

FORWARD

Recently, in a pile of old family documents I discovered a draft of a high school paper Joan Bergstein wrote in 1968. A photocopy of the paper had been forwarded in 2004 to me by Jean Bergstein, mother of Joan. Because the copy was difficult to read I transcribed the last four pages pretty much word-for-word into an easier to read format. The first three pages were omitted because they were pretty much the 1956 letter to the GWU Patent, Trademark and Copyright Foundation found on pages 14 -16 of *Samuel Bergstein & Sons* at ***Aero-logical.com*** or David M. Bergstein Patents (Google).

In this letter Samuel claims to have been granted 116 patents by the U.S. Patent Office. A comprehensive search of all of Bergstein and Interstate Folding Box patents was conducted in 2004 and revealed only 95 U.S. patents by Samuel. I tried to locate the list of the 116 patents listed, but by that time the GWU Patent, Trademark and Copyright Foundation was long gone. I did find out that in 1957—one year later—that Foundation became the PCT Journal and morphed into IDEA, a Patent related journal. Both the letter and this document are classic examples of oral, written and participatory history.

Some of the patents on that list may have been those that Samuel and son Robert developed together; or they could have been international patents.

Joan frequently refers to Samuel as 'Simon.' This was strictly a nickname and no U.S. Patents were filed under the name Simon Bergstein. As for Joan Bergstein she was daughter of Robert M., making her a first cousin. She graduated from Yale in 1972 at the top of her class.

Joan also mentions Samuel as an "extreme conservative." In light of today's business environment with bail-outs, culture of corruption and revolving door politics, Samuel would probably be considered a Libertarian. I say this not only because he despised lobbying but because of his compassion for detainees on Ellis Island when he was employed there.

A page from his 1931 sliced bread-tray patent is enclosed. Samuel was a mechanical genius, without a doubt. He also had a great faculty for the English language. I attended GWU my freshman year and my copy of Aristotle has been underlined with notes in the margins, just like Samuel's copy. Both Milton and Wordsworth observe: "Child is father to the man / As morning is to Day."

David Bergstein, Prescott, AZ 2019

Shortly after a small box factory was opened in Middletown (1911) it was destroyed by fire, and again it was destroyed by a flood in 1913. This time it was built on higher ground and The Interstate Folding Box Company began to grow and prospered through the first world war and during the prosperous twenties. Now there were two more children and in 1922 the family moved to nearby Cincinnati since it offered better schools. Before he left Middletown, Samuel Bergstein had published—at his own expense—a guide to all the children's books in the public library. This was distributed by the Boy Scouts to all houses in the hopes of encouraging children to read.

With the stock market crash of 1929—in which he lost a considerable amount of money—during the subsequent depression business fell off and he shared in the country's hard times. Sliced bread was invented in the early 1930s and this brought Interstate economic prosperity at a time when many were still suffering. Samuel invented the machine which made the trays for sliced bread.

The bread tray was the 48th patent issued to Mr. Bergstein. During the years from 1915 to 1956 he was granted 95 patents by the U.S. Patent office; many covering different phases of paperboard containers and packages. Among his patents are ones for making cellophane bags more effectively than any previous machine and for putting cellophane windows in boxes. His various patents assured the continuing growth and success of his company, which began to make its own boxboard and employed more than 250 people.

In 1947 Samuel retired leaving his business to his two sons. He devoted most of his time to reading, writing and continued inventing until 1952 when he suffered a stroke. From then until his death in 1968 he was cared for devotedly by his wife Edna May and received the best possible medical care. As long as was able he kept his reading and spent many hours dictating his thoughts and ideas.

All his life Samuel was a serious, intense man. He believed each person had a duty to develop their mind to its fullest potential and he tried to live up to his belief. On his own he read many of the classics, not just reading them but underlining and taking notes as he read. He read newspapers, magazines and journals in the same way taking notes, underlining and cutting out those articles he thought were important. After-words, instead of relaxing with a light novel or with friends he would study Plato and Aristotle. He preferred reading Marx and Lenin and volumes of other political thought to attending sports or social affairs. He thought about what he read. After intense reading he would organize and sort out those ideas of his own. He wrote hundreds of pages on various social, economic and political theories. He was not a gay, lighthearted person but one who believed in using every moment for a worthwhile purpose. If one of his sons spent a Sunday afternoon laughing and talking with friends Samuel would grow angry and would chide his son for wasting time he might have spent studying or improving his mind. He did not drink or play cards or enjoy other social pastimes, preferring to use his time to learn all he could.

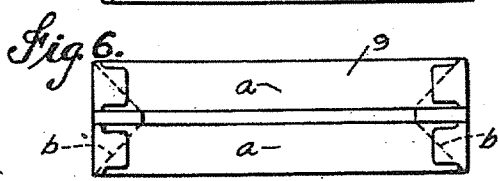
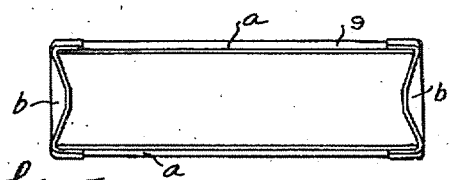
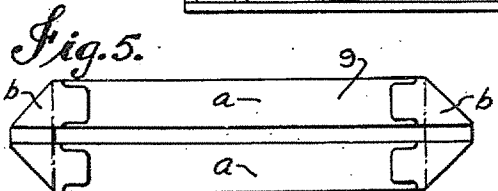
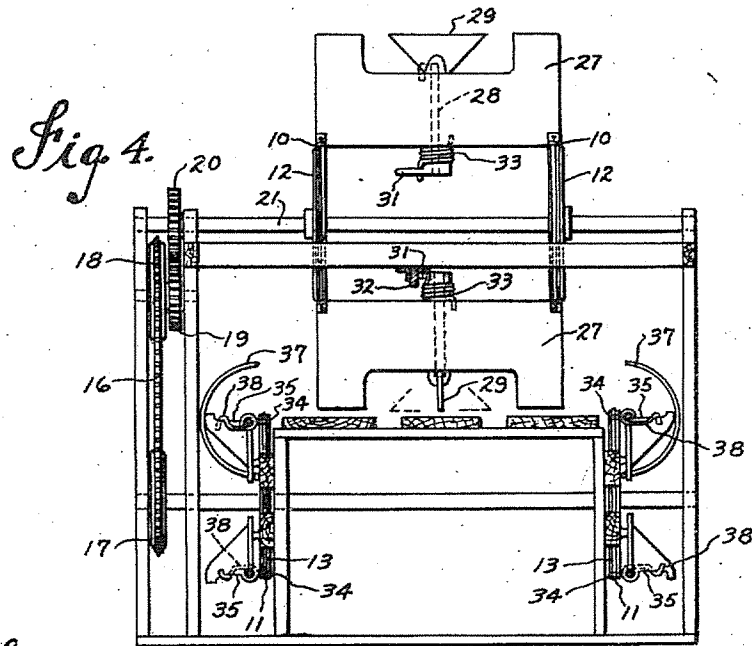
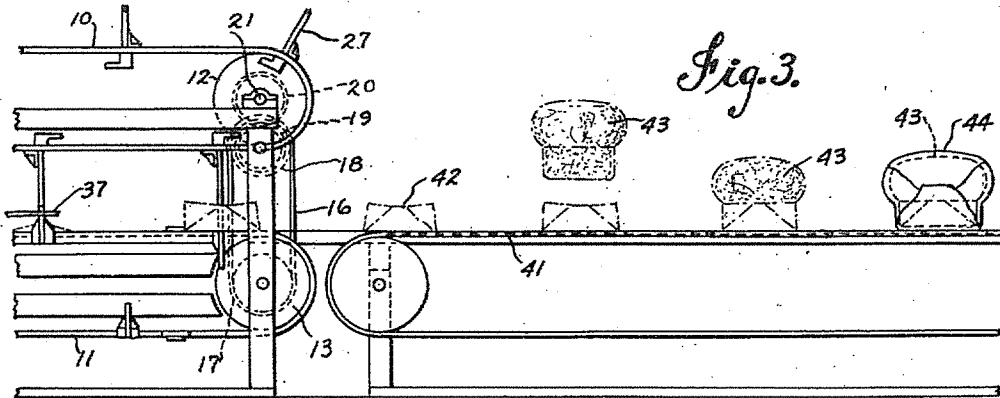
Feb. 24, 1931.

S. BERGSTEIN

Re. 17,975

MACHINE AND METHOD FOR UNFOLDING PAPER TRAYS

Original Filed Dec. 31, 1929 2 Sheets-Sheet 2



INVENTOR.
Samuel Bergstein
BY
Allen Allen
ATTORNEYS

Thus Samuel Bergstein starting in New York as a poor, Jewish immigrant who knew no English seems by his own words and ambition to have accomplished two things in his life: 1) He was financially successful, owning a prosperous factory and various other properties and was able to live comfortably and provide well for his children. 2) Intellectually, he developed his mind by intense reading and study so that he was able to think, speak and write clearly and creatively. His effort to develop his mind to the fullest extent seems the more important of his accomplishments. One idea that is found again and again in his writings is that the instinct of self preservation compels all people to work daily to provide daily needs, but there are some people who voluntarily work to attain objectives that their minds conceive. He believed that the vast majority of the world population lived by following their instincts and using their energy to “live and procreate.” Human intelligence is very much superior to that needed by humans to survive. He felt that to the “extent the urge to live coerces humans to use their minds they must do so in order to survive,” but beyond that degree there is no coercion or compulsion to use the mind. Thus the use of the mind by humans is not forced but “voluntary.” Those centuries in which a higher proportion of people were “mind-dominated”—he believed— achieved “superior results,” much or more advanced technology and a higher standard of living. He believed that the United States and Western Europe had a greater proportion of these people who “did what their minds provided them to do,” while the Asian and Latin American and underdeveloped nations of the world had only a small number of “mind dominated people.” In these underdeveloped countries all their people were governed or dominated in their daily lives by “basic instincts.” By the long lists of comparative number of major inventions per capita national income, average life span and other statistics of the countries of the world, he sought to back up his theory that “the standard of living countries is determined by the number of people there are in that country who--uncoerced and uncompelled--do what work their minds’ prevail upon them to do, and not what their instincts compel them to do.

These beliefs explain in part why M. Bergstein had patents and did experimenting in many fields and not just paperboard and packaging. It explains why he spent his spare time reading academic books and dealing with abstract ideas and not just those that would be useful to him in business. Closely tied in with his theories on human’s duty to use their mind, was a belief in “ The Art of Doing a Little More than You are Paid to Do.” This was the title of one of his favorite articles of which he had dozens of copies made Samuel lived to apply his devotion to reading, i.e.the catalogue of books in the public library he had printed at his own expense and his efforts to learn English. Thus we see that he was a highly motivated and hard-working man. He lived by the idea that people must use their minds voluntarily to determine and achieve goals and should never be content just to survive and just fulfill basic needs. By trying to learn all he could in all areas and by doing a little more than was necessary he became an educated man and his financial success was the result of using his mind effectively.



This is a photograph of the Bergstein's home at 717 South Crescent Avenue in the Avondale area of Cincinnati. The house was built in 1875. The family including Samuel, Mimi (Edna), Robert (age 13), Marjorie (age 7) and Frank (age 4) moved into the house in 1922 after moving from Middletown, Ohio. They bought the house from Mrs. Stix.

In 1941 a lady came to the door and asked if she could take a picture of the house and blooming magnolia tree. The photo was taken and a print was given to the Bergsteins.

Each of the kids lived at home until they married. Samuel Bergstein died in 1968 and Mimi moved to Wyoming, Ohio later that same year.

Marjorie Goldman
January 20, 1995

Samuel also strove to be completely honest. One example is from his letter to the Patent, Trademark and Copyright Foundation (1956) where he relates the incidence of dishonest practices on Ellis Island. He refused free meals from corrupt contractors because he was not motivated by desire for financial gain. In later years he lost many packaging contracts because he would not make a “deal” with the buyer from another company. The custom of giving the buyer a few extra dollars was a widely accepted, common practice in commerce. Although this practice may not be illegal, Samuel felt it was dishonest and unfair.

Along with trying to fulfill the ideals of high motivation and honesty, Samuel was loyal to America, its institutions and principals on which it was founded; he felt it was the greatest nation on earth. Much of his writings praise the free-enterprise system of capitalism and trying to prove—by various statistics and data—that voluntary use of the mind and coercion by neither Communist nor Socialist systems can produce superior results. He was anti-communist and in some of his writings attack various principals and doctrines of communism. He especially hated the brutality and suppression of human will for the good of the state. He loved America because he felt it had offered him freedom and the opportunity to achieve whatever he wished. Although he started as a poor, illiterate boy he felt that all a government need offer its people was an opportunity. He opposed any government aid or help, feeling people should be responsible for themselves. He was against such measures as social security. Inequality in wealth and power—he felt—was justified since some people are dominated by their minds and work hard and plan “to provide means needed to obtain their objectives,” while others “do not devote any more time or effort to any task they are forced to subsist.” These “mind-dominated” people will naturally rise to the top, while the rest of the world creates masses of people dissatisfied with their share of wealth.

This paper has attempted to describe the ideas, ideals and goals of one man who spent his live trying to live up to the “American Dream.” Samuel Bergstein felt his most important duty was to make the best possible use of his mind, so he spent nearly all his time working or studying. He felt being honest was more important than getting ahead in business. Politically he believed in America and everything it stands for. He was an extreme conservative for he thought each person should make their own way with no aid or help from the government.

Although it is impossible to say whether Samuel was typical of any group or era, it might be assumed he was in some respects similar to others who cherished the “American Dream.” Comparisons might be made to the great masses of students whose only goal in school is to get good grades and a degree so that they might earn more money or because it is the socially acceptable thing to do. He believed this created a general amount of apathy and the attitude of “let somebody else do it.” By contrast, his concept of “doing a little more than we are paid to do” is totally opposite.

Massive government spending and planning to help various people is far from his ideas of letting each person make it on his own. Yet these comparisons are only speculation and there is no way of knowing if they are accurate or meaningful.

I got almost all of my information from the various writings of Samuel Bergstein, my grandfather. I never knew him personally. Talking to my father (Robert M. Bergstein)—Samuel's eldest son—was also helpful. Although I realize that I have tended to stress the good qualities and minimize the bad, I feel that I have been fairly accurate in stating the goals and ideas that shaped his life.

Joan Bergstein, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1968