# PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD
## ELEVATED TRACK CONSTRUCTION
### PHOTOGRAPHS, 1918–1923

**Collection Information**

**Biographical/Historical Sketch**

**Scope and Content Note**

**Series Contents**

**Cataloging Information**

Processed by

Stephen J. Fletcher  
2000  
Revised by Dorothy Nicholson  
21 May 2004

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

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**COLLECTION INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</th>
<th>1 box of photographs, 1 box of oversized photographs, 1 oversized folder of photographs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTION DATES:</td>
<td>1918–1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVENANCE:</td>
<td>St. Joseph County Archives &amp; Records, 1140 S. Lafayette Blvd.,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Herschel G. Wray was born in Oxford, Ohio, on 20 April 1890. Wray received a civil engineering degree from Purdue University in 1913, and began his career with the Pennsylvania Railroad in June of that year. He was married to Ruth C. Irvin on 14 October 1914 in Union County, Indiana.

He worked with the Pennsylvania Railroad for ten years where he was in charge of grade separation construction in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Cleveland, Ohio. After completion of this project, Wray joined the Indianapolis city engineering staff as assistant engineer. Following this he became the city engineer of South Bend, Indiana, in January 1926. He returned to Indianapolis to form his own consulting business in 1935. From 1940 to 1949 Wray served with the War Department and the United States Corp of Engineers. He then joined a Chicago firm as a public relations engineer.

After his retirement Wray resided in Liberty, Indiana, where he served on the town council. Indiana Governor George N. Craig appointed Wray to the State Highway Commission in April 1953. Three months later while on a visit to Indianapolis he suffered a fatal heart attack and died on 3 July 1953.

The Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railway was created through mergers on 29 August 1890. On 1 January 1917, through more mergers with the Vandalia Railroad and other smaller lines, the company was reorganized as the Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad, which came to be operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad on 1 January 1921.

The “elevated tracks movement” in Indianapolis was a controversial topic at the end of the 19th century, with political and legal battles going on for years between local civic and political leaders. Railroad tracks in the city, especially those surrounding Union Station and running south of the Warehouse District, created the dual problems of traffic congestion and public safety. Progress was slow but by 1888 a tunnel was constructed under the tracks on Illinois Street, and later in 1905 a temporary trestle was built at East 10th Street and Massachusetts Avenue. It was not until 1912 that the first large-scale track elevation project of the Pennsylvania Railroad began in Indianapolis. The photographs in this collection document part of that project from 1918 to 1922.

Sources:
“Dynamic Men of South Bend,” *South Bend Tribune*, 13 May 1927.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains photographs that document two railroad construction projects: the construction of railroad track elevations and facilities in the mile-square area of Indianapolis between 1918 and 1922, and a track elevation project in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1923. The photographs were once owned by Herschel G. Wray, the Pennsylvania Railroad’s chief engineer for the projects.

The images are arranged in two series to reflect the two separate construction projects. Researchers will find that most of the photographs have captions written in the lower right corner with the date, image number, and location of the scene. Each series of photographs is arranged in numerical order beginning with the earliest date. In the Contents section of the collection guide the processor has written an abbreviated description of the images in square brackets [ ], noting the street names and buildings from the captions along with the range of the image numbers and the dates.

Series 1: Indianapolis, Indiana, documents the progress of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s elevated track construction between 1918 and 1922. The images dated 6 September 1918 to 22 October 1919 have captions that identify them as either the Indianapolis or Louisville divisions of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad. The remaining photographs omit this identification.

Series 2: Cleveland, Ohio, depicts a Pennsylvania Railroad track elevation project in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1923. The images have captions that begin “Cleve. Trk. Elev.” followed by a “GR” number. Street names found on the captions and signs seen in the photographs confirm that this set of photographs was made in Cleveland, Ohio. These photographs, dated from 18 May to 1 June 1923, illustrate only a two-week period during this project.

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Series 1: Indianapolis, Indiana

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P 0383).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.