



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the Haskell and Barker Car Company Photographic Negatives

NMAH.AC.1183

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Haskell and Barker Car Company Photographic Negatives
<b>Date:</b>	undated 1926-1957
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.1183
<b>Creator:</b>	Haskell & Barker Car Company
<b>Extent:</b>	13.5 Cubic feet (47 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	A collection of photograpic negatives from the Haskell and Barker Car Company, manufacturers of railroad cars, of Michigan City, Indiana.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Originally collected for the Division of Transportation (now the Division of Work & Industry) reference files. Date and source of acquisition unknown.

### Provenance

Transferred from the Division of Work and Industry, Transportation Collections to the Archives Center, National Museum of American History in 2009.

### Other Finding Aids

An [inventory](#) for Haskell and Barker Car Company Photographic Negatives is available.

### Processing Information

The original guide to the Haskell and Barker Car Company Photographic Collection was authored by John N. Stine and typed by Mary E. Braunagel in 1991. Revised by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., archivist, May 2013.

### Preferred Citation

Haskell and Barker Car Company Photographic Negatives, 1926-1957, undated, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Special arrangements required to view negatives due to cold storage. Using negatives requires a three hour waiting period. Contact the Archives Center for information at [archivescenter@si.edu](mailto:archivescenter@si.edu) or 202-633-3270.

## Conditions Governing Use

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

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## Biographical / Historical

In 1852, the wagon and freight car firm of Sherman, Haskell, Aldridge & Company was founded in Michigan City, Indiana on the shores of Lake Michigan. The founders of the company were Dr. Mason C. Sherman, Frederick Haskell (1810-1890), and Hiram Aldridge, Haskell's brother-in-law. The three reportedly had moved to Michigan City from Ogdensburg, New York. Sherman left the firm in 1855 and sold his interest to John Barker (1818-1878). Barker, a merchant and grain broker, had originally come from Andover, Massachusetts to Michigan City in 1835. The firm's name was changed to Haskell, Barker & Aldridge. In addition to rail cars the firm produced Woodbury corn shelling threshing machines and J.J. Mann reapers. Upon Aldridge's retirement in 1858 the firm became known simply as Haskell & Barker. In 1871 the firm was incorporated as the Haskell & Barker Car Company. Haskell became president, Barker treasurer, and Nathaniel P. Rogers secretary. Rogers had joined the firm in 1864 as an accountant. John Barker retired in 1869, and his son John H. Barker joined the firm. Haskell retired in 1883, and John H. Barker became president with Rogers as secretary and treasurer. John H. Barker and Rogers ran the company until Rogers' death in 1906.

Haskell & Barker initially manufactured passenger and wood-structure freight rail cars. By the late 1850s they had ceased manufacture of passenger cars and devoted themselves strictly to freight cars. The American Civil War brought a surge in business because of government contracts. This increase in business not only grew the company but made it one of the largest employers in Indiana and one of the wealthiest.

The company at one time produced 15,000 cars a year and in 1907 was the largest factory complex in Indiana, covering fifty-one acres along Eighth and Wabash Streets. In 1907 there were 990,000 feet of factory space. The south yards consisted of 1,308,344 square feet on 109 acres. In 1913, Haskell & Barker suffered a massive fire at the south yards. In 1916 it became known as Haskell & Barker, Inc. After 1922 it was a subsidiary of the Pullman Car Company and in 1934 became known as the Haskell & Barker Shops of Pullman-Standard. It returned to manufacturing passenger cars briefly during World War II.

The factory is said to have been the birthplace of the modern assembly line, an innovation often credited to Henry Ford. The factory also produced the PS-1, the first standardized box car on American railroads. As the company entered the late 20th century, production shifted to other locations and the company announced the closing of the facility in December of 1970. At that time the workforce numbered seventy with over 1,000 workers having been laid off. The physical plant suffered a massive fire in July 1973 which totally destroyed the entire complex. Only two buildings survived, the original Haskell & Barker office built in 1914 and the machine shop next door. A warehouse on the north side of the complex also escaped the fire but was later razed.

The site of the Haskell & Barker factory site was made into an outlet shopping mall named Lighthouse Place, with the Pullman Cafe in the surviving Pullman buildings. The shopping center, renamed Prime Outlets by 2007, was at the time Michigan City's biggest attraction with over 3 million visitors.

Frederick Haskell was born in East Windsor, Connecticut in 1810, the son of Eli B. Haskell (1778-1861) and Sophia Bissell (1785-1816). He married Caroline E. Aldridge (1822-1900) on November 11, 1852 in Chazy, Clinton County, New York. Haskell was a dry goods merchant, as well as a miller and textile manufacturer before moving to Michigan City and becoming involved with Haskell & Barker. He and Caroline adopted a son, Frederick Tudor Haskell (1854-1935). Haskell retired in 1883 and sold his interests in the company. He died on May 6, 1890 in Chicago, Illinois and was buried in Ogdensburg Cemetery, Ogdensburg, New York. His estate was valued at \$1,635,000 and was left to his wife, various relations, and his adopted son.

John Barker married Cordelia Collamer (1818-1894) and the couple had at least two children, Anna and a son, John Henry Barker (1844-1910). John H. joined the company in 1869 upon the retirement of his father. John H. had been successfully engaged in the wholesale grocery business in Chicago and later in Springfield, Illinois prior to his return to Michigan City. John H. became the General Manger of the company, and in 1883 he became President. By 1910 he was worth an estimated fifty to sixty million dollars. The company became prosperous enough that John H. built a substantial mansion on Washington Street in Michigan City in 1905. This mansion was later listed on the National Register of Historic Places. John Barker was also president of the Harbor Company and played an instrumental role in many improvements in Michigan City, including erecting a bandstand in Washington Park. John H. was married twice. His first marriage was to Jennie M. Brooks (1843-1891). They had three children, who all died before the age of five. He married his second wife, Katherine Fitzgerald (circa 1858-1910) in 1893. They had one daughter, Catherine (1896-1970) who later married Charles V. Hickox. Both John H. and his wife died in 1910, and they were buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Michigan City.

### **Sources**

Egelhof, Joseph, "Chicago Leads Nation As Rail Supply Source", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 13, 1952.

Harper, Charlton E. *Railway Car Builders of the United States and Canada*. New York, NY: Interurban Press, 1957.

"Our Heritage", The Michigan City News Dispatch, 1976. <http://www.mclib.org/ourheri1.htm>

"A Look Back", The Michigan City News Dispatch, 2007.

Sederberg, Deborah, "Book takes a look back at Washington Park history", [thenewsd Dispatch.com](http://thenewsd Dispatch.com), May 13, 2011. [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com) (last accessed April 25, 2013 and May 1, 2013.)

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## **Scope and Contents**

An extensive and detailed guide to this collection was produced by John N. Stine of the Division of Transportation, National Museum of American History in 1991 and typed by Mary E. Braunagel, published by the Smithsonian Institution. The guide gives the negative number and a brief description or caption to each negative. The negatives are film and not glass plate. The collection was also scanned to video disc. The following quotes are from the Division of Transportation guide.

"A collection of photographs documenting the Haskell and Barker Car Company's activities from 1926 to 1957. The gaps between negative numbers assigned by Haskell and Barker indicate that a portion were either discarded by the photographer or removed from the file and not replaced. Although the car building operation at Michigan City, Indiana began in 1852, the photos listed in this catalogue represent the complete holdings of the Division of Transportation", and these represent the complete holdings transferred to the Archives Center.

"A great deal of attention has been directed at the operation of the plant. Shop scenes recording special tooling, testing of car components and the construction or upgrading of the car building plant are plentiful. In some instances a car is photographed during each step of construction, others only after completion. Occasionally a car was returned to the plant for a rebuild either due to its becoming obsolete or due to major damage. In any case, these repairs are well documented."

"Scenes showing shop personnel operating car building equipment or engaged in the assembly of rolling stock are abundant."

"This is a very fine collection in that it deviates from the standard practice of recording finished cars and concentrates on the daily operation of the building plant. Except for some World War II troop sleeper views, all of the pictures are of railroad freight stock: box, hopper, refrigerator, tank, flat, and cabooses."

"The photos themselves range in quality from fair to excellent." From the Division of Transportation guide to the *Haskell and Barker Car Company, Michigan City, Indiana, Photographic Collection*, 1991. Copies of this

guide are available in the Archives Center reading room and at the National Museum of American History library.

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## Arrangement

This collection is arranged in one series. The photographic negatives are arranged by negative number assigned by Smithsonian Photographic Services within broad chronological order.

### **Series 1: Photographic Negatives, 1926-1957, undated**

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Freight cars
- Railroad companies
- Railroads -- 20th century -- United States
- Railroads -- Rolling-stock
- Railroads -- Trains

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Photographic Negatives, 1926-1957, undated

Language: English.

Box 1	Photographic negatives, 1369-1832, 1926-1931
Box 2	Photographic negatives, 1833-2058, 1931-1936
Box 3	Photographic negatives, 2060-2205, 1936-1937
Box 4	Photographic negatives, 2206-2376, 1937-1938
Box 5	Photographic negatives, 2377-2511, 1938-1939
Box 6	Photographic negatives, 2513-2632, 1939-1940
Box 8	Photographic negatives, 2746-2897, 1940
Box 7	Photographic negatives, 2633-2745, 1940
Box 9	Photographic negatives, 2898-3019, 1940-1941
Box 10	Photographic negatives, 3020-3254, 1941
Box 11	Photographic negatives, 3255-3395, 1941-1942
Box 12	Photographic negatives, 3396-3500, 1942
Box 13	Photographic negatives, 3502-3993, 1942-1943
Box 14	Photographic negatives, 3994-4236, 1943-1944
Box 15	Photographic negatives, 4239-4516, 1944-1945
Box 16	Photographic negatives, 4522-4712, 1945
Box 17	Photographic negatives, 4713-4872, 1945-1946
Box 18	Photographic negatives, 4873-5008, 1946
Box 19	Photographic negatives, 5009-5113, 1946
Box 20	Photographic negatives, 5116-5261, 1945-1947
Box 21	Photographic negatives, 5262-5379, 1947

Box 22	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 5380-5492, 1947</a>
Box 23	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 5493-5616, 1947</a>
Box 24	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 5617-5745, 1947</a>
Box 25	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 5746-5859, 1947-1948</a>
Box 26	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 5860-6054, 1948</a>
Box 27	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 6055-6195, 1948</a>
Box 28	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 6196-6345, 1948-1949</a>
Box 29	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 6346-6478, 1949</a>
Box 30	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 6479-6634, 1949</a>
Box 31	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 6635-6812, 1949-1950</a>
Box 32	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 6814-6986, 1950-1951</a>
Box 33	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 6987-7164, 1951</a>
Box 34	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 7165-7337, 1951-1952</a>
Box 35	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 7338-7498, 1952</a>
Box 36	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 7499-7681, 1952</a>
Box 37	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 7682-7858, 1952-1953</a>
Box 38	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 7859-8150, 1953</a>
Box 39	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 8151-8362, 1953-1954</a>
Box 40	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 8363-8523, 1954</a>
Box 41	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 8524-8674, 1954-1955</a>
Box 42	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 8675-8870, 1955</a>
Box 43	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 8871-9034, 1955-1956</a>
Box 44	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 9035-9186, 1956</a>
Box 45	<a href="#">Photographic negatives, 9187-9315, 1928-1957, undated</a>



Box 46	Photographic negatives, unnumbered, 1926-1949, undated
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Box 47	Photographic negatives, unnumbered, 1924-1955, undated
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