The American Horological Society called upon a watch and clockmaker at the American Watchmakers-Clockmakers Institute (AWI) in 1918, which was formed by German immigrants in Chicago to attend a meeting Thursday evening in June 9th, 1932 in order to set about forming an association, which shall encourage and promote American horology. Theodore Gribi was the first president of the organization.

The Horological Institute of America was formally established in October 1921 at a meeting of the National Research Council in Washington DC. The organization set about standardizing certification in order to improve the technical skills of its members. The HIA founding president, George W. Spier, bequeathed $15,000 to the organization.

Under the presidency of Ewell Hartman, HIA's 15th annual meeting in DC in May of 1938, the AWI staff produced an index of library materials, and instituted a more effective system of book lending. At the American Watchmakers-Clockmakers Institute, Henry B. Fried became president of AWI in 1972. He had bought the Horological Institute of America (UHAA) and the associated collections, and was a founder and fellow of the American Watchmakers Institute (AWI).

The library has been understated in the past few years on account of its disorganization. There are plans in the future to make the index available online, but in a format that may better facilitate searches than an Excel or PDF document. A number of programs are being considered, and cost is the main concern.

The next phase of the overhaul is to account for the material in storage. Now that the process of constructing book call numbers is known, it is possible to add new titles to the library index. There is a growing pile of documents left without a folder in the library of technical documents, and it is imperative that these receive proper storage. There is uncertainty as to what the pamphlet collection contains, and it is necessary that this collection be reviewed.