

# Guide to the **BorgWarner/Morse Collection**

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## **Collection Number V-64-1-1**

### COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Tompkins County's largest manufacturing industry was founded by the Morse brothers in 1880 in Trumansburg as the Morse Equalizing Spring Company, makers of horse drawn carts and buggy springs. In 1892 their patented rocker joint was used to produce a successful bicycle chain, leading to incorporation as the Morse Chain Company in 1898. As in its earliest years, Morse has thrived on making new and improved products to serve rapidly changing U.S. industries. Development of a silent power chain in 1901 led to construction of an 80,000-square-foot plant on Ithaca's South Hill for manufacturing chain and other products for the automotive industry. In the teen years plant size was quadrupled and various products included adding machines, electric clocks and, most famously, airplanes for U.S. forces in World War I. In 1928 Morse Chain joined the BorgWarner Corporation, newly formed by several makers of auto parts and other products. The Morse operations, as leading suppliers for automotive and other industries, continued to grow and plants were added abroad. In 1983 BorgWarner sold the Morse Industrial Products Division and the Ithaca plant on Aurora Street to Emerson Electric Company and moved Morse Automotive and related operations to the large Warren Road complex, newly built in nearby Lansing.

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