

Moritz Hensoldt and the Carl- Zeiss-Gruppe in Wetzlar

The roots of the Carl Zeiss Sport optics reach back to the company of Moritz Hensoldt (1821-1903). Moritz Hensoldt went on the customary travels after his apprenticeship for optics and precision engineering where he met Carl Kellner.

The friendship between them led to the attempt to start a joint business, as this did not succeed Hensoldt established a company 1852 in Sonneberg (Thüringen).

Family ties brought him back again in the vicinity of Wetzlar, after he married a cousin of Kellner and Engelbert. With the mechanic and optician Luis Engelbert Hensoldt produced microscopes beginning 1861 in Braunfels under the name Engelbert and Hensoldt.

The move to Wetzlar took place at the end of 1865. Starting 1877 Hensoldt began manufacturing telescopes. The image reversing prisms which were used were the basis of the prisms double-telescope (binoculars), whose quality and handling let Hensoldt become one of the leading international producers of telescopes, around 1900. In 1896 the sons of Hensoldt, Waldemar and Carl became partners of the optical workshop M. Hensoldt & sons. In 1922, there was a conversion of the company into a stock company, and from then on it was named M. Hensoldt & sons Optic shop AG.



Microscope from Wetzlar around 1900

In 1928 the Carl Zeiss Foundation acquired a majority share. The company and product name “Hensoldt” remained until 2006. Then the Hensoldt AG Zeiss Group became the Carl Zeiss Sport Optics GmbH, a subsidiary company of Carl Zeiss AG.

Today’s building complex in the Göelstraße 3-5 has been evolved since 1909. In the year 1922 the prominent facade was shown on the letterhead of the company. Today employees of various subsidiaries of Carl Zeiss AG work in the buildings.

Are produced in the:

Carl Zeiss Sports Optics GmbH:
Telescopes and telescopic sights

Carl Zeiss SMT GmbH:
high-performance optics for the semi-conductor industry

Zeiss Optronik GmbH:
special instruments for defense and security facilities
(former Hensoldt Sondertechnik, today Airbus group SE)

Text: Gerhild Seibert

Literature and pictures:

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