



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the James J. Hill Scrapbook, 1916

NMAH.AC.0334

Robert Harding

1991



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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	James J. Hill Scrapbook
Date:	1916
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0334
Creator:	Warshaw, Isadore, 1900-1969 Hill, James Jerome, 1838-1916 (Creator)
Extent:	0.66 Cubic feet (1 box)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Scrapbook documents James j. Hill's work as president of the Great Northern Railway, and his control of the First National Bank and Northwestern Trust Company.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Immediate source of acquisition unknown.

Provenance

This scrapbook, presumably part of the Warshaw Collection of Business Americana (AC0060), was found in the vault, Spring, 1989.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Robert Harding, 1991.

Preferred Citation

James J. Hill Scrapbook, 1916, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

James J. Hill was born near Guelph, Ontario on September 16, 1838 of parents of Scottish and Northern Ireland background. He moved to St. Paul, Minnesota when he was 18 and began his career in railroad building.

His major accomplishment was to discover the "bread-basket of the world" in the Northwest United States and led in the development of its 6 states from wilderness. Along the 6,000 miles of track he created wealth of \$5 billion in land values, having provided for 400,000 farms on 65 million acres. This was done between 1880-1893 with no Federal or State money. He introduced livestock to these farms and imported blood stock. He had men show the farmers how to raise more wheat, and established cheap rates for rail and steamship for the transport of the grain. Hill organized a fleet of steamships for the commercial invasion of Japan and China and made possible trade between Buffalo, NY to the Far East.

Hill was known to believe in low grades, heavy power, large capacity cars and big trainloads. Besides being president of the Great Northern Railway from 1889-1912, he controlled the First National Bank and the Northwestern Trust Company. He also helped to get Armour and Company to locate in south St. Paul. He arranged for Wall Street to purchase \$500,000,000 of foreign bonds to help the allies in 1915. He also personally gave money to King Albert of Belgium to help the country after the Germans invaded it.

Hill was worth an estimated \$200 to \$250 million when he died.

Biographical / Historical

Hill was the son of a farmer in Ontario, Canada. At 18 he moved to St. Paul, Minn., and took a job as a clerk with a steamship company. In 1873 he and a partner took over the bankrupt St. Louis and Pacific Railway. This line was reorganized in 1879 as the St. Paul, Minnesota and Manitoba Railway, with Hill as General Manager; in 1883 he became its President. Hill extended his rail line into the Great Northwest and opened it up to commerce. He amassed a fortune, estimated at between 200 to 250 million dollars at his death.

Scope and Contents

Scrapbook contains clippings of the news stories and obituaries printed after the death of James J. Hill on May 29, 1916, drawn from newspapers throughout the United States and Canada.

The 151 scrapbook pages (13" x 15") contain newspaper clippings of the news stories and obituaries of the death of James Jerome Hill on May 29, 1916 at age 78. The clippings dated May 29 and 30, 1916 are from throughout the United States and Canada and report on the life and death of the man known as "Railroad Builder" and "Empire Builder".

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Railroad companies -- Minnesota
- Railroads -- Management
- Transportation

Types of Materials:

Clippings -- 1910-1920
Obituaries
Scrapbooks -- 1910-1920

Names:

Great Northern Railroad
St. Paul, Minnesota and Mantioba Railway.

Places:

St. Paul (Minn.)

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1

[James J. Hill Scrapbook, 1916](#)