EDWIN P. BELKnap COLLECTION
1888-1976

Collection Information

Biographical Sketch

Historical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Cataloging Information

Processed by
Pamela Tranfield
8 January 2003
Revised 27 August 2004

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:
4 boxes photographs, 1 oversize box photographs, 2 folders oversize photographs, 1 oversize box graphics, 5 folders oversize graphics, 16 flat file folders oversize graphics, 13 boxes manuscripts, 2 oversize boxes manuscripts, 1 rolled item, 1 box acetate negatives

COLLECTION DATES:
1888-1976

PROVENANCE:
Edwin P. Belknap, Anderson, Indiana

RESTRICTIONS:
For conservation reasons linen trace drawings and blueprints
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF EDWIN P. BELKNAP

Railway enthusiast Edwin P. Belknap of Anderson, Indiana, accumulated this collection before circa 1980. His desire to collect was motivated by an interest in railway history. In the 1960s Belknap was researching the history of the Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company and the Indianapolis and Southeastern Railroad. Material in the collection indicates that Belknap had worked for the Central Indiana and Pennsylvania Railway.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF MAJOR RAILROADS IN THE COLLECTION

Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company

Randal Morgan, W. Kesley Schoepf, and Hugh J. McGowan formed the Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company (THI&E) on 1 March 1907. The Indianapolis and Western Railway, the Indianapolis and Eastern Railway, the Richmond Street and Interurban Railway, and the Indianapolis Coal Traction Company were predecessor companies. On 25 March 1907 the THI&E acquired the Terre Haute Traction and Light Company and in 1912 purchased the Indianapolis, Crawfordsville and Danville Electric Railway. The company also controlled the Indianapolis Street Railway. Profits from the street railway and the power company assured the survival of the THI&E through the 1920s but the company went into receivership on 2 April 1930. The Danville, Martinsville, Lafayette, and Crawfordsville lines were abandoned on 31 October 1930. The Sullivan and Clinton lines ceased operations in spring 1931. The United Midland Corporation purchased the company at auction on 23 June 1931 and incorporated the remaining portions of the line into the Indiana Railroad system.

Union Traction Company of Indiana

Charles L. Henry of Anderson, Indiana, organized the Indiana Union Traction Company circa 1897. W. Kesley Schoepf and Hugh J. McGowan controlled the company starting in 1902. In 1912 Union Traction leased the line between Indianapolis and New Castle (formerly the Indianapolis, New Castle and Toledo Railway) and operated the New Castle and Eastern Traction Company. The company began construction of a line north from New Castle to Muncie in 1913, and leased the Muncie and Portland Traction Company beginning in 1916.

By the 1920s the Union Traction Company of Indiana was operating 410 miles of interurban line across the state, and approximately 44 miles of street railway track in Anderson, Marion, Muncie, and Elwood. Passenger traffic began to
decline after 1917 and the company went bankrupt in 1925. Receiver Arthur Brady operated the company until 1930. Midland United purchased the Union Traction Company on 2 July 1930.

**Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company**

Charles L. Henry founded the Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company circa 1902. A line from Indianapolis to Shelbyville was completed in 1907. The line went into receivership in 1906, but continued to operate until 1929. That year Henry reorganized the company as the Indianapolis and Southeastern Railroad Company, which operated until 1932.

**Indiana Service Corporation**

Incorporated 15 January 1920, the Indiana Service Corporation operated interurban lines across Indiana. These lines included the Fort Wayne and Northern Indiana Traction Company, the Fort Wayne, Van Wert, and Lima Traction Company, the Marion & Bluffton Traction Company. After 1930 the company operated as the Indiana Railroad system. Assets of the Indiana Railroad system were liquidated in 1941.

**Public Service Company of Indiana**

The Interstate Public Service Company line ran from Louisville to Indianapolis on track that paralleled the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Indianapolis, Greenfield and Franklin Railroad (IGFR) began construction on the line south of Indianapolis in 1895. In 1903 the IGFR became the Indianapolis, Columbus, and Southern Traction Company. The Indianapolis, Columbus, and Southern pushed construction south to Seymour, Indiana by 1906.

Samuel Insull began construction of the Louisville and Southern Indiana Traction Company line to Indianapolis from Louisville in 1903. Insull’s Louisville and Northern Railway Lighting Company controlled the line starting in 1905. Insull acquired the Indianapolis, Columbus and Southern Traction Company in 1912 and organized the Interstate Public Service Company that same year.

The Interstate Public Service Company also operated street railways in Jefferson, New Albany, and Columbus, Indiana. The company was reorganized in 1931 as the Public Service Company of Indiana and was operated by the Indiana Railroad.

**Marion & Bluffton Traction Company**

The Marion & Bluffton Traction Company was organized in 1914 following the bankruptcy of the Marion, Bluffton and Eastern Traction Company. The line ran from Marion, Indiana, to points in Ohio and was absorbed by the Indiana Service Corporation in 1926.

**Central Indiana Railway Company**

Incorporated 16 March 1903, the Central Indiana Railway Company was operated jointly by the Chicago and Southeastern Railway Company and the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Chicago and Southeastern Railway Company had acquired the trackage from the Midland Railway Company in 1891. The Central Indiana ran from Muncie to Brazil, Indiana, but was never a profitable company. Poor maintenance on the line, the use of old equipment, and the increased use of automobiles were reasons for line’s demise. In September 1928 the Interstate Commerce Commission approved a petition by the railway’s board of directors to abandon the track between Muncie and Anderson, Ladoga and Waveland, and from Sand Creek to Brazil. The Advance-Ladoga section was abandoned in 1929. The last abandonment occurred between Lebanon and Advance in 1943. Ike Duffey purchased the remaining portion of the line (between Anderson and Lebanon) in 1951. Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) took over the line in 1976.

**Pennsylvania Railroad**

Chartered on 13 April 1846, the Pennsylvania Railroad financed and operated railways in Indiana beginning in 1847. In 1968 the company merged with the New York Central Railroad, and renamed the Penn Central Transportation Company. The company declared bankruptcy in 1970. Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) took over the system in 1976.
**Wabash Valley Coach Company, Southern Limited, Inc.**

The Wabash Valley Coach Company operated bus services from Terre Haute, Indiana to points across the United States, including, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, and Dallas. The Southern Limited, Inc. bus company operated from Chicago to New Orleans.

**Sources:**

Material in the collection.


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**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection consists of business records, correspondence, personnel records, black-and-white photographs, color photographs, albums, maps, blueprints, linen trace drawings, graphics, and ephemera. Interurban and other railroad companies that operated in Indiana during the 19th and 20th centuries generated most of the material. Other material in the collection consists of manuscript material, black-and-white and color photographs, cellulose acetate negatives, color negatives, and clippings accumulated by Edwin P. Belknap for research purposes and personal enjoyment.

The processor organized the collection into two series: Photographs and Negatives; and Manuscripts, Printed Material, and Graphics. Folders within each series are grouped by company name (with companies containing the largest amount of material first), according to Edwin P. Belknap’s original filing system, and by subject files, as designated by the processor. Folder or item titles designated by the processor are enclosed in square brackets ([ ]). Other item titles, specifically those derived from individual items, were transcribed as written. These titles may include abbreviations or variations to company names. Following this Scope and Content Note is an alphabetical listing of most of the railway companies represented in the collection, with box locations.

**Series 1.** Photographs, includes black-and-white and color photographs made between circa 1890 and 1972. Most photographs are not dated. The images include views of railway cars, stations and other buildings, track construction, and railway employees. Photographs made between 1962 and 1972 show abandoned cars and relics along the former Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company lines. Color photographs include views of working engines on the Central Indiana Railway. Albums include views of railroad activity during the late 19th and 20th centuries, mainly on the Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company and Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company lines.

**Series 2.** Manuscripts, Printed Material, and Graphics comprises the bulk of the collection. The material includes business records, correspondence, timetables, maps, blueprints, linen trace drawings, drawings, and ephemera created by interurban and other railway companies that operated in Indiana in the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. The major railway companies represented include the Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company, the Union Traction Company of Indiana, the Central Indiana Railway Company, the Indianapolis & Cincinnati Traction Company, and the Pennsylvania Railway. The Pennsylvania Railway records consist mainly of reports regarding rail failures in the Fort Wayne District in 1961 and 1962. The series also contains blueprints and linen trace drawings made by the following interurban and railway car manufacturers: the Cincinnati Car Corporation, the Jewett Car Company, the Thew Company, the St. Louis Car Company. Manuscript material from manufacturers includes material from the American Car and Foundry Company, the Unity Equipment Company, the Haffner Thrall Car Company, the Interstate Car Company, and the McGuire-Cummings Manufacturing Company.

Other material in this series includes correspondence between Edwin P. Belknap and other railway enthusiasts. Information in this correspondence includes details regarding the history of the Indianapolis & Cincinnati Railroad Company, and the Indianapolis and Southeastern Railway Company. Clippings in this series concern railway history in
Indiana. Items concerning the Wabash Valley Coach Company include timetables from 1926-1937, and a letter regarding annual passes.

The spelling and style of corporate names, as written on the items in the collection, is not consistent from item to item. For example, the name “Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Eastern Traction Company” was also written as “Terre Haute, Indianapolis & Eastern Traction Company.” The variant spellings and styles may reflect usages of the companies over the years. Also, a particular corporate name, as written on one item, may have been accurate at the time the item was created but changed later in the company’s history. For this reason, researchers who are searching this collection guide online through a “Find” command may wish to search using place-names associated with company names (e. g., Terre Haute, Cincinnati, or Indiana).

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[Sperry Car, Ft. Wayne District, Defects Removed from Track, February 1961]

[Sperry Car, Ft. Wayne District, Defects Removed, Sub. Div. #5, February 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #1 & #2, February 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #7, February 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #9, February 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #1 & #2, March 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #5 & #7, March 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #9, March 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #1, #2, #4, May 1961]

[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #7 & 9,
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[Rail Failures, Ft. Wayne District, Sub. Div. #2, #4, #7, #9, June 1961] Manuscript Collections: Box 11, Folder 4


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**Various Railroads, circa 1903–circa 1970s**

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