



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Baldwin Locomotive Works Drawings

NMAH.AC.0353

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2007

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Baldwin Locomotive Works Drawings
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0353
Date:	1870-1890
Extent:	9 Cubic Feet (4 drawers)
Source:	Transportation, Division of, NMAH, SI. Baldwin Locomotive Works.
Language:	English
Summary:	Collection consists of 202 assembly drawings of locomotives and tenders, prepared to check the clearances and major component parts of the locomotive and retained for engineering reference.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Baldwin Locomotive Works Drawings: 1870-1890.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Collection donated by H.L. Broadbelt, July 1959-November 1960.

Ownership and Custodial History

Transferred from the Division of Transportation, now the Division of Work and Industry, April 1987.

Related Archival Materials

Archives Center #157, the Baldwin Locomotive Works Collection, consists of Engine Registers and Order Books for locomotives, 1833-1956. In addition, a six-reel microfilm edition of collection #157 is located in the NMAH Library (mfm-720).

Photographs relating to Baldwin are in the Railroad and Firefighting History Photographic Collection, Division of Work and Industry.

The DeGolyer Library of Southern Methodist University has a collection of 8,500 original Baldwin engineering drawings and has published three guides to their records.

Other Finding Aids

[List of Baldwin Locomotives](#) is available.

Processing Information

Processed by Mark Seggel (volunteer), April 2007; supervised by Alison Oswald, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Baldwin Locomotive Works Drawings, 1870-1890, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted research use on site by appointment.

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Biographical Note

The Baldwin Locomotive Works was the largest and most successful locomotive building firm in the world. It was begun as a machine shop owned and operated by Matthias W. Baldwin in 1831. Baldwin turned out its first locomotive engine from its shop in Philadelphia in 1832; within a few years the company was producing two a month and employed 240 men. By 1852, 500 engines had been produced; by 1861, 1,000; and by 1868, 2,000. At that point, the company employed between 1,600-1,700 men, and was one of the very largest machine works in the nation. In 1906 Baldwin began construction of a large auxiliary plant in Philadelphia suburb of Eddystone. In 1928 the Broad Street plant was closed and all work transferred to the Eddystone Plant.

Baldwin had been forced by hard financial times to take on a series of partners between 1839 and 1846, and the firm's name changed repeatedly as a result. It was known as Baldwin, Vail & Hufty (1839-1842); Baldwin & Whitney (1842-1845); M.W. Baldwin (1846-1853); and M.W. Baldwin & Co. (1854-1866). After Baldwin's death in 1866 the firm was known as M. Baird & Co. (1867-1873); Burnham, Parry, Williams & Co. (1873-1890); Burnham, Williams & Co. (1891-1909); it was finally incorporated as the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1909.

The company's phenomenal growth ended with in the mid-1920s as the U.S. railroad industry began its long decline. Despite various mergers and acquisitions--and an increased attention to the development of diesel engines--a slow but sure decline set in. Baldwin declared bankruptcy in 1935. World War Two brought a temporary respite, but after the war the steam locomotive was obsolete and orders rapidly diminished. The Westinghouse Corporation bought Baldwin in 1948 but was unable to turn the company around. In 1950 the Lima-Hamilton Corporation and Baldwin merged but in 1956 the last of some 70,500 locomotives were produced and the company's long history came to an end.

Sources

History of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, 1831-1902

A Short History of American Locomotive Builders in the Steam Era, John H. White, (1982).

Scope and Contents

202 assembly drawings of locomotives and tenders, prepared to check the clearances and major component parts of the locomotive. When work was slow, draftsmen hand-colored the drawings. They were not used in the shop but were retained for engineering reference.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Cultures:

- Baldwin locomotives
- Locomotive industry
- Locomotive works -- Pennsylvania
- Locomotives
- Locomotives -- Drawings
- Railroad equipment industry
- Railroads -- Equipment and supplies
- Railroads -- Rolling-stock
- Transportation

Types of Materials:

- Erection drawings
- Technical drawings

Names:

- Transportation, Division of, NMAH, SI.

Geographic Names:

- Pennsylvania
- Philadelphia (Pa.)