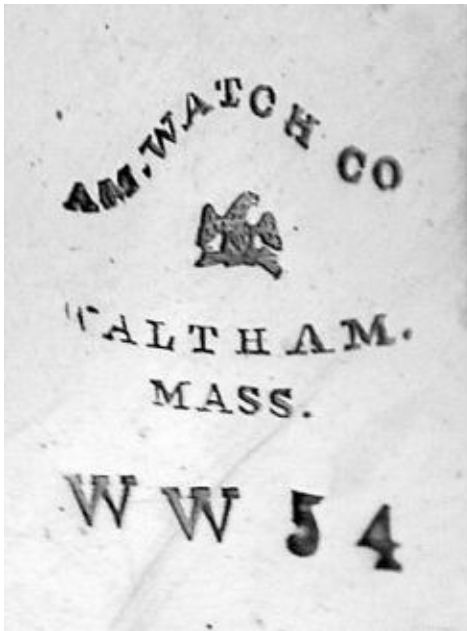


# Waltham Model 57 Pocket Watch Cases

by Ron Price (SC)

When recording Model 57 movements over the past 20 some years, I also captured case information for Waltham cases that potentially could be original. I thought in time maybe I could observe some pattern of case numbers, like approximate date of manufacture based on the date of the movement. The Serial Number Ledger, reference 1 in "[Origins of the Waltham Model 57](#)" was used for dating movements. The results are a little disappointing, although might be interesting to some collectors; however, user be ware, this isn't an exact science.

I tabulated three case signatures into tables; [AT&Co](#), [AM Watch Co Eagle](#), and [Am Watch Co Warranted](#). Shown are tables sorted by movement serial number (on a PC right click links to open new tab). These are silver cases. My so-called Eagle cases are commonly known as "inch worm" cases because of their design.



Examples of Eagle and Warranted hallmarks, "warranted" could be either coin or sterling.

One nasty problem is that the originality of the cases is unreliable; many movements were obviously re-cased. The other problem is that only AT cases have numeric IDs, the other two have alpha numeric IDs. I see no pattern emerging with the latter two whether I sort by date, ID number, movement grade or OF-versus-HC. I didn't always record weights so I can't sort by weight. For example, on the Eagle table, I see no way of knowing that HC Eagle B159 on AT movement #42451 was made in June of '62 whereas B174 on AT #18943 was made in August '59. An anomaly is recorded on the Warranted table. PSB #68791 was made 02'66 whose neighbors were made in '63, number(s) like #204192 was made 02'66; but this is what is recorded in the Serial Number Ledger.

I suppose the alpha numeric stamps on the AM Eagle and Am Warranted cases could be up to the whim of the workers in the case room (e.g., who made the case or for an unknown mysterious pattern). Maybe a reader will figure it out.

Considering that the Appleton Tracy & Company agreed to reorganize as the American Watch Company on January 1, 1859, which became official February 17, 1859, Am Eagle and Am Warranted cases on movements dated 1857 and 1858 are likely re-cased. Of course we have to keep in mind that a movement made on a given date could have been sold and cased at a much later date. There might be other clues about the watch to help determine originality.

A lot of AT&Co cases go well into 1859 and overlap AM Eagle case dates. I don't think this is surprising. It would take time for the case room to transition to the new Am signatures; plus, potentially having a good number of AT cases in stock and the desire to continue the AT name (e.g., to match the AT signature on the movement).

An observation that was surprising to me is that many Eagle case dates overlap Warranted case dates. The examples on the tables do seem to indicate that the production of Eagle cases preceded the Warranted cases, and the Eagle cases have a shorter lifetime. But why would the Waltham factory produce two different signed silver cases for the same model movement?

I think I have an explanation. Consider the following historic events (references given in "Origins"):

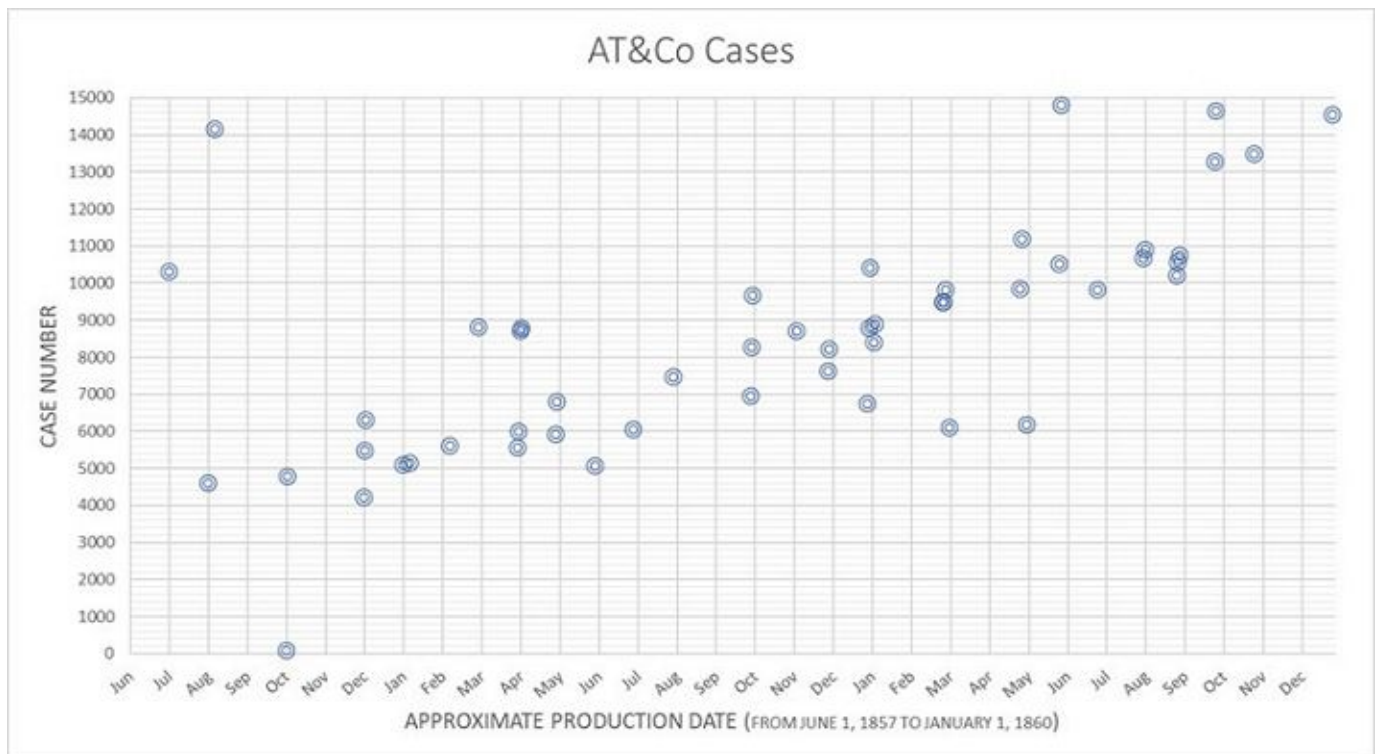
- N.P. Stratton designed the thinner 3/4-plate Model 1859 (KW18) in November of 1859 to compete with the upcoming Nashua Watch Company.
- The AWCo acquired the Nashua Company in the spring of 1862 and later produced high-grade 16S and 20S 3/4-plate watches out of a separate "Nashua Department" in the Waltham factory. The AWCo then used the KW18 solely as lesser quality 18S watches.

- Surviving examples of M59 movements made early 1863 are housed in AM Eagle cases.
- Charles Vander Woerd came to Waltham with the Nashua Company.
- Nashua Department KW16 movements are documented as being offered in silver cases (although none are yet known to me); e.g., see “Origins” Roy Ehrhardt reference 78, page 14.
- Charles Vander Woerd modeled the Crescent Street (M70) in 1869 out of the Nashua Department. It was short lived because its key set from the back required a special case.
- New American watch companies began production late 1863 through 1864 (amazingly during the Civil War) adding competitive pressure for new and better products from AWC (e.g., Newark, Tremont and US Watch).
- C.V. Woerd was made general superintendent at Waltham in 1876.
- Although continued to be made for another year, the Model 1857 was modified by C.V. Woerd in 1877 to produce the 3-pillar full-plate 18S Model 77 movement (later also M79).
- Surviving examples of M70 and M77/79 movements are housed in Am Warranted cases.

I believe the production of the Eagle cases was just a continuation of AT cases out of the old Waltham case room. The company needed a new style case for the M59 and why not sign them with the new company name, Am Watch Co.

Considering that M70 and M77/79 movements made in the Nashua Department are in Am Warranted cases, and that Woerd had a big influence on Nashua Department operations, I believe he had a case room early on for  $\frac{3}{4}$  plate Nashua movements. He then supplied Am Warranted cases for M57 movements to increase production. If my theory is correct, Am Warranted cases on M57 movements dated 1858 to 1860, could be suspected as re-cased.

Since AT&Co cases seem to have serial numbers associated with date of production, I made a plot of the AT table by movement date of production, see [graph](#) (for a little larger view).



I used Microsoft Excel on Windows to make the graph with the “Scatter” Chart option. It has a couple of problems. In particular, the precision in matching the original data is not great. Microsoft treats the date number type with days from January 1, 1900. So, to get my plot, I made January 1, 1857 = January 1, 1900, and left the year designation off the legend. Also, Microsoft does not match each month with the actual number of days in the month; month grids are therefore based on an average number of days. The consequence of this formula is that the date grids do not line up accurately with the actual dates, and the graph gets worse as months add up. The resulting graph is not bad, though. As they say, “close enough for amateurs”.

Yes, the graph is a little messy (well, it is called a scatter chart), and might not have a lot of value. I guess I could claim case numbers around 8500 to 14500 were made in 1859. I don't think there is enough accuracy of the graph to claim a range in half years, and 1857. I'm not sure a plot of production dates of movement serial numbers would be any better.

Perhaps one value of tabulating M57 cases is recognizing potential outliers. As mentioned above, Eagle entries dated '57-'58 and Warranted entries dated '58-'60 are potential outliers. The last two entries on the Eagle table are around two years later than the previous entry; they are very likely re-cased examples. Warranted cases would be more representative.

For another example, on the AT table, the weird case ID A99 on AT 17728 couldn't be used in the AT graph. And the very low case number 104 on AT 5505 does not seem real. AT Case on movement dated in 1870 is obviously not original. AT Cases 10316 (on AT 5086) and 14179

(on AT 5327) were likely re-cased because they seem way too high of a number for 1857 movements. AT Case 8727 was used twice; maybe original on PSB movement #14182, but also on PSB 9310 after replacing an AM Watch Co Warranted case D55. As it appears, AT cases made in 1859 probably have serial numbers over 8000, so then cases 6119 (on PSB 16098, 03-04'59) and 6201 (on AT 21792, '59-'60) are suspect. Similarly in reverse, cases 8825 (on PSB 8590, 03'58), 8798 (on PSB 9123, 04'58) and 8727 (on PSB 9310, 04'58) are suspected of being too high of a number for 1858. Ditto for case 14801 on PSB 21095 (June '59).

For a general rule of thumb, AT case dates range from 1857 to 1860, Am Eagle cases from 1859 to 1870 and Am Warranted cases from 1862 to 1878 (and beyond for other full plate movements). AT case IDs are numeric like serial numbers. Roughly, AT case numbers from 8500 to 14500 were made in 1859. They might go up to 15000, early 1860.

This tabulation of M57 cases might get more interesting as more watches are recorded. I would be more comfortable with my theory that the *Am Watch Co Warranted* cases were made in the Nashua Department if I knew of examples of Am Warranted cases housing  $\frac{3}{4}$  plate movements. Although Am Eagle cases seem to end on M57 movements around 1870, I suppose they could be continued on M59 movements, but the intent of this paper is about Model 57 watches. Similarly, Am Warranted cases might be continued on movements following the M57, but again, the intent of this paper is only about Model 57 watches.