

18 Size Rockford Watches

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WITH A BIT OF DETAILS

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Why Only 18s Movements?

- *Most Documented Size*
- *Reveals Company Development Best*
 - *Collectors Preference*

Plan Of Attack

- *General Background*
 - *Production*
- *Models With Some Detail*
- *Other Details (Upgrading, Indicator, Two-Tone, Prototype)*
 - *Cases and Dials*
 - *Summary*

Background

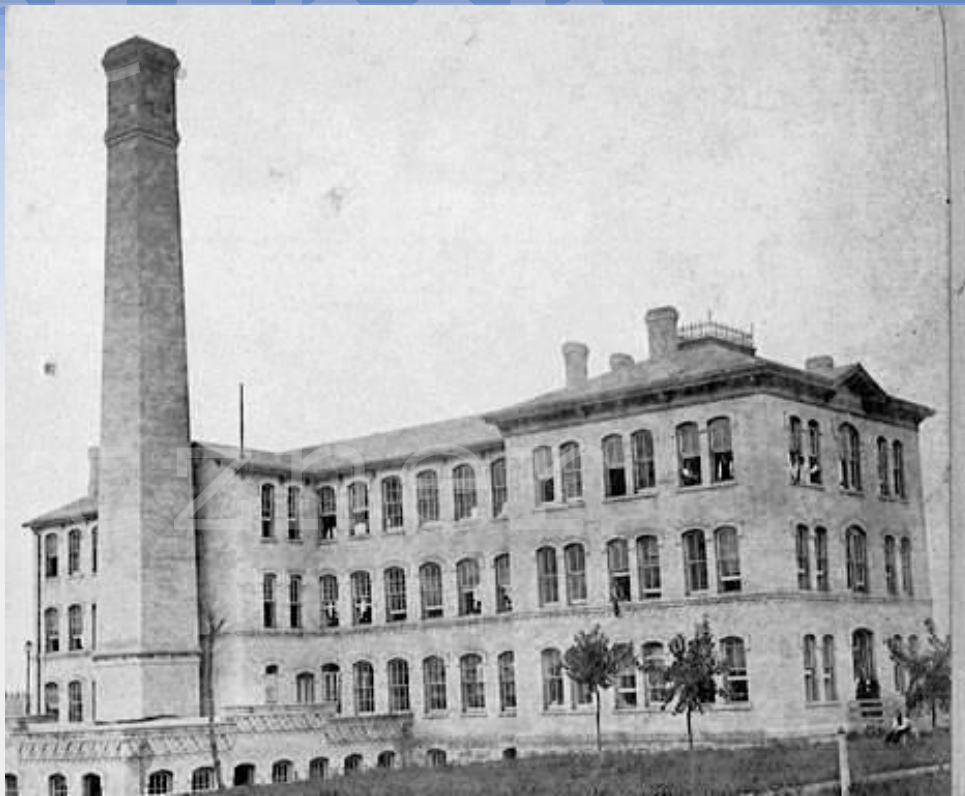
Rockford watch production began in early 1876 with a temporary hiatus occurring in 1896 to 1901 due to a nationwide recession that, no doubt, had an effect on watch sales. During this hiatus at least 30 employees continued watch production (most likely on existing and/or requested orders). Then two principles of the Illinois Watch Case Company (Jacob Franks and Max C. Eppenstein) took ownership in 1901, changed it a Limited (Ltd) company, and continued with watch production until 1915.

It is reported that about 300 employees were producing 120 movements a day in the year 1888 which is considered a period of significant production (170 employees in 1903). All were “quick (fast) train” movements (18,000 bph).

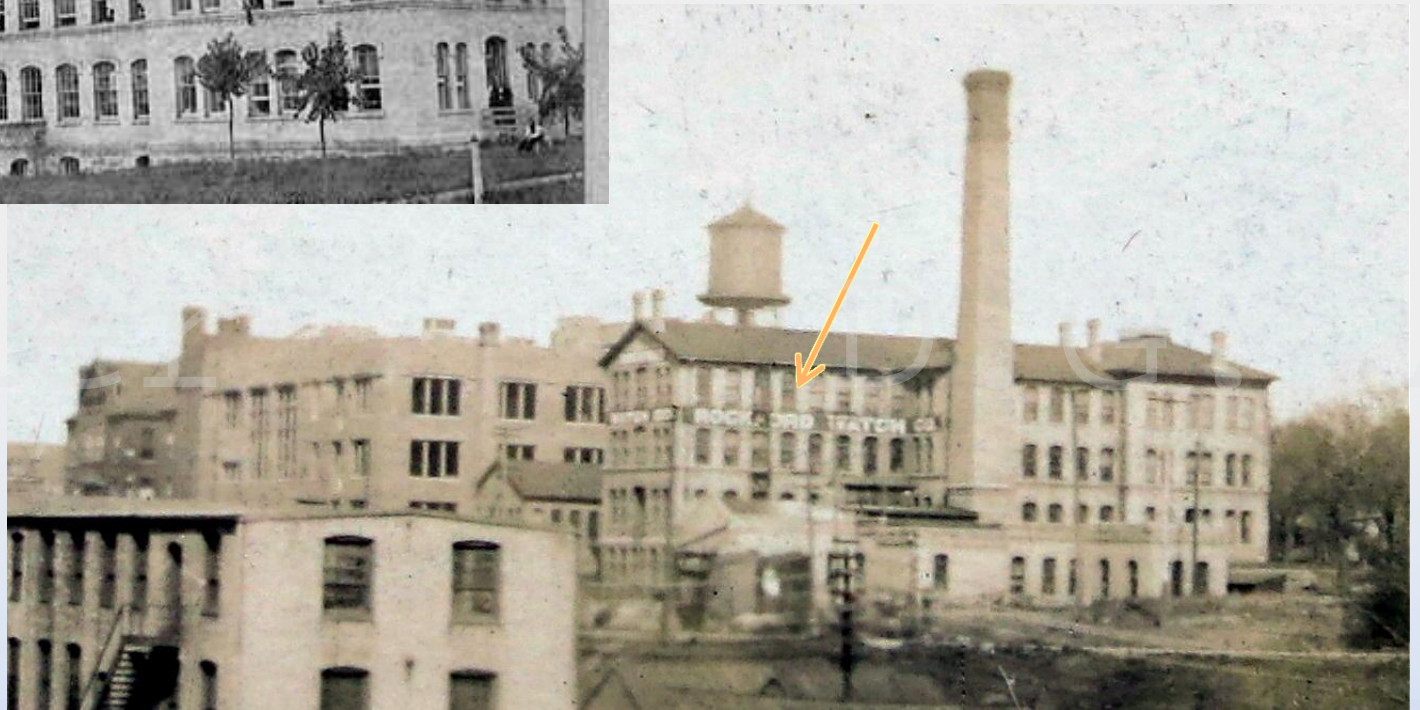
Rockford, Illinois

(located approximately 90 miles NW of Chicago)

~1885



Rear Views



rtzner

D.G.A



Rear View

Recent

D.G.A



Front View

rtzner

D.G.A

Conventional Jeweled Watches

	1880	1900	1930
• Elgin	700,000	9,000,000	33,000,000
• Waltham	1,500,000	9,000,000	27,000,000
• Illinois	190,000	1,000,000	5,300,000
• Hampden	200,000	1,300,000	4,600,000
• Hamilton	-	100,000	2,500,000
• Rockford	50,000	100,000	938,000*
• Howard	50,000	100,000	250,000
• Lancaster	50,000	150,000	150,000
• U.S. Marion	20,000	-	20,000
• Newark	13,000	-	13,000

* Highest SN recorded (937,424, Seikel 2001)

M.C. Harrold, 1984

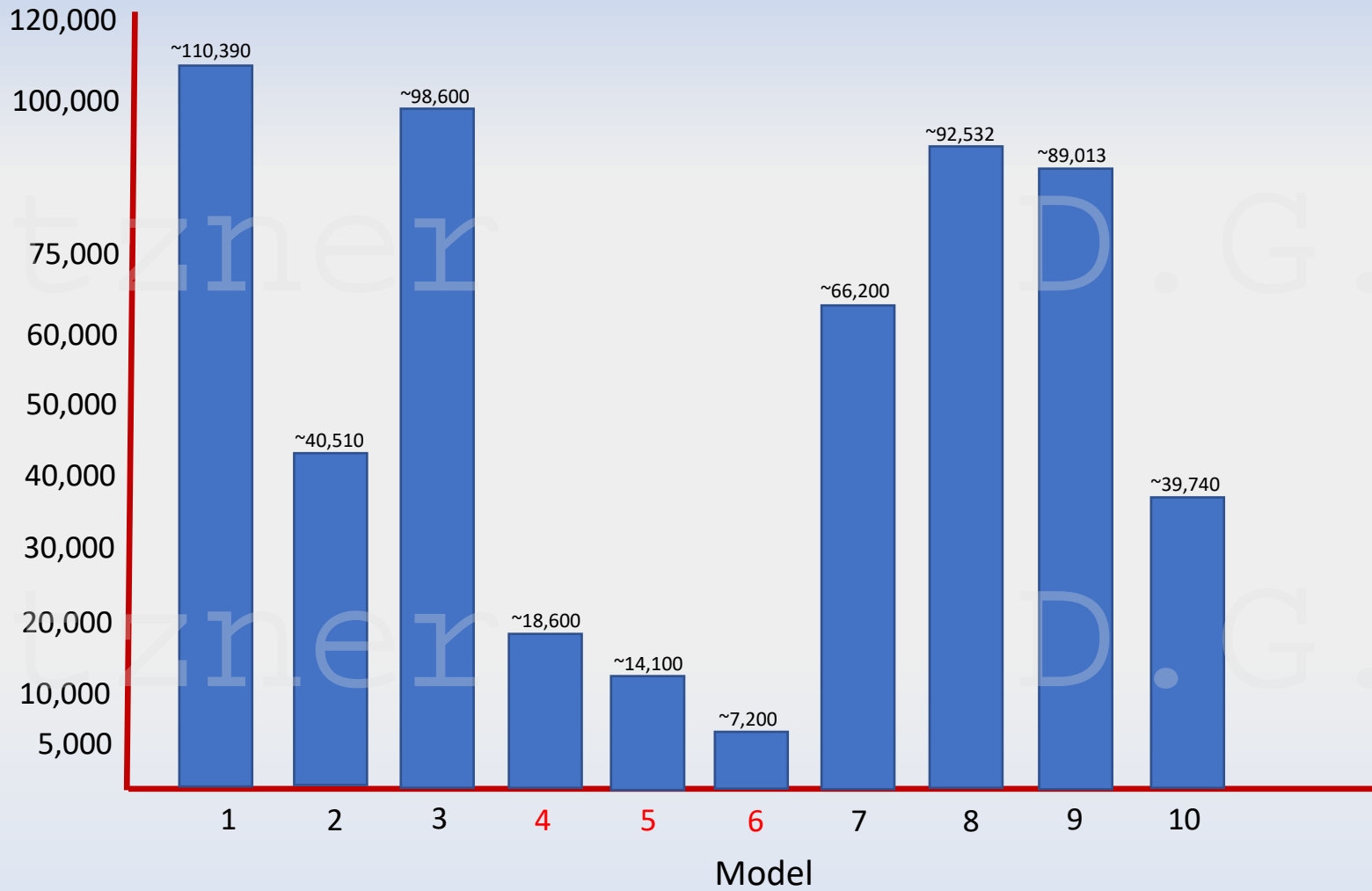
Total Production

Size	Models (types)	Grades	Production*	Runs
18	10	109*	514,933	631
16	7	62	207,663	339
14	1?	?	150?	4?
12	2	17	49,700	79
8	2	0	13,100	1
6	2	8	18,800	26
0	3	14	48,800	60
3/0	2	?	40?	4?
?	?	?	84,744	?

*approximate

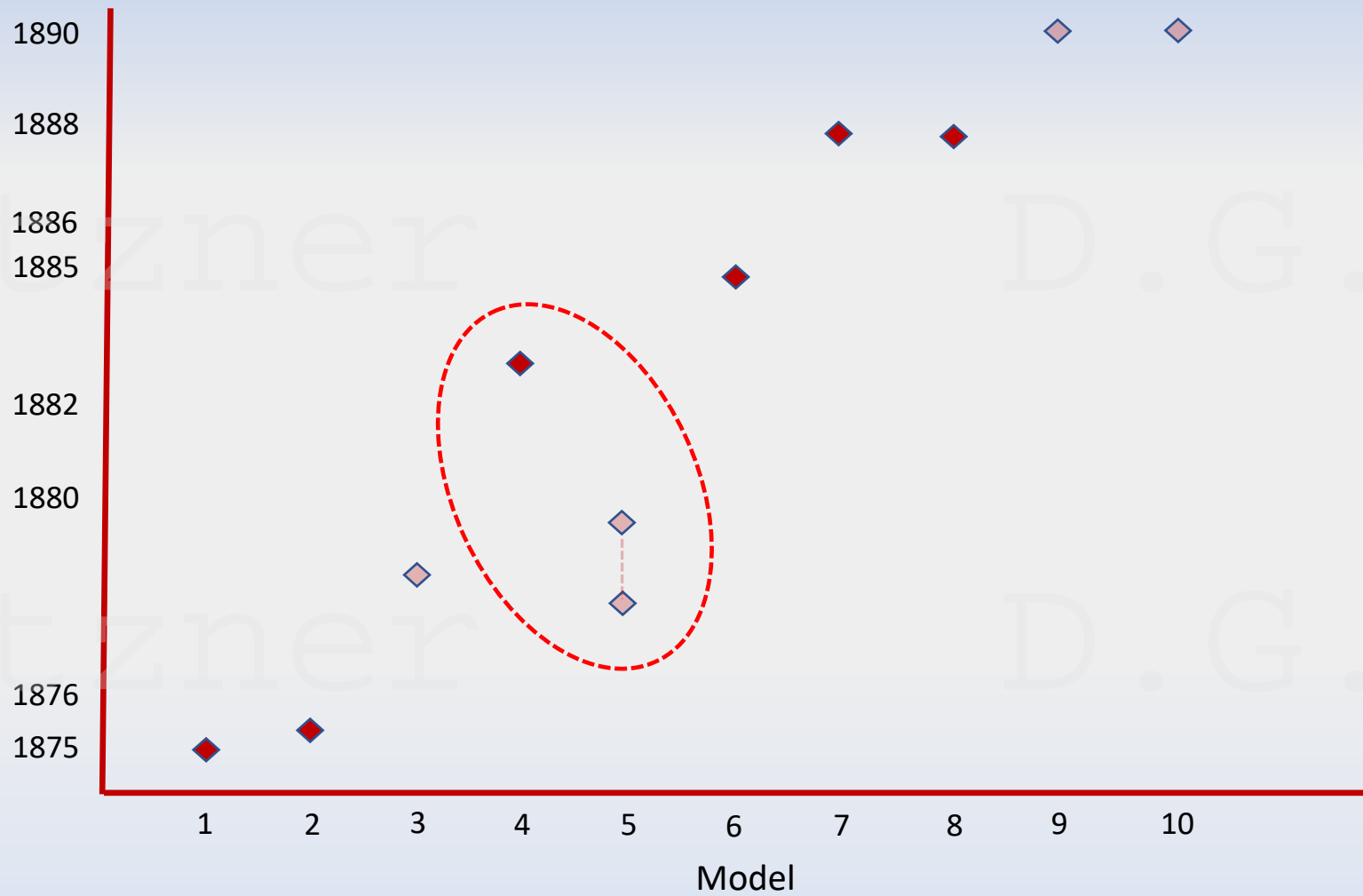
Total 938,000*

18s Model Production



Totals obtained from Pocket Watch Database website

18s Model Introduction



◇ = approximate

18s Grades

	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Produced*</i>
<i>Company Assigned</i>		
	66	268,523
<i>Informal</i>		
	43	246,410
<i>Total</i>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	109	514,933

*= approximate

Early Grading

18s M1 grade A (9J)



18s M1 grade B (11J)



18s M1 grade C (15J)



(Recorded in both Models 1 and 2)

18s Models 1 & 2



Model 1 = Key wind and set

One case screw



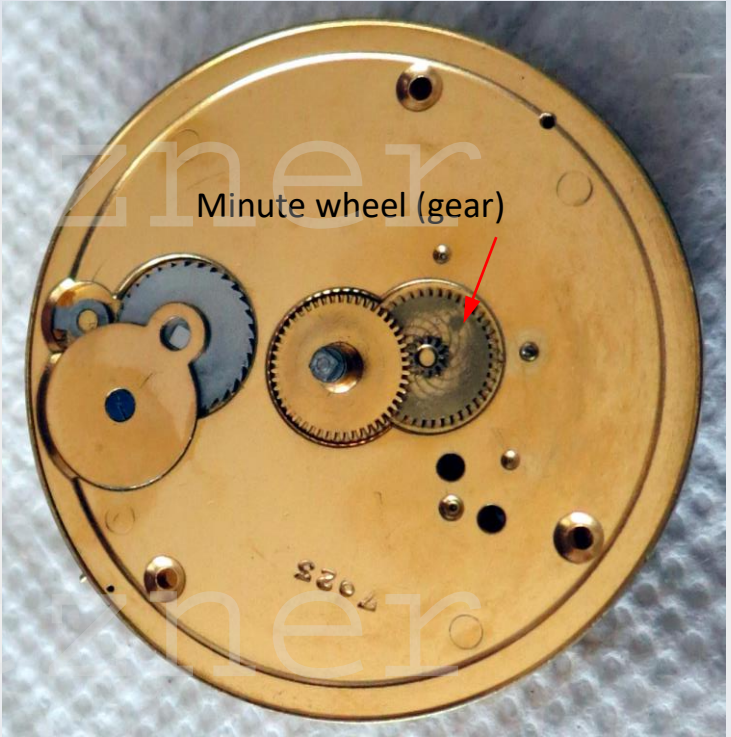
Model 2 = Key\stem wind and key\lever set

Two case screws (usually)

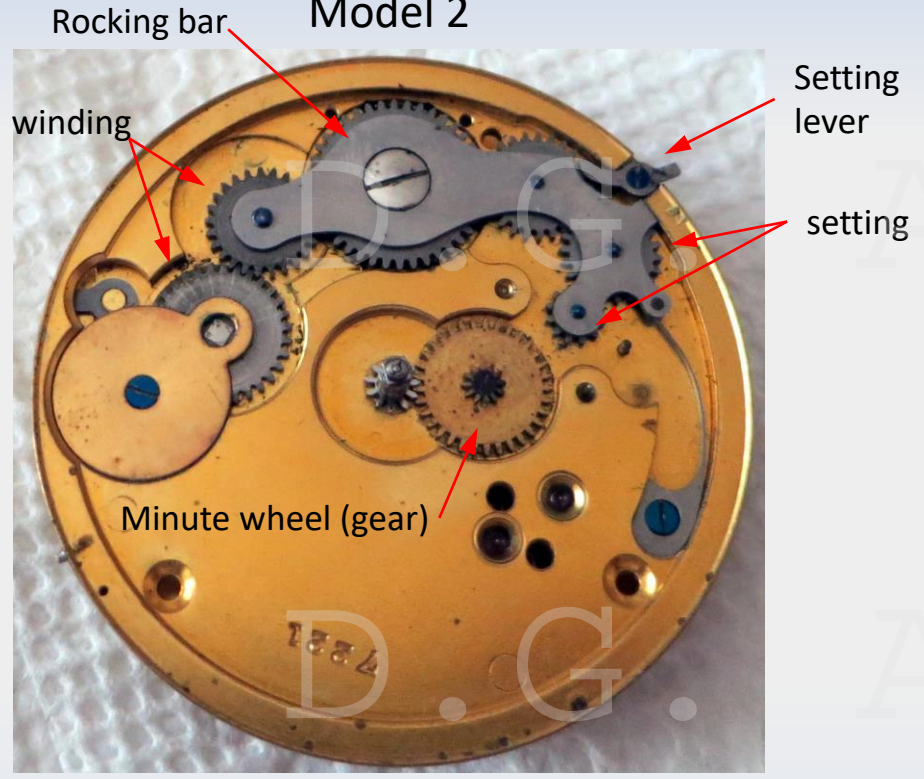
"transitional" term = M2

Dial Plates

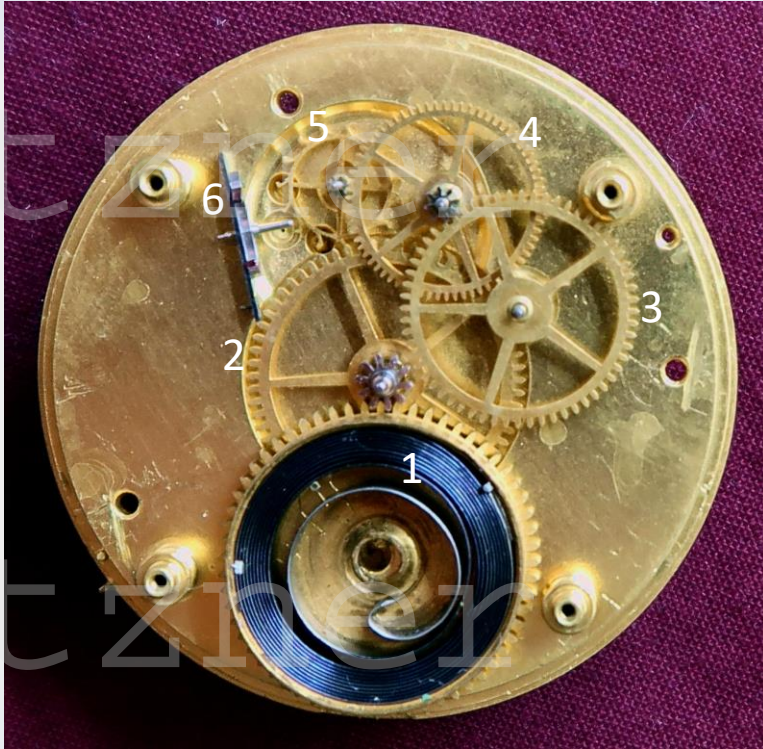
Model 1



Model 2



Standard Power Train



1. Main Spring barrel – 1st Wheel
2. Center Wheel or 2nd wheel
3. 3rd Wheel

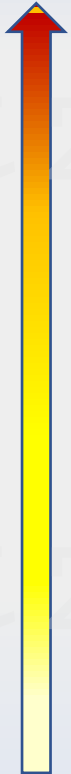


4. 4th Wheel – seconds hand arbor
5. Escape Wheel
6. Pallet Fork

'Ruby Jewels'

Models 1 and 2

Greater



Desirability

19 Ruby Jewel

19 Ruby

15 Ruby Jewel

15 Ruby

*17R

**15R

*(Only model 3)

** (On models 2, 3, 4, and 6)

19 Ruby Jewels and Ruby (Adjusted)



Pre 1882



Production (Prod): M1 and M2 ~290

15 Ruby Jewels and Ruby (Adjusted)



1876

Offered in nickel and gilt by 1882

Prod: M1 ~40 and M2 ~200

'EXTRA'



Standard 9 Jewel movement



EXTRA = 9J has jewels positioned on escape and pallet.

(11J & 13J EXTRA have paired escape and pallet jewels.)

And, we have Confusion

THE RAIL ROAD WATCH. 7

15 Jewels.



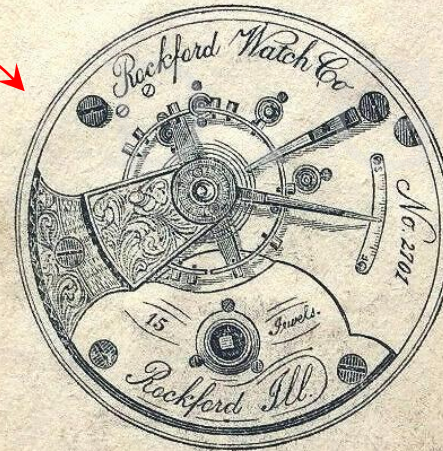
Jeweled in Settings.

This is a full-jeweled watch, is regulated closely, and has given satisfaction to all who have carried it. It has no superior among full-plate watches of like grade. This movement constitutes the regular standard of full jeweled American watches, is inferior to none of them, and can confidently be relied upon for the ordinary service of a business man's time-keeper. When tried has never been found wanting.

8

ROCKFORD WATCH COMPANY.

15 Jewels—Plain.

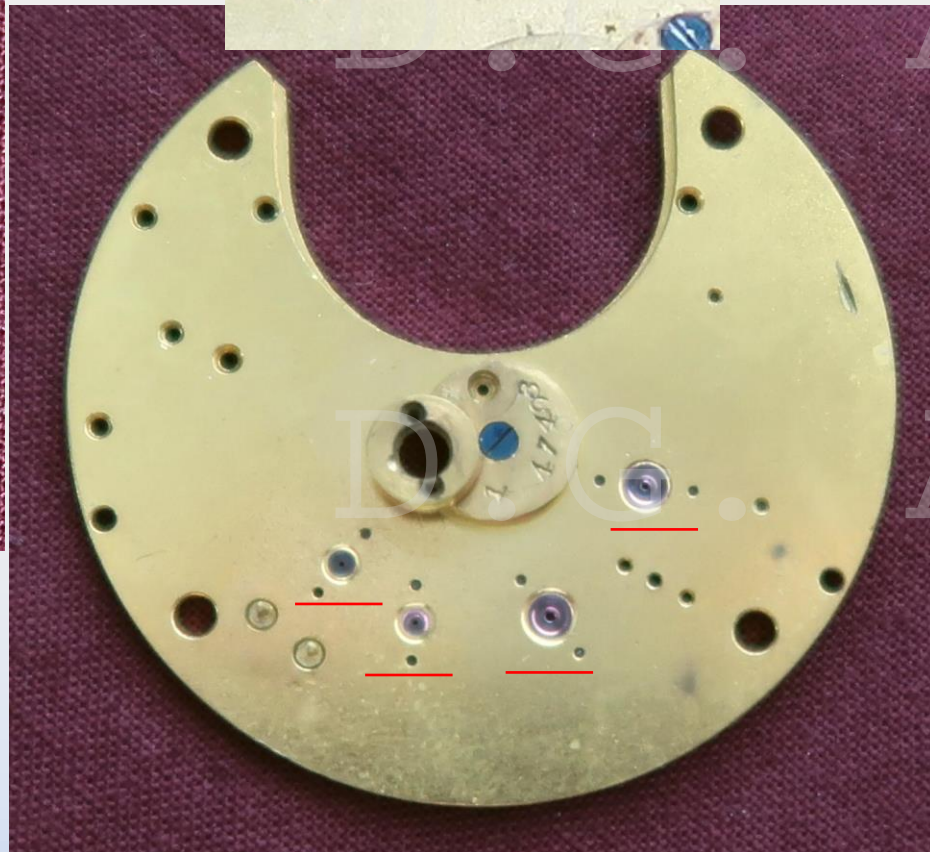
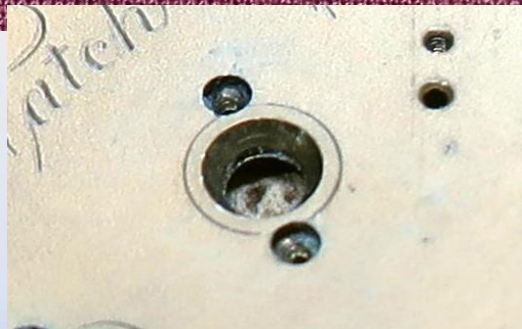


This watch differs from the preceding in one respect only; the jewels are set directly in the plate, instead of being, as in our other full-jeweled movements, first fixed in a separate setting. As a time-keeper it has met with general approval.

This is a substantial and elegant movement, and, like the good wife of whom the poet sang, is:

“ A creature not too great or good
For human nature's daily food.”

Faux Bezel Jewel Settings



18s Models 3 - 4

M3

Beginning of lever set/stem wind only.

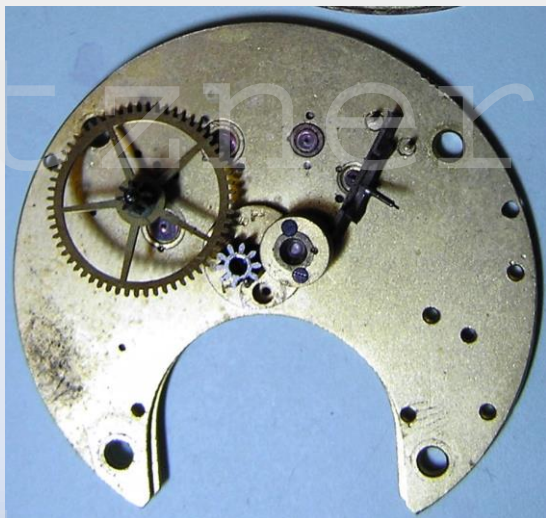
However, some have 'shortened square tip' canon pinion (probably adapted existing stock).



M4

"Open Face"

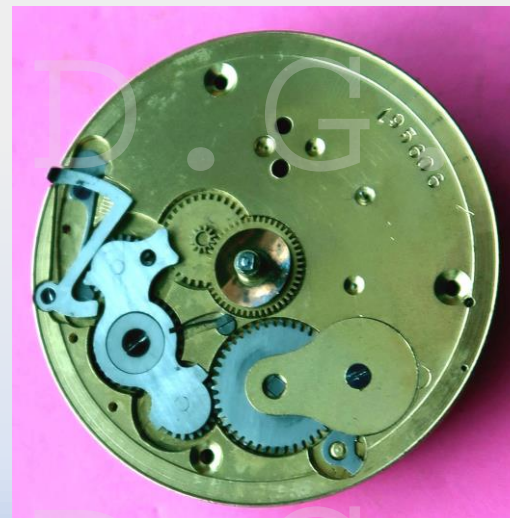
Inner side Top Plate



Inner side Dial (Pillar) Plate



Top side Dial Plate



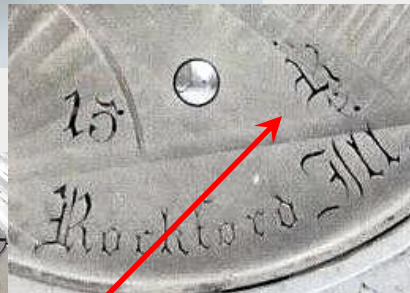
Model 3 15R - 17R (Adjusted)



~1884

Earliest 17j TT

Prod: 100



R = described as
Old German, Old
English, Gothic,
stylized and fancy.

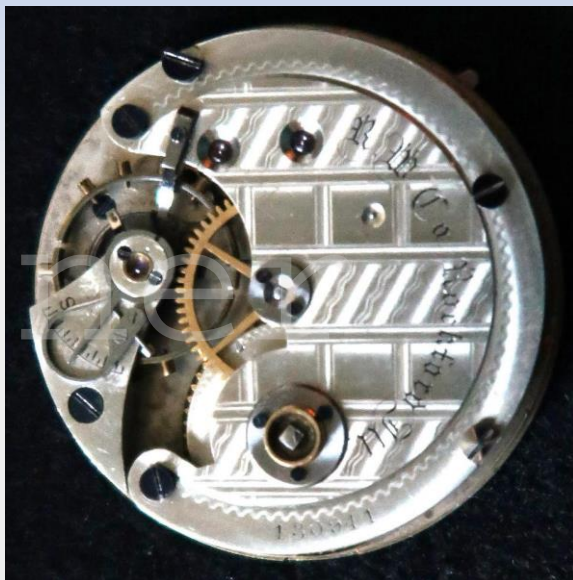
Grade 40 15J R nickel movements
(107,85x, 241801 – 241900)

Grade 40 17J R two-tone (241901-242000 only).

18s Models 5 - 6

M5

3/4 plate



M6

"New Model"



18s Models 7 - 10

M7



Open Face

M9



*"Model
Of
1888"*

M8



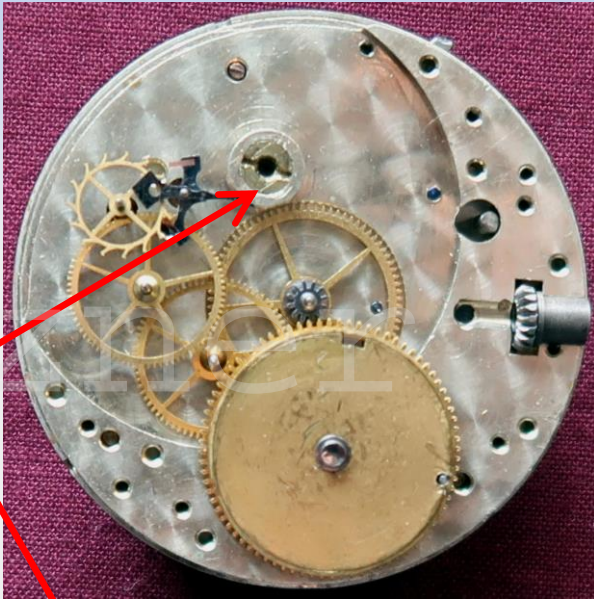
Hunting

M10



Power Train

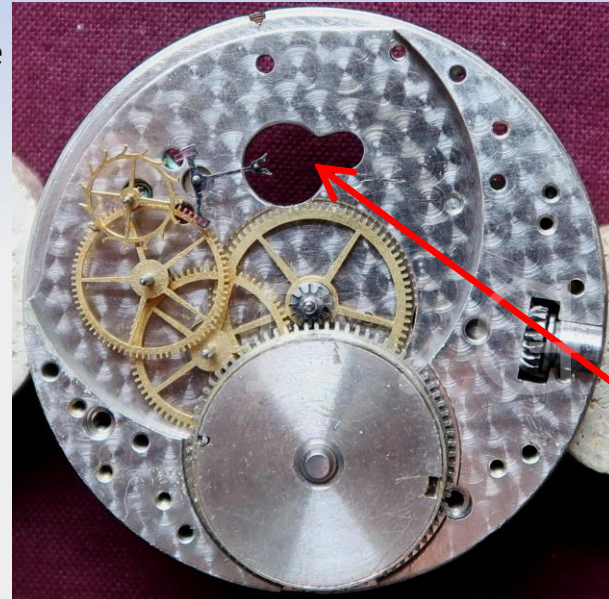
M7



Lower
balance
jewels

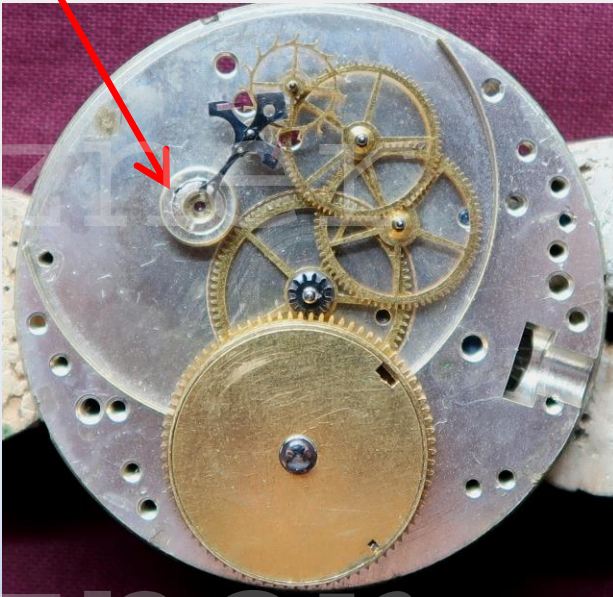
Open Face

M9



Opening to
accommodate
top plate
potence
containing
lower balance
jewels.

M8



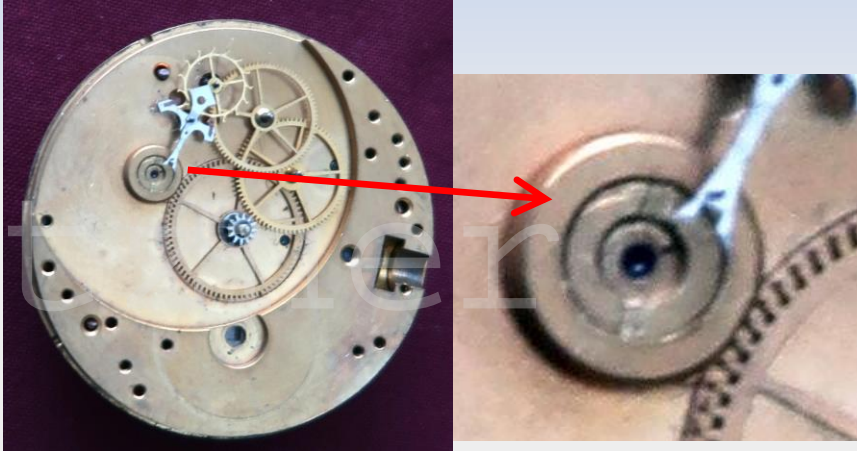
Hunting

M10

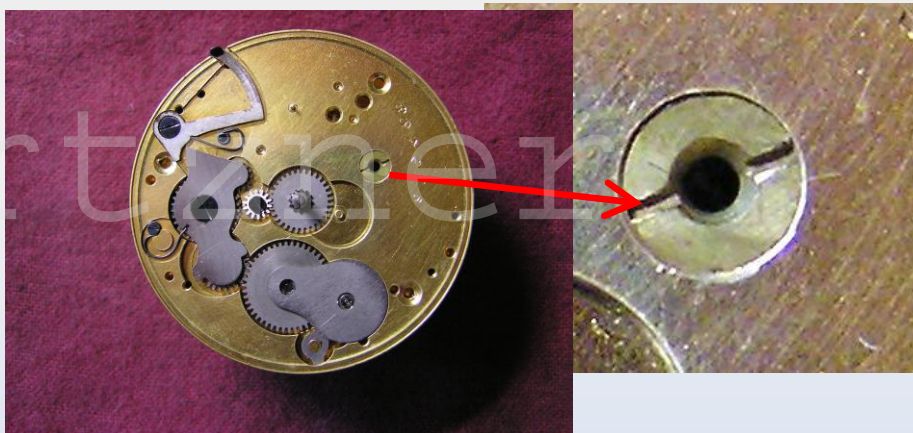
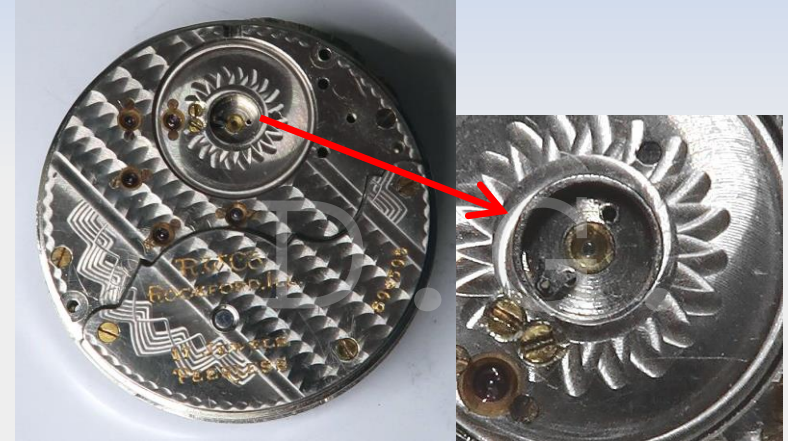


(Lower) Balance Jewel Comparison

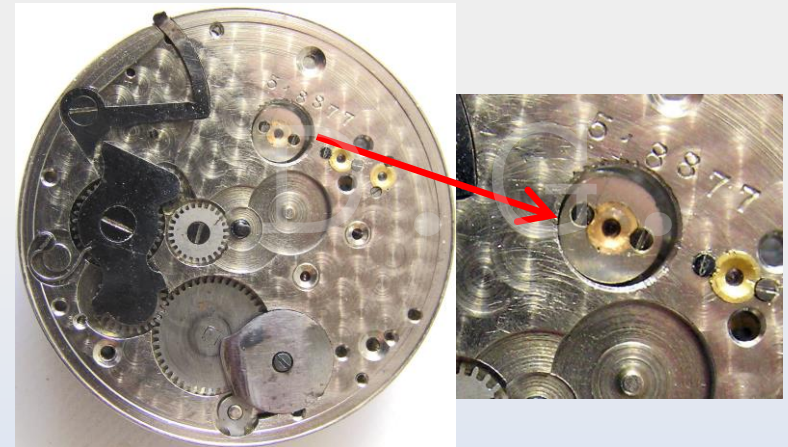
Models 7,8



Models 9,10



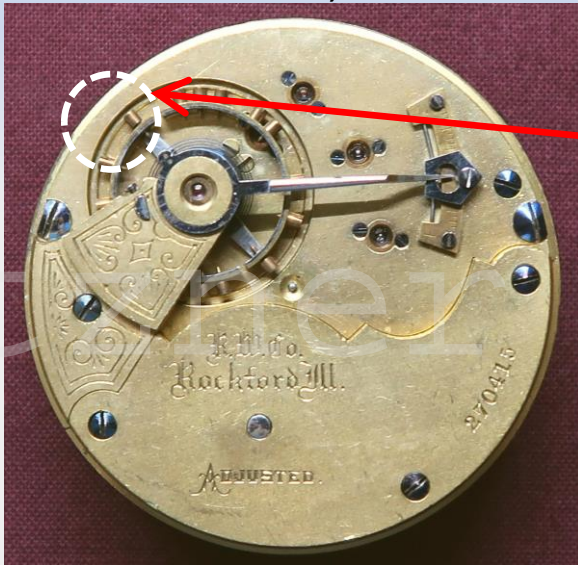
Threaded disk



Potence

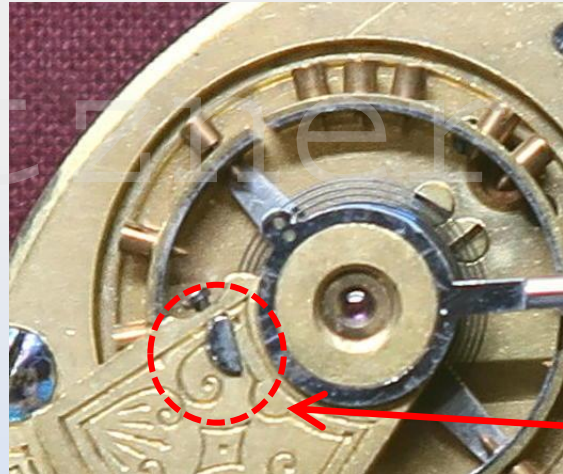
Adjustment Groove and Hair Spring Stud

Models 7,8

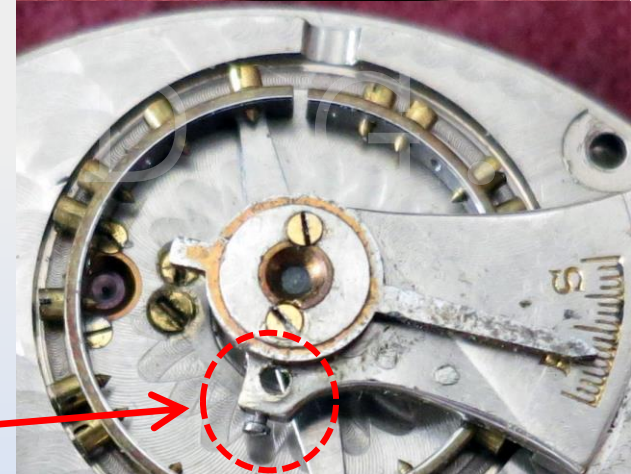


Groove Location
'To have or not to have'

Models 9,10

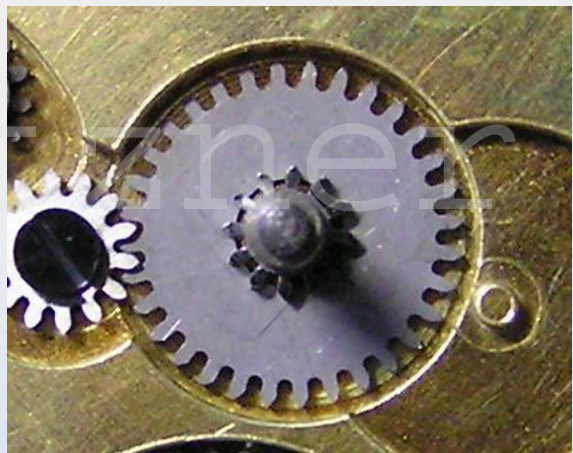


Hair spring stud
shape and position



Canon Pinion Comparison

Models 7,8

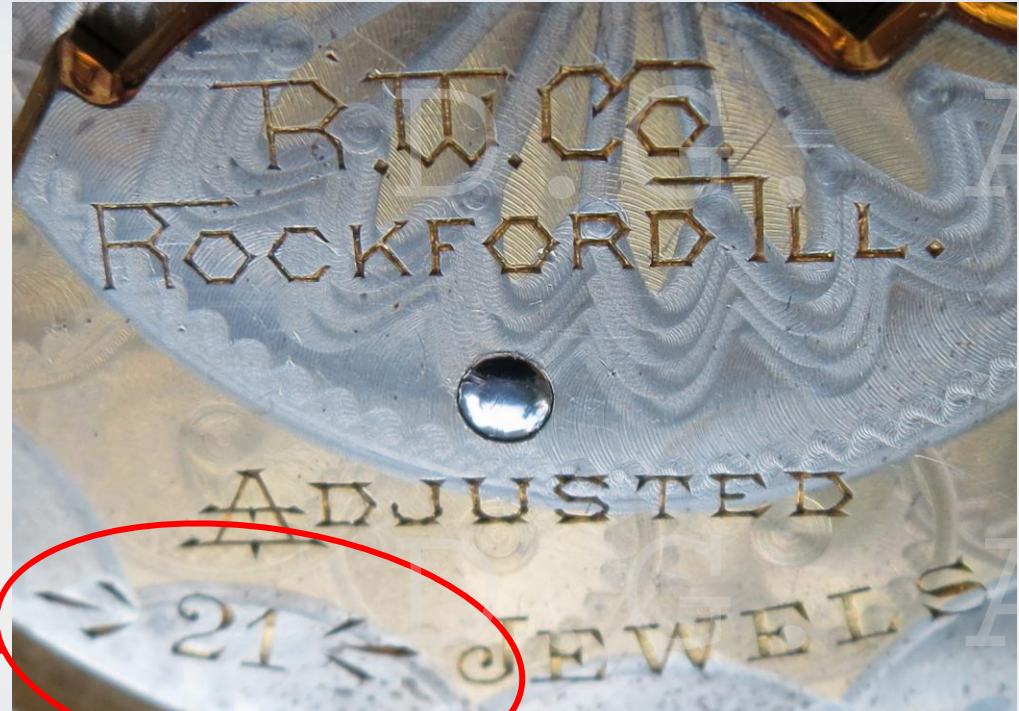


Models 9,10



Other -Upgrading (21J)

Models 7 & 8



Prod: est. 40

**Jewel count bounded by -> <- which indicates upgrading (exc. Some Private Labels)
Grades 61 and 81 (16-17J) used to upgrade to 21 and 22J. (~ 1897)**

Upgrading (22J)

M8



Identified in ranges: 4307xx, 4308xx, 4347xx, 4371xx, 4377xx. With some private labels throughout.

The range 437xxx dates to approximately the mid 1890s. Prod: est. 50

Note: raised jewel settings.

Highest Production Jewel Count

24 Jewels (~1898-1900; later?)



18s M10 g800

Prod: 500



18s M9 g900

Prod: 1100

25 Ruby Jewels

18s M9 g25

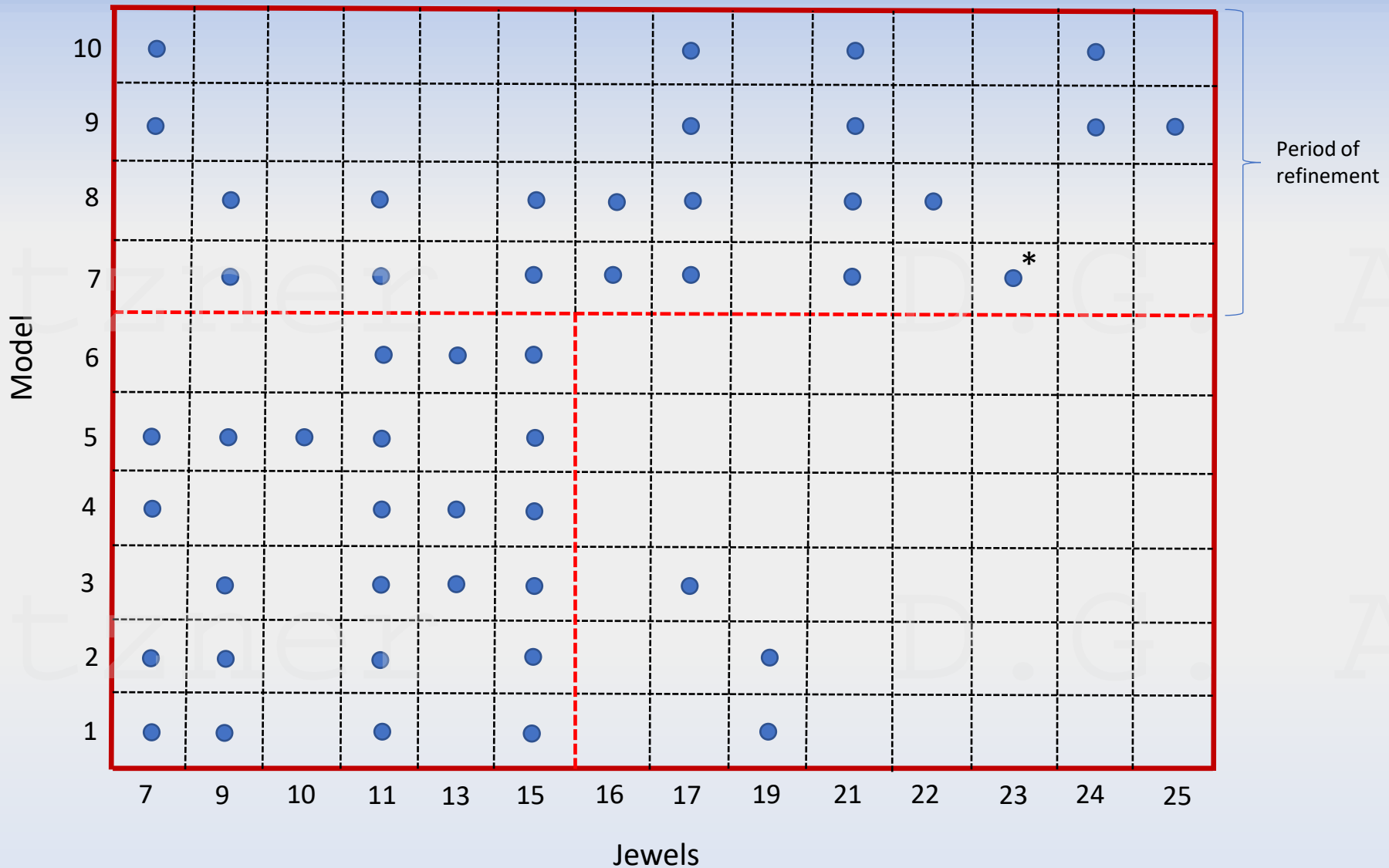
~1900

Prod: 12



PL of (?) H.M. Jacobson & Son, Jewelers for Penn. RR watch inspectors of Philadelphia, Pa.

18s Observed Jewel Counts



* = Only one PL, TT; G.S. Sutterfield, Sault Ste, Marie, ds Arabic color dial, 330844

18s Indicator

Model 9



21J Adj 5 pos Grade 950
Prod: 200

Two Tone Finish

J.P. Waither

Prod 50?

Grade 84

Prod 6,900

L.F. Hussander

Prod 50?



PL?

Rockford utilized a three step method of producing two tone plate finishes.

1. Damascene nickel plate(s).
2. Gild.
3. Damascene complimentary pattern over gilt surface.



Grade 925

Prod 7,900

Prototype



**18s M8 15J Aluminum #13
1888-1900**



Cases

(White metals)



*Rockford Watch Case Co., owner of the Muckle reversible case, had very close ties to RWCo.

Cases

(Gold)



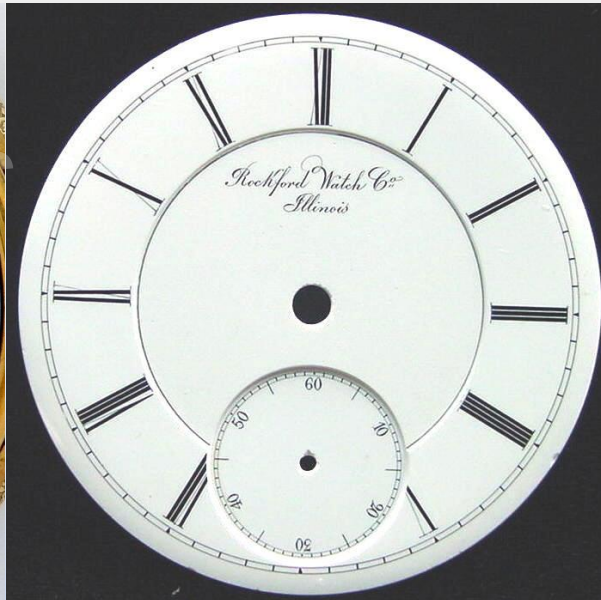
Case brands having Rockford movements : A(merican).W.C.Co, Crescent, Dueber, Elgin WCCo., Fahys, Illinois WCCo, Keystone, Ladd, Philadelphia, Rockford WCCo., Roy & Co., Sears Roebuck & Co., Solidarity, South Bend, Star, and others.

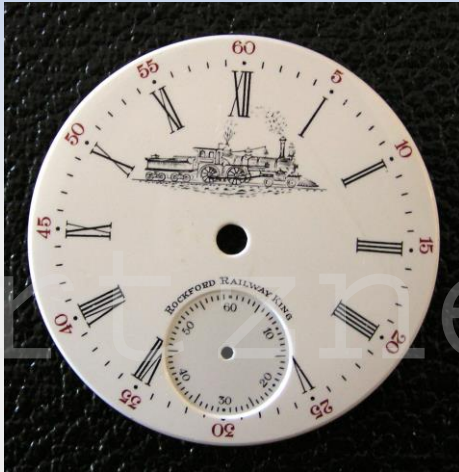
DIALS – Early Styles

Single Sunk

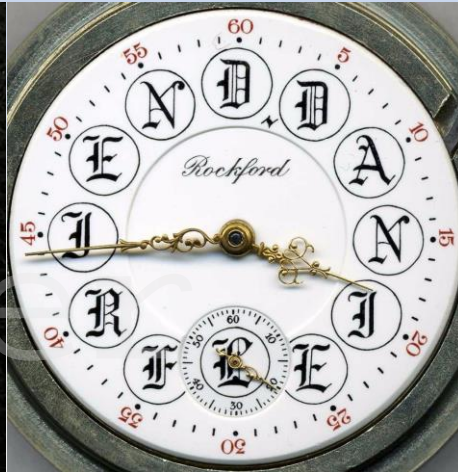


Double Sunk





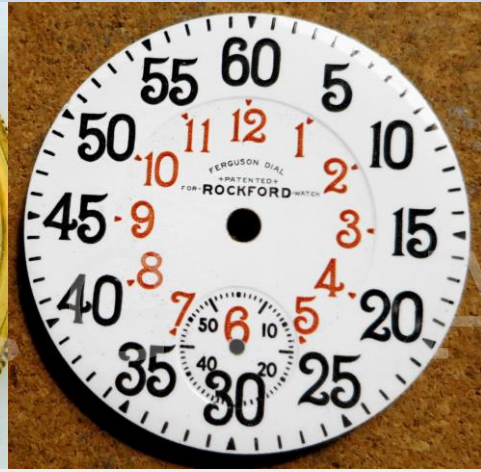
Railway King



Runic



Fancy



Ferguson 8162



Order Railway Conductors



Courtesy F. Hansen

Rockford 'Special'

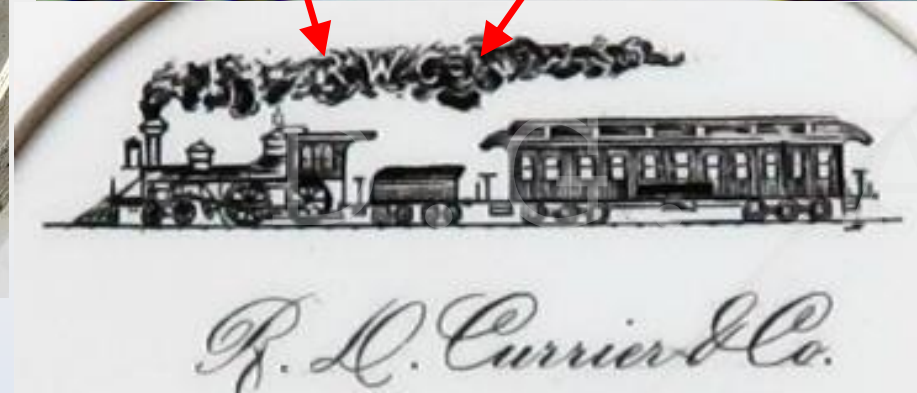


Fancy

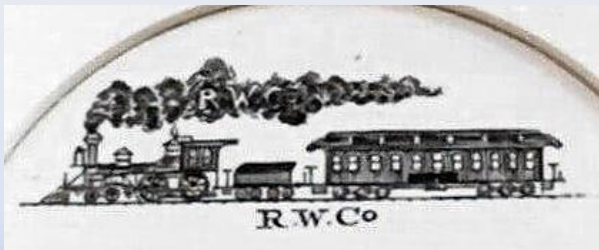


Montgomery

Dials cont



Private Label



Rockford Watch Co.

Summary

- **Over 50% of the RWCo production consisted of 18 size movements.**
- **All are rapid (fast) train movements (18,000 bph).**
- **There are 10 models of 18 size movements with multiple grades in each, however a majority of the earliest models were not assigned ‘formal’ grade numbers or names.**
- **Jewel counts range from 7 to 25 jewels with most early watches 9, 11 or 15J.**
- **Later movements comprise mainly 17 or 21J.**
- **Upgraded, specialized and custom movements resulted in some having 22 to 25 jewels.**
- **The information presented above gives a reasonable review of Rockford’s 18 size watch models but my research continues as there are still missing pieces of the puzzle.....**

The Rockford Watch Company

Thank You!

Questions? Comments?



References

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Ueberall, Ed and Singer, Kent, 2008, "Railroaders' Corner - Wind Indicators, Part 3: Ball & Rockford," NAWCC Bulletin No. 373, April issue, pp. 181-188.

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Artzner, Darrah G., 2016, The Rockford Watch Company And Its Watches, NAWCC Bulletin March/April, No. , pp. 131-160.

Artzner, Darrah, 2021, Rockford Watch Co. Aluminum Prototype, NAWCC Bulletin Vol 63/4, No. 452, pp. 254-260.