

Collection #
P 0676

**ST. JOSEPH VALLEY RAILWAY
PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1908-1915**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half-size photograph box

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1908-1915

PROVENANCE: William J. Decker, Anderson, Indiana

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2018.0005

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The St. Joseph Valley Traction Company was financed, built, and operated by the wealthy Herbert Elijah Bucklen (b. 1848, d. 1916) of Elkhart, Indiana. Bucklen made his fortune as a druggist by patenting a salve which he called "Bucklen's Arnica Salve." As an entrepreneur, Bucklen decided to get into railroads by building and operating a line that would connect the gap between the Chicago and Toledo interurban lines. Unfortunately, Bucklen was not able to completely connect the two lines, falling short in Columbia, Ohio.

Construction began in 1903 at LaGrange, Indiana, the midpoint location and eventual operating headquarters. While operation began in 1905, the track did not reach Elkhart to the west until 1911 and Columbia, Williams County, Ohio to the east until 1915. The eastern segment of the line was technically the St. Joseph Valley Railway, though it also leased the line west of LaGrange. The St. Joseph Valley Traction Company and the St. Joseph Valley Railway were two separate entities that essentially operated as one.

Bucklen wanted the entire railway line to be electric, but only about nine miles of it between Elkhart and Bristol were electrified. The line was known for operating a variety of trains including electric, gas, gas-electric, steam, chain driven, and even a storage battery car. The line functioned for both passengers and freight, but was not an in demand route and only serviced a few sparsely populated towns. The lack of use in addition to multiple wrecks and Bucklen's death in 1916 led to the abandonment of the railway line in 1918.

Sources:

Ancestry.com

Simons, Richard S. and Francis H. Parker, Railroads of Indiana. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. [HE 2771 .I6 S56 1997]

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains black and white photographs of trains and stations on the St. Joseph Valley Railway (ca. 1908-1916) and includes the following locations: LaGrange, Orland, Angola, Berlien, Bristol, Shipshewana, Mongo, Elkhart, Middlebury, and Crooked Lake. There are also two time tables.

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CONTENTS

St. Joseph Valley Railway, Time Tables, 1908; 1915

Gas Trains 130, 151, 171-174, and 204-205, ca. 1914

Gas-Electric Train 101 and Trailer 102, n.d.

Electric Trains 2-10, 202-217, and 505, n.d.

Steam Trains 107 & 121-127, n.d.

Unidentified Trains, n.d.

Grading and Ditching Cars, n.d.; No. 19 Fairbanks-Morse Gas Passenger Car, n.d.

Train Stations-Lagrange, Bristol, Berlien, Middlebury, and Mongo, n.d.

CONTAINER

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 4

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 5

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