



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Chicago, Burlington
& Quincy Railroad Negatives

NMAH.AC.1080

NMAH Staff

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
archivescenter@si.edu
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Negatives
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1080
Date:	1890-1915, undated.
Extent:	2.33 Cubic feet (8 boxes)
Source:	Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Division of [former name], NMAH, SI. Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company. Work and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI
Language:	English
Summary:	The photographic images in this collection are largely of railway bridge construction and other properties owned by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company at the turn of the twentieth century. Images are of two distinct projects (mostly construction) taken in and around the St. Louis, Missouri area (1890-1900): of a bridge project (name and location unknown) spanning 1902-1903; and of the construction of the Metropolis Bridge (that crosses the Ohio River at Metropolis, Illinois, about 12 miles south of Paducah, Kentucky) between 1914-1915. For the latter project Ralph Modjeski originally served as consultant engineer and then as chief civil engineer of construction. There are also negatives of unidentified bridge construction.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Negatives

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Originally collected by the Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering (now called the Division of Work and Industry). Exact date and source of acquisition unknown.

Ownership and Custodial History

Collection transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Work and Industry in 2007.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, subject category Railroads (AC0060)

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Records, circa 1826-1943, 1951 (AC1086)

Wilbur L. Metz Collection of Railroad Ephemera, 1910-1986 (AC1172)

Northern Pacific Railway Photoprints, 1880-1945 (AC1067)

Wheeling and Lake Erie Photographs, 1925-1942 (AC1075)

Materials at Other Organizations

The Newberry Library

The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, 1820-1999

Minnesota Historical Society

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company Corporate records, 1855-1983 (bulk 1901-1970)

Processing Information

Processed by Allison Sutton (intern) and Rebecca Crist (intern); supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist, and Franklin A. Robinson Jr., archivist, March, 2010.

Preferred Citation

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Negatives, 1890-1915, undated, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection open for research on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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Biographical Note

In the later part of the 1800s and throughout the Progressive Era, the United States experienced a great expansion of its railroad industry, which resulted in many partnerships, mergers and changes in leadership. Among railroad companies that became a dominant force in the industry was the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company (originally the Aurora Branch Railroad), which was purchased in 1901 by James Jerome Hill. Hill, a businessman and resident of St. Paul, Minnesota, also owned the Great Northern Railway and other entities. Hill's other business interests included mining, timber, land, and livestock--all industries with ties to the transportation industry, and particularly to railroads as the country became more reliant upon this mode of transportation. Hill was noted for his business acumen and competition with other wealthy men and families of the time--J.P. Morgan, the Rockefellers, and E.H. Harriman of the Union Pacific--who eventually pooled their resources to form the Northern Securities Company.

Northern Securities Company was a holding company, set up to hold a controlling part of the stock of other companies, essentially to control four big railroads of the Northwest. During a period of much labor unrest and migration to the country's Midwestern and Northwestern regions, people were left at the mercy of one big conglomerate that had a stronghold on the industry. It is important to note that the Northwestern Securities Company (at President Theodore Roosevelt's request) was sued by the United States government through invocation of the Sherman Antitrust Act.

In March of 1904, the Supreme Court, by a vote of 5 to 4, ruled in favor of the United States and ordered the Northern Securities Company dissolved (Northern Securities Co. vs. United States 193 U.S. 197). While the images in this collection are not known to be tied to the court case, they do provide details of many construction projects that are significant to the railroad expansion occurring at that time. The bulk of the collection focuses on railway bridge construction. Also included are photos of the Metropolis Bridge in Metropolis, Illinois, which was overseen in part by Ralph Modjeski. Modjeski was a lauded civil engineer who wrote the engineering manual *Standard Designs for Steel Bridges* for the Northern Pacific Railway Company. Additionally, the collection includes earlier photographic negatives showing construction from 1890 to 1894 of the Mound Street Viaduct and buildings at the corner of the Main and Brooklyn Streets in St. Louis, Missouri.

Scope and Contents

The collection includes approximately 230 glass plate negatives depicting railway bridge construction; 41 negatives, dated 1890 to 1894, depicting construction and railroad facilities in St. Louis, Missouri (including the Mound Street Viaduct and the buildings at the corner of Main and Brooklyn Streets); and 36 negatives showing construction work at the Metropolis (Illinois) Bridge from 1914-1915.

Court testimony in an accidental injury claim (Kersten vs. Hines, no. 21593) indicates these sites are located in St. Louis, Missouri, and were at the time owned by the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis. The envelope containing these negatives marks them as the property of F.H. Cramer, Bridge Engineer with the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad.

Negatives in Subseries 3 are themselves undated. The containing envelope indicates the photos depict construction work at the Metropolis Bridge by Carter H. Harrison Jr., 1914-1915.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Series 1: Photographic negatives, 1890-1915, undated

Subseries 11.: Bridge construction, glass plate negatives, 1902-1903, undated

Subseries 1.2: Construction, Saint Louis (Missouri), acetate film negatives, 1890-1894, undated

Subseries 1.3: Construction, Metropolis (Illinois) Bridge, acetate film negatives, 1914-1915

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs and negatives. Special arrangements required to view negatives due to cold storage. Using negatives requires a three hour waiting period. Contact the Archives Center at 202-633-3270.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Bridges
- Railroad bridges
- Railroad companies
- Railroad tracks
- Railroads -- Buildings and structures
- Railroads -- Employees
- Railroads -- Rolling-stock

Types of Materials:

- Photographs -- Black-and-white negatives -- Acetate film -- 20th century
- Photographs -- Black-and-white negatives -- Glass -- 19th century

Names:

- Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Division of [former name], NMAH, SI.
- Modjeski, Ralph, 1861-1940
- Work and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI

Container Listing

Series 1: Photographic negatives, 1890-1915, undated

Box 1	Glass plate negatives, bridge construction, 1902
Box 2	Glass plate negatives, bridge construction, 1902-1903
Box 3	Glass plate negatives, bridge construction, 1903
Box 4	Glass plate negatives, bridge construction, 1903
Box 5	Glass plate negatives, bridge construction, undated
Box 6	Acetate film negatives, construction, St. Louis (Missouri), 1890-1894 Image(s)
Box 6	Metropolis (Illinois) Bridge construction, 1914-1915
Box 7	Unidentified glass plate negatives (broken), undated

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