

Collection #  
P 0382

**UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION. GARY WORKS  
GARY WORKS AND GARY (INDIANA)  
TOWNSITE CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS,  
CA. 1906–1907**

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 18 black-and-white photographs (3¾ x 3½ inches; 9.5 x 9 centimeters or smaller)

COLLECTION DATES: Circa 1906–circa 1907

PROVENANCE: Marilyn and Johan Hansen, Brunswick, Maine, December 2000

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Workmen's Houses, Gary, Indiana Photographs (P 0374)

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 2001.0106; 2001.0173; 2001.0174; 2001.0367

NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Construction of the United States Steel Corporation, Gary Works plant at Gary, Indiana, began in summer 1906. The plant was also known as the Indiana Steel Company plant. The Indiana Steel Company was a subsidiary of the Illinois Steel Company, which was a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation (U. S. Steel). U. S. Steel had purchased 9,000 acres on Lake Michigan in Indiana in 1905 for a new steel plant and townsite. The area was accessible by water and rail to Minnesota, Michigan, and Kentucky. These states that produced raw materials used in the steel industry. The site could also be easily linked by rail to Chicago. The Gary Works plant became operational in summer 1908.

Engineers employed by U. S. Steel platted the townsite of Gary in spring and summer 1906. The Gary Land Company, also a subsidiary of U. S. Steel, managed construction of the plant site and development of the townsite. Buildings at the plant were under construction, and temporary businesses were operating in the townsite by fall 1906, but the Gary Land Company had made few provisions for the immediate housing needs of the construction workers and laborers. U. S. Steel directed its financial and human resources mainly towards construction of the Indiana Steel Company plant. Originally, approximately \$65 million was directed towards townsite and plant construction, but money from the town budget was used to build industrial facilities.

In response to the housing shortage, construction workers and laborers built shacks or pitched tents adjacent to the construction site. These workers included African Americans, immigrants from Europe, transient laborers, and their families. The Gary Land Company built 506 permanent houses in the “first subdivision” between 1906 and 1909. The first subdivision extended south from Fourth Avenue to the Wabash Railroad tracks at Ninth Avenue, east to Tennessee Street, and west to Fillmore Street. Company officials and executives bought or rented most of these homes. Fifty homes were rented to European immigrants, many of whom offset high rents by operating the residences as boarding houses.

### Sources:

Lane, James B. *City of the Century: A History of Gary, Indiana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978. General Collection: F534.G37L3 1978

Lane, James B., and Ronald D. Cohen. *Gary, Indiana, A Pictorial History*. Norfolk, Virginia: Donning, 1983. General Collection: F534.G37L35 1983

McShane, Stephen G. (smcshane@iun.edu) electronic mail submission to Pamela Tranfield (Visual Collections Archivist) 19 January 2001

Mohl, Raymond A., and Neil Batten. *Steel City: Gary, Indiana, 1906–1950*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986. General Collection: F534.G37M64 1983

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains eighteen original black-and-white photographs that document the construction of industrial buildings, the townsite, and dwellings in Gary, Indiana. The images date from circa 1906 to circa 1907. Most photographs show industrial buildings at various phases of construction, including the United States Steel Corporation, Gary Works plant. Other images show steam-powered cranes leveling sand dunes (folder 3) and views of laborers and horses in construction areas (folder 1). Photographs of dwellings include shacks likely built by construction workers or laborers. These include a view of buildings in the “Main Camp” (folder 1) and a hut built of trees, grasses, and straw (folder 2). Two photographs (folders 2 and 3) show stores on Broadway Street that catered to construction workers and laborers.

The photographer or previous owners of this collection identified the photographs in ink and pencil on the back of the images. Two photographs are labeled as the “Illinois Steel Works at Gard [sic] Indiana” (folders 1 and 3), and one image is identified both as “Gary Ind.” and “Gary, Ill.” (folder 4). This ambiguity may have arisen from the fact that the United States Steel Corporation operated plants in the Chicago area under the name Illinois Steel Company. The photographer, or individual who owned or used the photographs may not have been familiar with the corporate relationship between U. S. Steel, the Illinois Steel Company, and the Indiana Steel Company.

The processor transcribed the information written on the photographs onto acid-free mat board. The mat board was then inserted with the photograph into a protective sleeve. Researchers are asked not to remove the mat board from behind the photographs, as all the information on the images has been transcribed onto the mat board. The processor included information in square brackets ([ ]) when necessary in order to clarify ambiguities in the original annotations. The images are arranged in four folders based on subject content and the size of the items.

The images of workers’ homes in this collection complement photographs found in the visual collection P 0374, “Workmen’s Houses, Gary, Indiana Photograph Album.” The homes shown in P 0374 were built approximately ten years after the photographs in this collection were made. Skilled workers and their families bought most of those homes.

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Levelling sand hills for roadways, Machine, Carpenter & Blacksmiths shops in distance. Illinois Steel Wks Gard [Gary], Ind.	Folder 1
One of sixteen sand cuttings nearly a mile long. Illinois Steel Wks. Gard [Gary] Ind.	Folder 1
Lumber station—Lumber for the first permanent dwellings in Gary, Ind.	Folder 2
Building first permanent residences on Van Buren St., Gary, Ind.	Folder 2
Hut built of trees filled in with grasses and straw—foundations for the main office of Ind. Steel Co. in distance	Folder 2
First stores on Gary Broadway, Gary, Ind.	Folder 2
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The Works Office Bldg.	Folder 3
Orangefield Crane Excavating for sewer in town	Folder 3
Steam sand shovel at work. Illinois Steel Wks Gard [Gary] Ind.	Folder 3
Open Hearth Buildings under construction	Folder 4
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machine shop from the north side. Illinois Steel Works Gard [Gary] Ind. Gary Ill. [sic]	Folder 4
Foundation of Electric Power Station	Folder 4