

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

CASH REGISTER

Brass and wood

H. 30 x L. 38,5 x W. 46,5 cm

1911, United States of America, Ohio, Dayton

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The registers were a step further in fields as commerce and accounting. It made possible a faster and more trustable transactions processing; printing the sales slip would be useful for checking the transaction and the product typology.

The specimen shown here, which is part of Angra do Heroísmo Museum Science and Technology Unit, stands out for its beautiful *art nouveau* decoration. It corresponds to the model 600, made just for the European market and produced by the national *Cash Register Company*, founded in 1884 by John Henry Patterson. It was sold in 1976 to the Angra do Heroísmo Museum by the wholesaler Joaquim A. Bogas, from Lisbon.

In 1879, James Ritty, the owner of a bar located in the town of Dayton, invented the cash register, with the aim of avoiding that the employees stole money from the drawer... Shortly after the trademark register, he sold it and, after negotiations, it became property of the *National Cash Register*, owned by the already mentioned Patterson. This company would dominate the market for more than 100 years, although if, in its first decade of existence, it produced just around 16 thousand machines; something that changed radically after the implementation of an aggressive *marketing* and publicity strategy, including the formation of a selling committee (*American Selling Force*). This one was composed by travelling sellers, trained by a script, that would promote and sell the registers, being paid by commission. In 1906, the company produced the first electric cash register and in 1914, more than 110 thousand registers were sold.

In what concerns its features, the letters on the right would represent the customized products typologies (like meats, beverages...). The numbers followed by letters, also on the right (5B to 5A), corresponded to some products of a certain typology. The letters on the left side, usually indicated the type of transaction – cash, in debt, debt paid, devolution, billing -, but it could also identify the employees who would process the transactions, accordingly to the model and customization used by the establishment owner. The number 1 lock, on the right, would allow the opening of the oval cover and, behind it, there was a display with the total amount of sales, available only to the owner, allowing him the chance of checking the correspondence between the figures in the display and the amount of money in the drawer, consisting in 10 divisions. The number 5 lock, on the left, would allow the opening of the printer cover and the number 10, in the back, would allow the removal of the back plaque.