitable for open face or hunter cases by determining the relative position of the balance in relation to the main spring. Movements with balances to the left of the main spring (approximately the 8:00 position) are primarily for hunter cases (some ladies 0 size open face cases accommodate hunter case style movements) and, those located to the right (approximately the 4:00 position) are for open faced cases. This does not preclude the fact that hunter movements are found in open faced cases and visa versa. Most of these are due to the lack of proper cases being available to those trying to build complete watches. However, a few original pocket watch owners used various watch combinations based on job related duties according to various veterans of the trade.

The following criteria are listed for each movement: size, serial number, model number, plate description, type of winding, hands setting type, designed for case style (hunter or open face), and any other information that makes model identification easier or that enhances the overall description. Serial numbers are not used for identification here but listed merely to document the movement characterizing each model shown. Please note that the identifying features are generally representative of each model however, a few movements have been recognized to go against them for reasons yet to be confirmed. For example, size 18 models 7 and 8 are easily distinguished from models 9 and 10 respectively when using balance jewel types and their placement and, location of the hair spring stud. A few movements don't fit this mold and have been found to be inconsistent with regards to stud location but I consider these as being transitional from one model to the other. Comparison of serial numbers of balance cock and associated plates of each occurrence should confirm whether this process occurred or, is simply a product of having mismatched components.

Finally, serial numbers can help determine a model when comparing it to reference charts found in various publications (Chapter 149 database; Gilbert et. al, 2008; Frauenhoff, 2004; Trauring, 1972; Ehrhardt, 1976(c), Hoke, 1991, [www.PocketWatchRepair.com](http://www.PocketWatchRepair.com) and others). However, keep in mind that serial number lists are not reliable enough for dating watch movements accurately. Summar (1986) states that movements with serial numbers below 500,000 were assigned or made prior to 1896 and, those numbers higher than 500,000 should be dated as being made after 1900. Sixteen size open face movements are not consistent and muddle the issue (Summar 1986). Rockford watch data collected by serious collectors (Early American Pocket Watch Club, Chapter 149) will, no doubt, resolve these issues at some point.

Size is critical when considering the identification of a movement. The photographic plates presented here are grouped by size but are not sized proportionally with respect to each other. This does not hinder the intent of this project. However, understanding how to correctly measure for movement size (refer to Gilbert et. al. 2008) is important as some sizes are differentiated by only a small increment (e.g. size 6 and size 8).

### **18 Size Model Descriptions**

**Model 1** – This model is described as full plate and drive train gears are not exposed. It has a rounded main spring plate with styled rounded inner (nearest center) edge and covers approximately 25% of the watch movement area. The balance cock is at the 8:00 position and the balance wheel is centrally located within the watch area. This model stands out from all other models of this size by having only one case screw. It is designed for hunter cases and is key wind and set. Set lever or crown winding action should not be present.

**Model 2** – This model has the same appearance as Model 1 but it is key and stem wind, lever set and has two case screws. It is often referred to as ‘the transitional model’ since it incorporated a change from key to stem wind. Check for the presence of a lever on the dial side of the movement at or near the 2:00 position. It is designed for hunter cases.

**Model 3** – This model is described as full plate and drive train gears are not exposed. It has a rounded main spring plate with styled rounded inner (nearest center) edge and covers approximately 25% of the watch movement area. This movement is absent the key wind feature on the arbor. The balance cock is at the 8:00 position and the balance wheel is centrally located within the watch area. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.

**Model 4** – This model is like Model 3 but the balance is at the 4:00 position. The main spring plate has a straight edge adjacent to the balance cock and the central edge is straighter giving this plate a flattened appearance. The balance cock edge adjacent to the main spring plate is straight. A side projection to attach the hair spring stud is present on rare occasions. It is designed for open face cases and is stem wind and lever set.

# Rockford 18s

18s Model 1 full plate  
Key wind and key set  
Hunter #9845



18s Model 2 full plate  
Key wind and lever set  
Hunter #104221



18s Model 3 full plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Hunter Grade 40 #187433



18s Model 4 full plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Open face Grade 47 #233056



**Model 5 – This model is described as full plate with drive train gears not exposed. This back plate is characterized by having a centrally raised area that forms a ridge where it intersects the lower area of the plate. This ridge is parallel to the outer plate edge and extends along the full extent of the plate. The balance cock is located at the 8:00 position and the balance wheel is centrally located within the back plate area. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set. Very rare occurrences of key wind and set are known to exist (Jon Hanson, oral communication).**

**Model 6 – This model is described as full plate. However, it is characterized by having an exposed escape wheel area. This is a result of having a single bridge for the escape wheel along with removal of a portion of the train plate in the adjacent area. It has a styled rounded inner (nearest center) edge on the main spring plate that covers approximately 25% of the watch movement area. A cup (brass or steel) over the main spring arbor, to reduce contaminants from entering the pivot area, may be present. The balance cock is at the 8:00 position. The balance wheel is located near the outer edge of the movement. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.**

**Model 7 – This model is described as full plate and drive train gears are not exposed. The main spring plate edge located near the central portion of the movement area is an overall straight line interrupted with sinuous and angular cuts. It covers approximately 40% of the watch plate area. The balance cock is located at approximately the 2:00 position and the balance wheel is located near the outer edge of the movement. This model usually differs from Model 9 by having the hairspring stud located in an area between the balance jewel and the balance screw. It is characterized by having a friction fit upper balance jewel and lower balance jewel fitted into a threaded adjustable setting on the pillar plate. It is designed for open face cases and is stem wind and lever set.**

**Model 8 – This model is like Model 7 except that the balance cock is located at approximately the 7:00 position. This model usually differs from Model 10 by having the hairspring stud located in an area between the balance jewel and the balance screw. It is characterized by having a friction fit upper balance jewel and lower balance jewel fitted into a threaded adjustable setting on the pillar plate. It is designed for hunter cases.**

# Rockford 18s (cont)

18s Model 5 full raised plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Hunter Grade 905 #232386



18s Model 6 full plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Hunter (exposed escapement)  
Grade 62 #250062



18s Model 7 full plate  
Stem wind and lever (pendant\*) set  
Open face (note hair spring stud position)  
Grade 87 #330228

\*some have pendant/lever set adjustment lever



18s Model 8 full plate  
Stem wind and lever (pendant\*) set  
Hunter (note hairspring stud position)  
Grade 87 #346638

\* some have pendent/lever set adjustment lever





**Model 9** – This model is similar to Model 7. However, the balance bridge is usually characterized by having an extended area on the left side to accommodate the hairspring stud. It is characterized by having upper and lower balance jewels secured by screws. The lower jewel is fitted within a potence. Some Model 9 movements can be found with the old style balance cock, with no hairspring stud extension, typical of those found on Model 7 and these are considered transitional. Comparison of the serial number on the underside of the balance cock with serial numbers found on the other plates should be made to confirm that it is a transitional model and not the result of part switching. Refer to published serial number listings ( Trauring 1972(?), Ehrhardt 1976(c), Gilbert et. al. Fraunhoff 2004, etc. ) when comparing physical specimens.

**Model 10** – This model is similar to Model 8. However, the balance bridge is usually characterized by having an extended area on the left side to accommodate the hairspring stud. It is characterized by having upper and lower balance jewels secured by screws. The lower jewel is fitted within a potence. Some Model 10 movements can be found with the old style balance cock, with no hairspring stud extension, typical of those found on Model 8 and these are considered transitional. Comparison of the serial number on the underside of the balance cock with serial numbers found on the other plates should be made to confirm that it is a transitional model and not the result of part switching.

# Rockford 18s (cont)

18s Model 9 full plate  
Stem wind lever set  
Open face (note balance extension to  
accomodate for hair spring stud)  
Grade 918 #707057



18s Model 10 full plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Hunter (note balance extension to  
accomodate for hairspring stud)  
Grade 838 #778696



## **16 Size Model Descriptions**

**Model 1 – This model is a three quarter plate movement with main spring ratchet and crown wheels visible. This plate takes up approximately 1/3 of the entire movement area. The gear train plate takes up approximately 1/4 of the entire movement area. It is characterized by having a centrally raised area that forms a ridge where it intersects with the lower plate area. This ridge is parallel to the outer plate edge and extends the full circumference of the plate. The balance cock is located near the 7:00 position with the balance wheel near the edge of the movement. The balance cock is curved on one side only. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind lever set.**

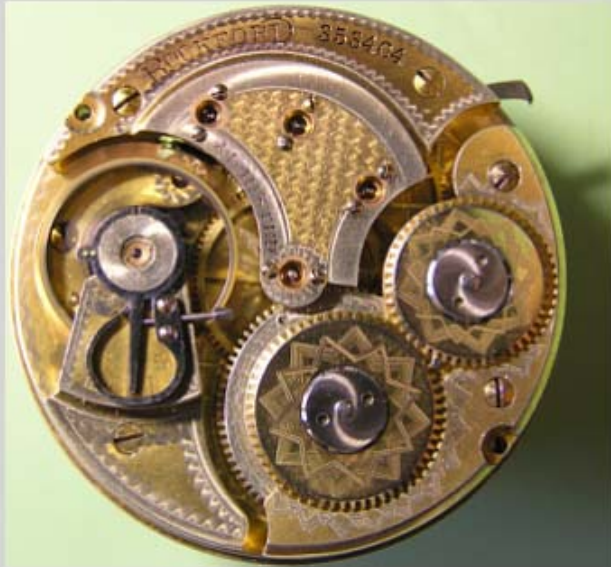
**Model 2 – This model is a three quarter plate movement, with visible main spring ratchet and crown wheels. This plate takes up approximately 1/2 of the entire movement area, whereas, the train plate takes up approximately 1/4 of the entire area. Both plates have wavy centrally located sides (edges) that trend in somewhat of a straight line. The balance is located near the 9:30 position and the balance wheel is near the edge of the movement. The balance cock is curved on one side only. It is designed for open face cases and is stem wind and lever set.**

**Model 3 – This model is similar to Model 2 other than balance placement is near the 8:30 position. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.**

**Model 4 – This model is distinguished from models 1, 2 and 3 by having a train bridge with 3 curved fingers. The gap between the main spring plate and train bridge is approximately one half that of the gaps separating the fingers. The balance is near the 8:30 position. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.**

# Rockford 16s

16s Model 1 3/4 raised plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Hunter Grade 100 #353404



16s Model 2 3/4 plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Open Face Grade 587 #755092



16s Model 3 3/4 plate  
Stem wind and pendant set  
Hunter (3 finger bridge)  
Grade 586 #741823



16s Model 4 3/4 plate  
Stem wind and lever set  
Hunter (3 finger bridge)  
Grade 572 #759804



**Model 4 Special – This model is identical to Model 4 except that it has 3 straight fingers on the train bridge. The balance is located at the 8:30 position. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set. This movement was sold primarily by the Sears Roebuck Company under the Plymouth Watch Company brand. A small number were designed for sale to individuals.**

**Model 5 – This model is a mirror view of Model 4 with the balance cock located at the 2:00 position. It is designed for open face cases and is stem wind and lever set.**

**Model 5 Special – This model is identical to Model 5 except that it has 3 straight fingers on the gear train bridge. The balance cock is located at the 8:30 position. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set. This movement was sold primarily by the Sears Roebuck Company under the Plymouth Watch Company brand. A small number were designed for sale to individuals.**

# Rockford 16s (cont)

16s Model 4 Special Hunter  
3/4 plate (3 straight finger bridge)  
Hunter Grade 100s #662025  
Stem wind and pendant set  
Made primarily for Sears Roebuck Co. under Plymouth  
Watch Company name and a few custom grades



16s Model 5  
3/4 plate (3 finger bridge)  
Open face Grade 566 #802962  
Stem wind and lever set



16s Model 5 Special (writer's classification)  
3/4 plate (3 straight finger bridge)  
Open face Grade 101s #662680  
Stem wind and pendant set  
Made primarily for Sears Roebuck Co. under Plymouth  
Watch Company name and a few custom grades



## **12 Size Model Descriptions**

**Model 1** – This model is similar in appearance to 16s Model 4 except that the balance cock is flared on both sides and, wider gaps exist between the mainspring barrel plate and, finger and balance bridges when compared with similar areas on the 16s model. The gap between the main spring plate and train (finger) bridge is approximately equal that of the gaps separating the fingers. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.

**Model 2** – This model is similar in appearance to 16s Model 5 except that the balance cock is flared on both sides and, a wider gap exists between the mainspring barrel plate and finger and balance bridges when compared with similar areas on the 16s model. The gap between the main spring plate and train (finger) bridge is approximately equal that of the gaps separating the fingers. It is designed for open face cases and is stem wind and lever set.

## **8 Size Model Descriptions**

**Model 1** – This model consists of one main plate that covers only a portion of the main spring barrel and center (2<sup>nd</sup>) wheel. It covers approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the movement surface even though it is described as  $\frac{3}{4}$  plate. The central edge of the main plate is moderately sinuous. The balance cock is positioned at approximately 7:00 with the balance wheel near the movement edge. It is flared on only one side. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.

I am identifying this movement style as Model 1 simply due to historical precedence. However, one might consider the movement represented as Model 2 (below) as Model 1 and visa versa since most companies designed plates more elaborately initially and then simplified their design as a cost savings measure. The Model 2 movement appears to have earlier serial numbers but Rockford's numbering seems to reflect only when it came off a stamping machine and not a true production date.

**Model 2 (writer's classification)** – This model is similar to the 8s Model 1 except that the main plate central edge is deeply cut producing a very distinctive outline when compared with the Model 1. This edge is rounded and extends beyond the generally sinuous portions of the plate edge around the main spring, center gear and escape wheel pivots. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.

# Rockford 12s and 8s

12s Model 1  
3/4 plate (three finger bridge)  
Hunter #772379 Grade 300  
Stem wind and pendant set  
(courtesy of Fred Hansen)



12s Model 2  
3/4 plate (3 finger bridge)  
Open face #837213 Grade 355  
Stem wind and pendant set



8s Model 1 3/4 plate  
Hunter #211981 Grade unknown  
Stem wind and lever set



8s Model 2 (writer's classification)  
3/4 plate  
Hunter #202296 Grade unknown  
Stem wind and lever set





## **6 Size Model Descriptions**

**Model 1 (this writer's classification) – The main spring barrel plate covers only half the main spring barrel and center (2<sup>nd</sup>) wheel (gear). The inner edge of this plate is deeply cut in a highly distinctive fashion. This plate is raised centrally with the area offset away from the main spring barrel. The ridge line, that separates the raised plate area from the lower plate area, extends nearly parallel with the outer edge of the movement except when closest to the main spring barrel where it curves inward or toward the center. The balance cock is located at approximately the 7:00 position with the balance wheel very near the outer edge of the movement. Only one side of the balance cock is noticeably flared. It is designed for hunter cases and is stem wind and lever set.**

**Model 2 – This model is similar in appearance to 16s Model 1 except that the main spring click spring is visible. It appears that no micrometric adjuster for the regulator was installed on this model and its absence might be helpful in distinguishing it from the 16s model. However, I would use the regulator differences with caution as I am suggesting this based on limited observations.**

# Rockford 6s

6s Model 1 (writer's classification)  
3/4 raised plate  
Hunter #214033 Grade unknown  
Stem wind and lever set



6s Model 2  
3/4 raised plate  
Hunter #392469 Grade 153  
Stem wind and lever set



## **0 Size Model Descriptions**

**Model 1 - This model is similar in appearance to the 16s Model 4 except for wider gaps existing between the mainspring barrel plate and the finger and balance bridges. It is similar to the 12s Model 1 except that the balance cock has only one flared side like the 16s Model 4. The balance cock is located at the 7:00 position. It was designed primarily for hunter cases and is stem wind and pendent set.**

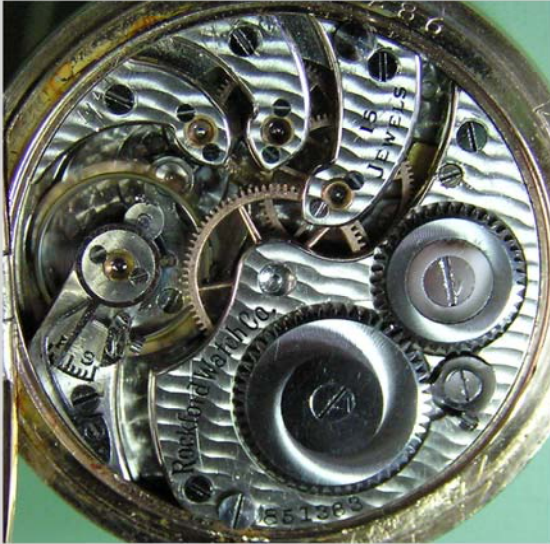
**Model 1 Special (writer's classification) – This model is comparable to the 0s Model 1 described above except that the plate corresponding to the Model 1 finger bridge does not have the cuts that would produce the fingers. This movement was sold primarily by the Sears Roebuck Company under the Plymouth Watch Company brand.**

**Model 2 - This model is similar in appearance to the 16s Model 5 except for wider gaps existing between the mainspring barrel plate and the finger and balance bridges. It is similar to the 12s Model 2 except that the balance cock has only one flared side like the 16s Model 5. The balance cock is located at the 2:00 position. It was designed primarily for open face cases and is stem wind and pendent set.**

**Model B – This model is described as three quarter plate where the main spring barrel plate covers approximately ½ the surface area. The gear train plate is shaped like a lazy L with the vertical arm shorter than the horizontal. The balance cock is located at approximately the 2:00 position. It may or may not contain a 'model B' impression. It is designed for open face cases such as those used for the wrist and attached to ladies' compacts. It is stem wind and pendent set.**

# Rockford 0s

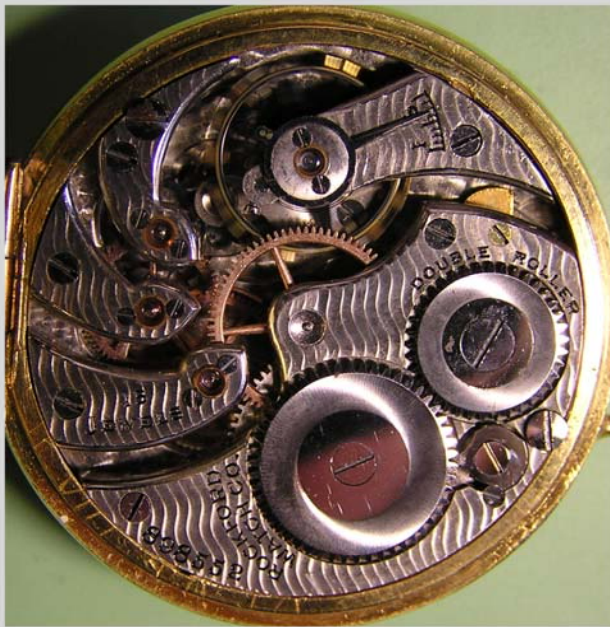
0s Model 1  
3/4 plate (three finger bridge)  
Stem wind and pendant set  
Hunter #851383 Grade 190



0s Model 1 Special (writer's classification)  
3/4 plate Hunter #645327 Grade 162  
Stem wind and pendant set  
Made primarily for Sears Roebuck Co. who sold it  
under the Plymouth Watch Company brand



0s Model 2  
3/4 plate (three finger bridge)  
Open face #898552 Grade unknown  
Stem wind and pendant set



0s Model B (some not marked)  
3/4 plate  
Open face no S/N Grade unknown  
Stem wind and pendant set



## Dials

Rockford dials were made by various North American companies as well as those located in Switzerland. Fraunhoff (2004) states that Rockford made dials in 1887. The dials shown in the plates below are meant to serve as a general representation of what can be found on Rockford movements. They are by no means meant to show everything that can be found on Rockford watches. Most dials are porcelain except those labeled as 'm' for 'metal'. The metal dials are painted or frosted and have chapter rings and logos stenciled or paint stamped. Porcelain dials are generally described as being flat (f), single sunk (ss), or double sunk (ds). Sunk (sunken) means the dial has more than one elevation to its surface. This is accomplished by soldering a round plate section where the main dial has been cut out. Soldering this plate, for example a seconds dial, on to the back (foot side) of the main dial makes it offset to the main dial, thus producing a sunken area when viewed from the front. Repeating this process in the center of the main plate will produce a second sunken area. Keep in mind that some dials appear to be single or double sunk but are not. They are merely painted to give the appearance of being that way. Sometimes the only way one can confirm whether it is sunken or painted is to view the item closely at an angle or, better yet, from the back to check for soldered areas. This is one area where photos of dials can be deceiving. Metal dials usually have their designs pressed into them.

# 18s/16s Rockford Dials



# 18s/16s Rockford Dials (cont)



# 18s/16s Rockford Dials (cont)





# 18s/16s Rockford Dials (cont)



SS

courtesy of Fred Hansen



ds

courtesy of Fred Hansen



ds

metal



ds



SS

# 12s and Smaller Dials



# Smaller Rockford Dials (cont)



## Cases

Rockford purchased cases from various watch companies and case makers as well as produced its own. The Rockford Watch Case Company was organized in 1872 and incorporated in 1874. The Northwestern Watch Case Company moved from Racine, Wisconsin to Rockford, Ill., probably around 1878, and became The Rockford Watch Case Company in 1883(Ehrhardt, 1976(b), p.66) and operated until 1915 (Ehrhardt, 1976(b), p.68). It was located on the second floor of a building located at 112-116 N. Main Street (Figure 3) until the 1890's and then located at 658 Race Street after 1897 but prior to 1913 (Seikel, verbal communication, 2008). It is listed as the New Rockford Watch Case Company on a map of the Sanborn Map Company 1913 collection (Seikel, 2008). There were sixty employees and \$50,000 in sales in 1880. James S. Ticknor was president, John Barnes VP and A. K. Ticknor Secretary (Browne and Rowe, 1891 and Olson, 1971). Some cases stamped with the Rockford logo are presented below and are presumed to be products of the company. However, I am not excluding the idea that another watch case company could have stamped a Rockford logo on to cases as requested and then purchased by the Rockford Watch Company. Or, cases were made by various companies, sent to watch companies for fitting and then stamped by the watch company (Ehrhardt, 1976(a), p. 95). The quantity and extent of production by the Rockford Watch Case Company are not known.



Figure 3. Rockford Watch Case Factory located on second floor. (Rockford Public Library, Rockford, Ill.)

# Rockford Manufactured Cases

18s Muckle convertible (hunter and open face)



Detail of impression on Muckle Case



12s open face case showing Rockford inscription on curvette (faint impression)



Os hunter case showing Rockford inscription on curvette



# Rockford Cases (cont)

Ladies 0s pocket watch / wrist watch



Back view. Note: crown swivels to accomodate wrist movement.



Ladies 0s opera case



Front view of Ladies 0s opera case



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