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by Robert S. Harding

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Jackson & Sharp Car Company Records and American Car & Foundry Company Collection
Dates: 1884-1948
Quantity: 2.5 cubic feet, 6 boxes, 21 volumes
Language: English

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Immediate source of acquisition unknown.

Provenance Information
Transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Transportation in 1979.

Related Material
The Delaware State Archives contains a collection of approximately 3,000 negatives and photographs from Jackson and Sharp and American Car & Foundry. These include views of ships, electric railway cars, and railroad equipment. A description of the Delaware State Archives' collection can be found in the control file for coll. #156 and a copy of the microfiche listing of these photos is available in the Archives Center's microfiche cabinet. The Archives also holds over 160 drawings and blueprints for cars and ships, dating from 1881 1937. The Hagley Museum and Library of Wilmington, Delaware, contains several collections of Jackson & Sharp records. These include historical materials; contracts for car orders, 1898 1905; and drawings and blueprints, 1895 1930. A smaller body of Jackson & Sharp records is in the Historical Society of Delaware, in Wilmington.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Robert Harding, 1984

Preferred Citation

Restrictions on Access
Collection is open for research. Special care required in handling photographs, as the bound volumes are in poor condition.
Biographical Note

The Jackson and Sharp Car Company, a manufacturer of railroad passenger cars, street railway cars, and ships, was incorporated in Delaware on February 24, 1869, as the successor to the partnership of Jackson & Sharp. Job H. Jackson (1833-1901), a tinsmith and mechanic, and Jacob F. Sharp (ca. 1815-1888), an experienced car builder, opened a small car building shop in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1863. Wilmington was a major center for the manufacture of railroad passenger cars prior to the development of Pullman, Illinois, in 1881. Sharp retired from the business in 1870. Soon after, Jackson erected the larger Delaware Car Works facility at the foot of 8th Street. A shipyard was added in 1875. By the late 1880s, the company was turning out about 400 cars per year, as well as sash work and panelling for buildings.

The American Car & Foundry Company purchased Jackson and Sharp in 1901 when Jackson died. American Car & Foundry, incorporated in New Jersey in 1899, was a typical late 19th century merger of many small car building companies. The Jackson and Sharp plant in Wilmington was used primarily for the construction of railroad cars for export orders until around 1920. From the end of World War One until 1938, the plant was kept open by building small pleasure boats. During World War Two the plant produced minesweepers. The plant was closed around 1945.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains order books, including design details of a wide variety of passenger, freight and specialty cars (including self-propelled electric cars), and cost accounts for the production department. Also included are 21 volumes of photographs of finished cars, arranged by lot number. These have separate indexes arranged alphabetically and by photograph number.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into two series.

Series 1: Records,

Series 2: Photographs

Bibliography

Hagley Museum and Library. Finding aids for collection.
Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
Railroads--Cars

Types of Materials:
Account books
Albumen prints
Cost account books
Lists--Photographs
Order books
Photographs--Black-and-white photoprints--Silver albumen--1850-1900

Names:
Transportation, Division of, NMAH, SI.

Geographic Names:
Delaware
Container Listing

Series 1: Records, 1885-1948

Box 1, Folder 1  Electric cars orders, 1894-1900
Box 1, Folder 2  Electric cars orders, 1899-1909
Box 2, Folder 1  Electric cars, detailed specifications, 1898-1905
Box 3, Folder 1  Order Books, 1885-1891
Box 4, Folder 1  Order Books, Vol. 10 A, 1907-1914
Box 5, Folder 1  Order Books, 1913-1917
Box 5, Folder 2  Order Books, 1918-1922
Box 5, Folder 3  Order book, 1922-1925
Box 6, Folder 1  List of equipment photographs, 1884-1948
Box 6, Flat-File 2 List of equipment photographs, 1907-1912
Box 6, Folder 3  Production costs record, 1899-1908
Box 7, Folder 1  Order Book, Vol. 10, 1907-1914
Series 2: Photographs, undated

Volume 1-4  Jackson & Sharp Co. Electric Equipment
Volume 5    American Car & Foundry Co. Electric Equipment
Volume 8;   American Car & Foundry Co. Railroad Equipment
            Volume 11-12;
            Volume 14-26