



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the U.S. Steel Corporation Photograph Albums

NMAH.AC.1037

Alison Oswald

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	U.S. Steel Corporation Photograph Albums
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1037
Date:	circa 1940s
Extent:	3 Cubic feet (8 boxes)
Creator:	Aikins, Russell Chorley, 1896- U.S. Steel Corporation
Language:	English
Digital Content:	Image(s): U.S. Steel Corporation Photograph Albums

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Immediate source of acquisition is unknown.

Provenance

Transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Work and Industry (formerly the Division of Engineering and Industry) on May 19, 2003.

Related Materials

Materials at Other Organizations

Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School

1934 Art and Industry Exhibition photograph collection

The 1934 Art and Industry Exhibition photograph collection contains photographs that were on display in New York City and Chicago in an exhibition sponsored by the National Alliance of Art and Industry.

United States Steel Corporation photographs, circa 1940-1960

A large collection of black and white gelatin silver prints depicting the United States Steel Corporation's steel plants, works, personnel, machinery, mining operations, buildings, warehouses and production of the numerous products manufactured by the company, circa 1940-1960.

Industrial Life Photograph Collection, 1920-1941

Photographs collected by the Business Historical Society to document major industries in the United States and industrial processes.

Lowell National Historical Park

Youngstown Center for Industry and Labor

Processing Information

Collection processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, 2018.

Preferred Citation

U.S. Steel Corporation Photograph Albums, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical

Russell Chorley Aikins was born in Philadelphia on December 7, 1896. He began his photographic career at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as a news photographer in 1917. Two years later, Aikins joined the *New York Times Sunday Rotogravure Section* and the World Wide Syndicate as a staff photographer. In the early 1920s, Aikins organized and ran the *New York Times* Washington picture bureau. Aikins served briefly, in 1929, as an editor for the newly developing Associated Press (AP) photo service. Following the growing trend in the photo news industry Aikins left the AP and became a freelance photographer. He opened his studio in New York City and did work for *Fortune*, *Time*, *Life*, and *Colliers*.

Aikins career shifted in 1937 when he decided to "devote all my time to the portrayal of business and industry." Aikins noted the need for big business to be represented and saw his images as tools for business self-promotion: "It had been a growing conviction with me that industry in addition to its product advertising should promote its fitness to serve the public and its ability to make quality goods." He started to recruit companies to combat the stereotypical cold, unfeeling edge of big business. Aikins called this new style of photography "camera-reporting," which he thought could transport stockholders, customers, and the public into the mills, giving the viewer greater confidence in the corporation and its products. A few companies Aikins represented included Chrysler Corporation, General Electric Company, Johnson & Johnson, and the United States Steel Corporation. After World War Two the demand for the technique Aikins helped to pioneer began to diminish as public and labor attitudes changed. After 1948, there is no record of Aikins' activities.

Source

Division of Work and Industry staff.

Historical

The United States Steel Corporation was created in 1901 by the purchase and consolidation of several companies by financier J.P. Morgan. At the time of formation, it was the largest company in the world. U.S. Steel represented Morgan's attempt to bring stability to the volatile steel market. Morgan purchased Andrew Carnegie's highly aggressive Carnegie Steel and brought it together with Federal Steel, National Tube, American Steel and Wire, American Sheet Steel, American Hoop Steel, American Tin Plate, American Bridge, and the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines. Other companies were added later.

Capitalized at \$1.4 billion, U.S. Steel was in 1901 the largest company in the world. It controlled over 50% of American Steel production but was in many ways hamstrung by its size. While the operation of Carnegie Steel was characterized by technological efficiency, US Steel avoided innovation. Some in the company referred to the Corporation's policy as "no inventions, no innovation." The company was thought by many to be driven by a banker's vision of protecting investment, not an industrialist's vision of increasing production. Always sensitive about public antitrust action, Elbert Gary, the leader of the company, sought to cast U.S. Steel as a "good trust." In 1936, the CIO formed the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC), and began a massive union drive. Although strongly antiunion, U.S. Steel, under Myron Taylor was the first major steel company to recognize the steelworkers union in 1937.

An industry once characterized by low wages and harsh conditions emerged by the late 1940s as one of the highest-paying blue collar employers, forced to negotiate with one of the nation's most powerful unions. Following recognition of the union U.S. Steel followed a corporate strategy of paying for wage settlements by increasing steel prices. This often put the giant company at odds with governmental economic policy.

Source

Division of Work and Industry staff.

Scope and Contents

The collection comprises of 21 albums depicting the steel making and finishing operations of the United States Steel Corporation. All of the images were made by Russell Aikins around 1940. The albums contain photographic prints (8" x 9-1/2"). The majority of prints are mounted on spiral-bound pages. The photographs were created for public relations purposes and provide visual documentation of American steel making technology, production practice, and worker manager relationships. Subject matter varies widely, depicting the process of manufacturing steel or steel-related products. The photographs have a strong human and dramatic emphasis. The strongest theme is industrial mobilization for the war effort. Many photographs document female wartime work in industry, and African American workers are also represented. The theme of worker safety is well documented with images depicting safety glasses and protective garments. Printed captions below each photograph usually identify workers by name and occupation.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series, chronologically by album number.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Safety
- Steel industry and trade
- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945 -- War work

Types of Materials:

- Photograph albums -- 1940-1950
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 1940-1950

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Album 1, Ambridge Works Structural Fabricating Division, American Bridge Company, Ambridge, Pennsylvania (Negative #1000-Negative #1034)
Box 1, Folder 2	Album 2, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Personnel Office, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Negative #1035-Negative #1039)
Box 1, Folder 2	Album 2, Carrie Furnaces, Homestead Steel Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Rankin, Pennsylvania (Negative #1040- Negative #1044)
Box 1, Folder 2	Album 2, Edgar Thomson Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Braddock, Pennsylvania (Negative #1046-Negative #1060)
Box 1, Folder 2	Album 2, Homestead Steel Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Munhall, Pennsylvania (Negative #1061-Negative #1075)
Box 1, Folder 2	Album 2, Pittsburgh Laboratory, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Negative #1076-Negative #1079)
Box 1, Folder 3	Album 3, South Charleston Naval Ordnance Plant, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, South Charleston, West Virginia (Negative #1080-Negative #1113)
Box 2, Folder 1	Album 4, Farrell Tank Armor Plant, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Farrell, Pennsylvania (Negative #1114-Negative #1139)
Box 2, Folder 1	Album 4, McDonald Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Youngstown, Ohio (Negative #1140-Negative #1153)
Box 2, Folder 1	Album 4, Upper Mills, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Youngstown, Ohio (Negative # 1154-Negative #1155)
Box 2, Folder 1	Album 4, Ohio Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Youngstown, Ohio (Negative #1156-Negative #1175)
Box 2, Folder 2	Album 5, National Works, National Tube Company, McKeesport, Pennsylvania (Negative #1177-Negative #1200)
Box 2, Folder 2	Album 5, Christy Park Works, National Tube Company, McKeesport, Pennsylvania
Box 2, Folder 3	Album 6, Irvin Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Negative #1126-Negative #1253)

Box 2, Folder 3 Album 6, Duquesne Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Negative #1254-Negative #1259)

Box 3, Folder 1 Album 7, Imperial Works, Oil Well Supply Company, Oil City, Pennsylvania (Negative #1260-Negative #1289)

Box 3, Folder 1 Album 7, Wilson-Snyder Manufacturing Division (Negative #1290-Negative #1293)

Box 3, Folder 1 Album 7, Ellwood Works, National Tube Company, Ellwood City, Pennsylvania

Box 3, Folder 2 Album 8, Zinc Works of American Steel and Wire Company, Donora, Pennsylvania (Negative #1331-Negative#1379)

Box 3, Folder 3 Album 9, Geneva Steel Works, Geneva, Utah (Negative #1380-Negative #1424)

Box 4, Folder 1 Album 10, Pittsburgh Works, Columbia Steel Company, Pittsburgh, California (Negative #1425-#1479)

Box 4, Folder 2 Album 11, Ironton Works, Columbia Steel Company, Provo, Utah (Negative #1480-Negative #1484)

Box 4, Folder 2 Album 11, Beehive Ovens, Defense Plant Division, Columbia Steel Company, Columbia, Utah (Negative #1486-Negative #1488)

Box 4, Folder 2 Album11, Geneva Coal Mine, Columbia Steel Company, Horse Canyon, Utah (Negative #1490-Negative #1500)

Box 4, Folder 2 Album 11, Columbia Iron Mining Company, Columbia Steel Company, Iron Mountain, Utah (Negative #1501-Negative #1510)

Box 4, Folder 2 Album 11, Torrance Works, Columbia Steel Company, Torrance, California (Negative #1511-Negative #1522)

Box 4, Folder 2 Album11, Boyle Manufacturing Company, Los Angeles, California (Negative #1524-Negative #1534)

Box 4, Folder 3 Album 12, Cuyahoga Works of American Steel and Wire Company, Cleveland, Ohio (Negative #1535-Negative #1591)

Box 5, Folder 1 Album 13, American Works of American Steel and Wire Company, Cleveland, Ohio (Negative #1592-Negative #1601)

Box 5, Folder 1 Album 13, Newburgh Works of American Steel and Wire Company, Cleveland, Ohio (Negative #1602-Negative #1603)

- Box 5, Folder 1 Album 13, Lorain Works, National Tube Company, Lorain, Ohio (Negative #1604-Negative #1625)
- Box 5, Folder 2 Album 14, Telegraph Department of the United States Steel Corporation, Chicago, Illinois (Negative #1626-Negative #1633)
- Box 5, Folder 2 Album 14, Buffington Indiana Plant of Universal Atlas Cement Company (Negative #1634-Negative #1637)
- Box 5, Folder 2 Album 14, The Gerrard Company, Chicago, Illinois (Negative #1642-Negative #1646)
- Box 5, Folder 2 Album 14, Waukegan Works of American Steel and Wire Company, Waukegan, Illinois (Negative #1649-Negative #1666)
- Box 5, Folder 2 Album 14, Cyclone Fence Division of American Steel and Wire Company, Waukegan, Illinois (Negative #1668-Negative #1677)
- Box 5, Folder 3 Album 15, South Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Chicago, Illinois (Negative #1678-Negative #1735)
- Box 6, Folder 1 Album 16, Gary Plant of American Bridge Company, Gary, Indiana (Negative #1736-Negative #1754)
- Box 6, Folder 1 Album 16, Gary Sheet and Tin Mill, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Gary, Indiana (Negative #1756-Negative #1775)
- Box 6, Folder 1 Album 16, Joliet Works, American Steel and Wire Company, Joliet, Illinois (Negative #1776-Negative #1798)
- Box 7, Folder 1 Album 17, Tublar Alloy Steel Corporation, Gary Indiana (Negative #1799-Negative #1817)
- Box 7, Folder 1 Album 17, Armor Plate Plant, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Gary, Indiana (Negative #1819-Negative #1837)
- Box 7, Folder 2 Album 18, Gary Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, Gary, Indiana (Negative #1838-Negative #1890)

Gary Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corp., Gary, Indiana [black and white photoprint], circa 1940-1950

1 Item (Silver gelatin on paper.; 7.5" x 9.5".)

Image(s): Gary Works, Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corp., Gary, Indiana [black and white photoprint].

Aikins, Russell Chorley, 1896-, Photographer

Printed caption: "Employees leaving Gary Works of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation at conclusion of the day shift. Over 21,000 people are employed at this plant, which is the world's largest steel mill." Large "Victory" sign in background. At left of title is printed Neg. No. 1840. Image includes several women and at least three African Americans, but most are white men. Nearly all wear hats or caps.

Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.

Local Numbers

AC1037-0000002.tif (AC Scan)

In Box 5.

Names:	Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation
Topic:	Iron and steel workers -- Indiana Steel industry and trade -- Indiana
Place:	Gary (Ind.)
Genre/ Form:	Photographs -- 1940-1950 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin

Box 7, Folder 3	Album 19, Ensley Works, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (Negative #1891-Negative #1925)
Box 7, Folder 3	Album 19, Hamilton Coal Mine, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (Negative #1926-Negative #1937)
Box 7, Folder 3	Album 19, Wenonah Ore Mine, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (Negative #1938-Negative #1949)
Box 7, Folder 3	Album 19, Dolonah Dolomite Quarry, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (Negative #1950-Negative #1955)
Box 8, Folder 1	Album 20, Fairfield Works, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (Negative #1956-Negative #2005)
Box 8, Folder 2	Album 21, Fairfield Works, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (Negative #2006-Negative #2047)