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Guide to the

George A. Harwood material related to Grand Central Terminal

1903-1914, 1927

MssCol 18810

Compiled by Kit Messick, November 2012

Summary

Creator: Harwood, George A.

Title: George A. Harwood material related to Grand Central Terminal, 1903-1914, 1927

Size: .94 linear foot (2 boxes)

Source: Donated by Herbert H. Harwood, 2012

Abstract: George A. Harwood was the chief engineer for the New York City and Hudson River Railroad Company during the construction and electrification of Grand Central Terminal between 1903 and 1913. His collection of material related to Grand Central Terminal consists of reports and photographs documenting the background and construction of the terminal and its electrification dating from 1906 to 1914. Also included are maps and plans created by the West Side Improvement Engineering Committee in May 1927, for the project which later became the High Line.

Access: Advance notice required. Apply at <http://www.nypl.org/mssref>.

Preferred citation: George A. Harwood material related to Grand Central Terminal, Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library.

Creator history

Grand Central Depot, as it was originally named, was constructed in 1871 to unite the trains of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, the New York and Harlem Railroad, and the New York and New Haven Railroad. Between 1899 and 1900, most of the original building was demolished, rebuilt, or reconfigured as Grand Central Station. Between 1903 and 1913, Grand Central Station was torn down in phases and replaced by the current Grand Central Terminal, designed by the architectural firms of Reed & Stem and Warren & Wetmore. Concurrently during this phase, the railroads were electrified under a plan drafted by William J. Wilgus, vice-president in charge of construction, which called for a bi-level station below ground. Wilgus' plan simplified switching, eased congestion for both trains and street-level automobile traffic, and allowed for the sale of air rights above the station, resulting in one of the most expensive and sought-after commercial real estate districts in the city.

George Alexander Harwood was the chief engineer for the New York City and Hudson River Railroad Company (N.Y.C. & H.R.R.R.) during the construction and electrification of Grand Central Terminal between 1903 and 1913. Born in 1875 in Waltham, Massachusetts, Harwood graduated with an engineering degree from Tufts in 1898 and began working for the railroad in 1900. In 1906, he was placed in charge of electric improvement, and is credited with completing the construction of Grand Central that William J. Wilgus had begun. He was later named vice-president of the N.Y.C. & H.R.R.R., a position he held until his death in 1926 at the age of 52.

Scope and content note

George A. Harwood's collection of material related to Grand Central Terminal consists of reports and photographs documenting the background and construction of the terminal and its electrification dating from 1906 to 1914. Also included are maps and plans created by the West Side Improvement Engineering Committee in May 1927 for the project which later became the High Line.

Reports are titled "Grand Central Terminal History and Description, Specifications, Digest of Laws Previous to 1900;" "Grand Central Terminal History and Description – Signalling," which includes descriptions of train operations and a history of railroad signaling in New York and beyond; and "Grand Central Terminal History and Description – Plans" which includes maps, plans, and technical drawings of Grand Central Terminal and surrounding facilities belonging to the New York City and Hudson River Railroad Company.

Photographs predominantly document the construction of Grand Central Terminal between 1906 and 1913. Some photographs originated with the General Electric Company, and show various views and details of the original (1906) prototype NYC electric locomotive, #6000, including test and inaugural runs.

The West Side Improvement Engineering Committee material documents some of the earliest conceptualizations (1927) of the project that later became the High Line. The Committee's "Plans for the Removal of the Tracks of the New York Central Railroad Company from the Public Streets Along the Hudson River Waterfront and for Related Public Improvements" contains elevation sketches, maps, and technical drawings related to the project.

Arrangement

Material is arranged by subject.

Key terms

Subjects

Civil engineering -- New York (State) -- New York
Railroad engineering
Railroads -- Electrification
Railroads -- New York (State)
Transportation -- New York (State) -- New York

Occupations

Engineers

Places

High Line (New York, N.Y. : Viaduct)

Names

Grand Central Terminal (New York, N.Y.)
Grand Central Terminal (New York, N.Y.) --
Buildings, structures, etc.
Harwood, George A.
New York Central and Hudson River Railroad
Company

Special formats
Photographs
Technical drawings

Container list

Grand Central Terminal History and Description Reports

- b.1 "Specifications, Digest of Laws Previous to 1900", undated
- b.1 "Signalling", undated
- b.1 "Plans", undated

Photographs

- b.1 f.1 46th Street Sewer, 1907-1908
- b.1 f.2 56th Street to 57th Street Truss, 1904-1906
- b.1 f.3 Canopies, 1908-1911
- b.1 f.4 Ceremonial First Electric Train, Grand Central Depot to High Bridge, Bronx, 1906
- b.1 f.5 Concrete and Masonry, 1905-1908
- b.1 f.6 Demolishing the Old Station Building, 1907-1911
- b.1 f.7 Electric Baggage Trucks, 1911
- b.2 f.1 Excavation North of 50th Street, 1903-1912
- b.2 f.2 Excavation South of 50th Street, 1904-1912
- b.2 f.3 Grand Central Depot and Annex, 1914, undated
- b.2 f.4 Maintaining Traffic, 1910-1911
- b.2 f.5 New Buildings: Main Station, Post Office, Boiler House, and Loft Building, 1906-1912
- b.2 f.6 New York Central's Original Electrification, 1905-1906
- b.2 f.7 Old Station Building, 1907-1910
- b.2 f.8 O.H. Contact Rail Support Bents, 1907
- b.2 f.9 Panoramas and Track Layouts, 1903-1811
- b.2 f.7 Steel Erection North of 50th Street, 1906-1910
- b.2 f.3 Steel Erection South of 50th Street, 1907-1911
- b.2 f.4 Street Changes, 1903-1911
- of.1 West Side Improvements Engineering Committee Plans, 1927