


# INFORMATION

Little has been published on this national toy maker and Mowrey has done the work of chasing the company's background through the primary records and detailing a chronology of plant and production history. Sand-activated metal toys, such as the "Sandy Andy," became the first products of this fledgling toy company; by the late 1910s, it could manufacture them in high enough volume to sell through mass market catalogs such as Sears and Roebuck. The company added wheeled toys, mechanical pull rabbits and circus animals, and also streamlined modernistic trains, trolleys, and boats by the mid-1920s. The purchase of the mechanical toy division of the Walbert Manufacturing Co. of Illinois by 1927 increased Wolverine's offerings to include games such as "Pitch'em" horseshoes. The book is a treasure trove for collectors or lovers of Wolverine's sand toys, stamped metal toys, mechanical toys, and games, as well as the household toys. Amply illustrated with catalog page reprints, advertisements, and photographs, almost half the book documents the toys produced by this Pittsburgh maker. With color images, dates, and some patent information, the book provides an excellent guide for identifying the output of Wolverine and tracing the evolution of the toy line through the decades. One chapter even focuses on the corporate collection

held by the History Center and the prototypes in that collection.

This book, as the author acknowledges, provides a much-needed resource correcting some of the myths and half-truths printed about Wolverine, as well as serving as a first catalog of company products. Collectors will especially appreciate the imagery, supporting documentation, and price guide. Mowrey draws upon earlier oral history work done by S. Greene Drucker and the Allegheny City Society with former Wolverine workers, but the book only hints at the importance of the machinist in the industrial milieu

of the Pittsburgh region and the role that mechanics played in regional manufacturing. More could also be said about the American toy industry and Wolverine's place in it as a producer of lithographed metal toys for a mass market, as well as the design and meaning of toys and what they tell us about the social and cultural life of children in our society. Those topics await exploration, but Terry Mowrey's book is the first to give Wolverine the place it deserves in the pantheon of American toy manufacturers. 

**This Zilotone musical toy, along with all other Wolverine items, was manufactured in Allegheny City.**

HHC Collections, gift of Spang and Co., 98.17.549. Photo by Paula Andras.

