

**D**o you have an old Elgin National Watch Company watch you are curious about? The Elgin Historical Museum's volunteer research staff can help. We specialize in Elgin timepieces made between 1867 and the mid 1960s. Whether your watch is a family heirloom or a collectible object, we can provide information that will enrich your enjoyment of it. Watches are more than just timepieces. They reflect the ever changing trends in fashion, plus they are part of an evolving history of manufacturing technology. Watches went from being the size of turnips in the 1860s to as small as your little fingernail in the 1960s. Old watches have interesting stories to tell. Here is a sample of what we can provide.

- ♦ Important details about the watch, such as the age, size, grade, number of jewels, how many were made, and an interpretation of the styling features.
- ♦ A brief history of the Elgin National Watch Company and watchmaking in America. We can show you where your watch fits into the big picture of time keeping.
- ♦ Information about the watch case manufacturer and this interesting industry that grew up alongside companies, like Elgin, which made the movements.
- ♦ Tips on getting appraisals and understanding the monetary, as well as historical value of the watch.
- ♦ Information on how an old-time mechanical watch operated, complete with a representative parts diagram.

*Our materials make an informative packet to keep with your watch and to pass on to your family.*



**USUALLY, THE MORE CLUES WE HAVE, THE MORE INFORMATION WE CAN PROVIDE. HERE'S WHAT WE NEED TO HELP YOU:**

- ♦ Short of actually having the watch in hand, our experts can tell a lot from a good photograph. An image made on a copy machine is an easy way to make a "photograph."
- ♦ The most important thing we need is the serial number for the watch movement (the moving parts of the watch, or where the "gears" are). This is different from the serial number on the case. You can obtain the watch's serial number by looking at the back of the movement. If you cannot figure out how to open the case, ask a jeweler for help. Some cases unscrew, some spring open, others swing out. Do not pry open a watch case.
- ♦ The Elgin National Watch Company used cases from many different manufacturers. These are usually identified by trademarks and other symbols on the case. If you can photograph, photocopy or draw these, we can probably give you more information about the case maker.
- ♦ Seeing an image of the watch also allows us to interpret the design motifs and helps place the watch's styling in historical context.

## POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN USING OUR RESEARCH SERVICES



- ♦ We don't repair or purchase watches. For those services, check with a local jeweler or repair shop. One way to locate a repair shop in your area is through the American Watchmakers & Clockmakers Institute. Their website is [www.awi-net.org](http://www.awi-net.org).
- ♦ We cannot give you an appraisal; that is the job of someone who buys and sells watches. But we **can** give you tips on how to estimate the value of your watch.
- ♦ Generally, we can provide more detailed information on pocket watches than on wrist watches.
- ♦ Elgin produced over 54 million watch movements. These were used on more than 10,000 different combinations of cases, sizes, dials, hands and other features, so there are some things even we can't figure out.
- ♦ The original Elgin National Watch Company went out of business in 1967. The Elgin name lives on, but is used to label imported watches. We do not have the facilities to research these watches. Our services cover Elgin watches made through the mid-1960s. In short, if it has a battery, it's NOT a watch we can help you with.

## RESEARCH FEE

\$15.00 *per watch*

Make checks payable to the  
ELGIN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Be sure to include your phone number  
and/or e-mail address  
in case we have follow-up questions

## TO REACH US . . .

By mail . . . Elgin Area Historical Society  
360 Park Street ♦ Elgin, IL 60120

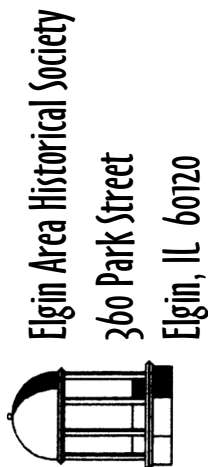
By phone . . . (847) 742-4248

By fax . . . (847) 931-6199

By internet . . . [www.elginhistory.org](http://www.elginhistory.org)

**Y**our research fees are used for postage and copying, of course, but also to build our research library so that we can improve our ability to help you and others. All our watch experts volunteer their time.

We also offer research services in other areas of Elgin history and genealogy.



# WATCH RESEARCH SERVICES

*for*  
Elgin National Watch  
Company  
*products*



*Provided by the  
Elgin Area Historical Society*