

Collection #
P 0320

UNIVERSAL ATLAS CEMENT COMPANY COLLECTION, 1927–1939

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	3 folders of photographs, 3 panorama photographs, 1 folder of newspaper clippings, 5 pamphlets
COLLECTION DATES:	1927–1939
PROVENANCE:	Frederic L Kempster, Omaha, Nebraska, 1986

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1986.0714

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Through the 1930s, the Universal Atlas Cement Company operated a Portland cement plant at Buffington Harbor five miles west of Gary, Indiana. The company, a U. S. Steel Corporation subsidiary, formed in 1930 when the Universal Portland Cement Company and the Atlas Cement Company merged. Portland cement is made by combining limestone or limestone dust with slag, then burning or grinding the resulting product.

The Cement Department of the Illinois Steel Corporation opened the first Portland mill at the Buffington site in 1903. The Universal Portland Cement Company took over operations in 1906. J. H. Kempster was the general superintendent of the plant during the 1920s and oversaw construction of a pier and storage facilities at the site. The port, named Buffington Harbor after Illinois Steel Company president E. J. Buffington, opened 9 June 1927.

United States vice-president Charles Dawes formally opened the port with the raising of flags over the harbor. Over 3,000 people attended the dockside ceremonies, which included speeches, music, and demonstrations of automated stevedoring equipment.

The pier at Buffington Harbor measured 3200 square feet, and the basin covered fifty-five acres. An electrical conveyer belt carried material from the dock to storage facilities at the rate of six tons per minute.

Beginning in 1924, the Portland Cement Association awarded a trophy to those Portland cement plants that maintained a perfect safety record over a calendar year. The Buffington Harbor plant won the award for accident-free years in 1934 and 1938. The concrete and granite trophy occupied a patch of ground at the entrance to the plant.

Sources:

Items in the collection.

“Dawes Raises Flag at Opening of Buffington,” *The Gary Post-Tribune*, 10 June 1927,

p. 1.

“Open New Gary Lake Harbor Today,” *The Gary Post-Tribune*, 9 June 1927, p. 5.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains fifteen photographs, mostly of crowds and dignitaries at ceremonial events at the Universal Atlas Cement Company Plant, Buffington Harbor, near Gary, Indiana. The donor wrote captions on the verso of each photograph, identifying individuals and supplying dates.

There are six photographs of opening ceremonies at Buffington Harbor in 1927. The images include three panoramic views of the dock, with the freighter *E.J. Buffington* in port. In other photographs, United States vice-president Charles

Dawes stands with Indiana senator James Watson; and E. J. Buffington, president of the Illinois Steel Corporation. Kaufmann and Fabry of Chicago made the panoramic views; and one aerial view of the harbor. Pacific and Atlantic Photos, Inc., of New York City made at least one image of the Buffington Harbor opening.

Nine photographs show the rededication of a safety trophy at the plant in 1939. Officials in these photographs include: J. H. Kempster, general superintendent of the Buffington plant; J. B. Lewis, assistant general superintendent of the Buffington plant; and Blaine Smith, president of Universal Atlas Cement Company. Fred G. Korth of Chicago made the photographs.

Newspaper clippings in the collection are articles from the *Gary-Times*, and *Gary Post-Tribune* on the following: the opening of the Buffington plant in 1927, Universal Atlas Portland Cement Company Barge No. 51, a tour by Rotarians of the Buffington plant about 1930, and the safety trophy rededication ceremony in 1939.

The five pamphlets in the collection are on industrial safety at the Buffington plant, and technology in the cement industry in Indiana between 1910 and 1939. J. H. Kempster wrote *Portland Cement as a Byproduct* in 1910 as an address to the Chicago Section of the American Chemical Society. The article describes the history of Portland cement, and cement production standards. Kempster's paper "Dust Collection and Prevention and Packing and Grinding Departments," given at the Annual Meeting of the Portland Cement Association in Chicago in 1926, discusses developments in dust collection technology. Two pamphlets commemorate the dedication and rededication of the company safety trophy in 1935 and 1939. The 1939 publication includes a history of the Buffington Plant and a description of the harbor. The pamphlets are maintained by individual catalog number and stored in the pamphlet storage area.

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Aerial view of Buffington Harbor

Buffington Harbor opening 1927

Three panorama photographs of Buffington Harbor pier, crowd, and officials at opening, 9 June 1939

Safety trophy rededication, 30 June 1939

Newspaper clippings

Accident Prevention magazine. Vol. 21, No. 1 (May 1935)

Safety Trophy Dedication: Buffington Plant. Thursday, June 27, 1935.

Safety Trophy Rededication: Buffington Plant. Friday June 30, 1939.

Portland Cement as a By-Product

Symposium on Dust Collection

CONTAINER

Photographs, Folder 1

Photographs, Folder 2

Oversized photographs,
Flat Files: FF1-a

Photographs, Folder 3

Photographs, Folder 4

Printed Collections:
Pamphlet
TP881.A2

Printed Collections:
Pamphlet Q
HD9622.U54 U5 1935

Printed Collections:
Pamphlet
HD9622.U54 U52 1939

Printed Collections:
Pamphlet
TP881.K4 1910

Printed Collections:
Pamphlet

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://157.91.92.2/>
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 0320).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.