
Interesting Variations in the First Metal Pickett

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The Deci-Point appears to be the first metal slide rule issued by Pickett and Eckel. Judging by the copyright date, this rule was first issued in 1945. Although the Deci-Point is not labeled Model 1, this 10-inch duplex slide rule can be regarded as Model 1.

We recently recognized interesting variations in an early specimen of this model. Figure 7.1, to be found in the centerfold, shows an early issue (serial number 00170) and a later issue (serial number 011319). In the later version (lower) the scales are centered, and the indexes are equally spaced on the posts. Also, the hairline is centered on the cursor lens, and the cursor bars extend beyond the lens. These are features of most early models made of Pickett's magnesium alloy. However, note that the scales in the upper specimen are displaced 4 mm to the right of center. The hairline has also been displaced to the right so that it can be used at the right end of the stator. Also, the cursor bars do not extend beyond the lens. The reverse side of the upper slide rule is identical to the reverse of the lower rule, i.e., all scales are centered.

We do not understand why the Deci-Point was initially designed with the displaced scales. However, we can speculate why this design was abandoned. Having one centered and one asymmetrical cursor lens must have created several problems. First, two versions had to be manufactured, reducing economies of scale. Second, the correct version had to be mounted on each face, increasing assembly costs. Third, the subtle difference in the two lenses may have been often overlooked when replacement lenses were ordered and installed, causing annoyance to users.

When the transition from the asymmetrical to the centered positioning of the scales took place is uncertain. So far the earliest specimen (that we are aware of) with the centered scales carries the serial number 003072. Collectors are urged to report specimens that may help date the transition more precisely.