

## **Gary Screw and Bolt Company Records—Personnel Record Series**

**CRA 261**

**8.00 Linear Feet, 16 Boxes**

**Arranged and Described by Martha Latko**

Recognized as one of the few early Gary industries independent of the U.S. Steel Corporation, the Gary Screw and Bolt Company enjoyed a successful seventy-five year life in northwest Indiana. In 1911, a group of Pittsburgh Screw and Bolt Corporation executives founded the Gary Screw and Bolt Company of Indiana on twenty acres of vacant land along East 7th Avenue. Production began in 1912 with 75-100 workers. In 1925, the Gary Company expanded to include the Continental Bolt and Iron Works in Chicago; five years later, the firm acquired the Hammond Bolt and Nut Company. Eventually, the Chicago and Hammond operations were consolidated at the Gary plant. The Company's executive offices remained in the Peoples Gas Building at 122 S. Michigan Avenue in Chicago.

By 1940, the plant became known as one of the largest manufacturers of bolt, nut, and rivet products in the country, including threaded rods and special fasteners. Railroads, capital goods manufacturers the automotive and farm machinery industries, and steel construction fabricators constituted the major customers at the Company. During optimum conditions, 4,000 tons of finished product per month were produced at the Gary plant; employment grew to 700 workers.

In 1947, a major fire resulted in a forty percent reduction in plant output. The disaster resulted from a short circuit in a crane runway, when a spark flew on to a wood housing over machinery; one worker suffered minor burns. In 1951, company directors authorized a one million dollar modernization and expansion program for the Gary plant complex, and by 1956, 900 persons worked for Gary Screw and Bolt.

By the 1980s, the company had been acquired by the Modulus Division of RBS Industries and had enjoyed a prosperous history. Unfortunately, the economic climate had changed, and the Gary plant had become unprofitable, particularly because of imports. In April 1986, RBS filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, and won the right to sell the Gary plant's equipment to a liquidator. The plant officially closed its doors on December 31, 1986.

The Personnel Records Series in the collection comprises index cards detailing various data about employees at the Gary, Indiana plant. This information has been input into a database which includes all or some of the following items: Last name; first name; date of birth; age; place of birth; gender; race; hire date; quit date; occupation; nationality; previous job; previous occupation; and other miscellaneous data.

If you locate a record of interest and would like a copy, please contact the Calumet Regional Archives at Indiana University Northwest at 219-980-6628 or email archivist Stephen McShane at [smcshane@iun.edu](mailto:smcshane@iun.edu).