This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

PROVENANCE

Andrew F. Laas and Gilbert Laas, sons of Frederick Laas, donated this collection to University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection on 6 January 2005, SHSMO-RA1098.

DESCRIPTION

This is a collection of printed railroadiana including timetables, schedules, brochures, paper ephemera and miscellaneous items pertaining mostly to passenger operations on North American railroads, ca. 1940s—1990s. The materials were assembled by Frederick Hulett Laas, a lifelong railfan. Laas was a native of Mishawaka, Indiana, where he was born May 8, 1935. He became an attorney and with his wife, Virginia Kitty (Jeans), located in Joplin.

Fred Laas built and collected train models, collected railroadiana and followed motorcar racing in his youth. Among this earliest collections are a scrapbook (f. 3), “home movies” taken during family vacations (ff. 9-13), and clippings regarding automobile racing (ff, 17, 35). Laas was interested in most aspects of trains and railroading, but especially in passenger service. Among the topical materials are folders on stations and passenger equipment, the latter including correspondence with equipment historian and author Robert Waynor (ff. 27-28). During his professional life he traveled by train whenever possible, which also allowed him to expand his collection of railroadiana with ticket stubs and other printed memorabilia.

Laas collected public timetables and other memorabilia in the period when passenger service was being discontinued by American railroads and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (doing business as “Amtrak”) was created in 1971. Folders 33-100 in Box 3 contain a range of Amtrak timetables and special schedules on national and regional routes from 1971 through the 1980s. researchers will find a wealth of information on passenger schedules and service during this transitionary period. Folders 101-130 contain brochures and travel information from foreign roads in Britain, Canada and Mexico. Folders 131-197 contain brochures, schedules, timetables and other printed materials from North American railroads and tourist lines.
SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection of railroadiana consists primarily of printed memorabilia such as timetables, station maps, ticket stubs, and other memorabilia. Most pertains to passenger operations in the United States and Canada, especially those by Amtrak, but there are also brochures and printed materials from passenger railroads in Europe and Asia. The bulk of the material dates from the 1960s to the 1990s.

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PREFERRED CITATION:

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INVENTORY:

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F. 02 The Official Guide of Railways published 1960-61
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F. 04 Black and white snapshots of trains with handwritten guide to photos
F. 05 Small box of railroad ticket stubs
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