

J. Parker Lamb Collection

Finding Aid to the Collection at the Center for Railroad Photography & Art

CRP&A | CENTER FOR RAILROAD
PHOTOGRAPHY & ART

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Collection Summary

Title: J. Parker Lamb Collection

Span Dates: 1949 - 1988

Bulk Dates: NA

Creator: Lamb, J. Parker

Extent: Approximately 2,700 negatives in six batches (as of March 2017)

Language: English

Repository: Center for Railroad Photography & Art, Madison, WI

Abstract: Black-and-white negatives by J. Parker Lamb. The collection's first six batches focus on the American Midwest and Southeast primarily in the 1950s – 1980s.

Selected Search Terms

Country:

Canada

United States

State/Province:

Alabama

Arkansas

British Columbia

California

Colorado

Georgia

Illinois

Indiana

Iowa

Kentucky

Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota

Mississippi

Missouri

Nevada

New Hampshire

New Mexico

North Carolina

Ohio

Oklahoma

Ontario

Pennsylvania

Quebec

South Carolina

Tennessee

Texas

Vermont

Virginia

West Virginia

Wisconsin

Railroad Name:

Akron, Canton and Youngstown Railroad	Erie Lackawanna Railway
Alton and Southern Railway	Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad
Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway	Illinois Central
Atlantic Coast Line Railroad	Illinois Terminal Railroad
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad	Kansas City Southern Railway
Bangor and Aroostook Railroad	Louisville and Nashville Railroad
Bevier and Southern Railroad	Maine Central Railroad
Boston and Maine Railroad	Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad
British Columbia Railway	Missouri Pacific Railroad
Canadian National Railway	Monon Railroad
Canadian Pacific Railway	New York Central Railroad
Central Railroad of New Jersey	New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad
Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad	Nickel Plate Road
Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad	Norfolk Southern Railway
Chicago and Illinois Midland Railway	Norfolk and Western Railway
Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad	Peabody Short Line
Chicago and North Western Transportation Company	Pennsylvania Railroad
Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad	Peoria and Eastern Railway
Clinchfield Railroad	Seaboard Air Line Railroad
Delaware and Hudson Railway	Southern Pacific Railroad
Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad	Southern Railway
Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway	St. Louis-San Francisco Railway
Duluth and Northeastern Railroad	St. Louis-Southwestern Railway
Erie Railroad	Texas and Pacific Railway
	Toledo, Peoria and Western Railway
	Virginian Railway
	Wabash Railroad
	Western Maryland Railway

Administrative Information

Provenance

This collection was donated to the Center by J. Parker Lamb beginning in Fall 2015 in batches—typically 200-300 negatives at a time.

Processing History

Processing began in late 2015.

Additional Notes

The ever-growing collection is being sent to the Center by J. Parker Lamb in batches of photographs.

Copyright Status

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Access and Restrictions

For educational use only, please contact the Center for other usage requests.

Biographical Note

J. Parker Lamb (b. 1933), one of the deans of post-World War II railroad photography in the United States, is donating his remarkable photographic works to the Center. Lamb initiated the transfer in 2015 and is carefully overseeing the process, sending batches of his negatives along with digital scans. The Center's collections staff has begun transferring Lamb's negatives into archival binders and numbering the photographs to match the organizational schemes of our other collections.

Lamb retired in 2001 after a distinguished tenure in the engineering faculty of the University of Texas in Austin. His hundreds of published photographs display a talent that is at once journalistic and artistic, as seen in *Steel Wheels Rolling* (Boston Mills Press, 2001), a portfolio of his work, and his several other books. In 1991 he received the Fred A. and Jane R. Stindt Photography Award from the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. "While other well-known photographers provided most of the imagery of the passing of steam, it was Parker who provided the best contextual images of the conquering diesels," the citation said.

Born in Boligee, Alabama, Lamb moved with his family to Meridian, Mississippi, in 1938 before his fifth birthday. While Boligee had been a tiny crossroads on the Alabama Great Southern, Meridian was a busy junction city with three class one railroads and one short line.

A friendly tower operator, Guy Horton, taught Lamb about railroad operations. Lamb's train watching became more serious with his discovery of *Trains* and *Railroad* magazines right after World War II. That led Lamb to begin making photographs in 1949, when he was in the 11th grade.

Legendary *Trains* magazine editor David P. Morgan helped Lamb develop as a fledgling photographer. During his college years at Auburn University, 1951 to 1955, Lamb made his first submission to *Trains*, and the editor replied with an encouraging letter. "Over the

next four to five years, he kept encouraging me to take more pictures because he said they didn't have much material from the South. So I must give considerable credit to his encouragement in my younger days," Lamb said.

From Auburn, Lamb went to Dayton, Ohio, for a two-year military tour as an officer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and then to Champaign, Illinois, where he earned a graduate degree from the University of Illinois. He began his teaching career in 1961 with two enjoyable years at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, and then moved to Austin in 1963. He has photographed railroads along every step of the way, both locally as well as while traveling.

Lamb began digitizing his images in 2004. He recently completed this decade-long process, paving the way for his work to find a permanent home in the Center's extensive collection. He expressed his thinking this way, "I received a lifetime of satisfaction and enjoyment during the creation of these images, and I hope that others will be able to use them to learn about American railroads in the twentieth century."

—John Gruber, adapted from his Winter 2000 article in *Classic Trains*

Scope and Content Note

As of March 2017, the J. Parker Lamb Collection consists of approximately 2,700 black-and-white negatives stored in archival plastic sleeves stored in archival clamshell binders.

The collection has a strong focus on the American Midwest and Southeast with an emphasis on Illinois and Texas, capturing the transition of steam powered locomotives to diesel engine locomotives.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged by the original order of the photographer, J. Parker Lamb, by region with various railroads within those groupings. Grouping titles were based of the batches which were labeled: 1 (B&O, Erie and IC, N&W and PRR, NYC Diesel, NYC Steam), Illinois A, Illinois B, Illinois C, North Carolina A, North Carolina B, Gulf States I, Gulf States II, Texas A1, Texas A2, Texas B1, Texas B2.

Container List

<i>Box</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Contents</i>
Lamb-01		

Lamb-01-001 –	1 (B&O, Erie and IC, N&W and PRR, NYC Diesel, NYC Steam)
Lamb-01-026	Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky 1954 – 1957
Lamb-01-027 – Lamb-01-067	Illinois A, Illinois B, Illinois C Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Ontario, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin 1957 – 1960
Lamb-01-068 – Lamb-01-095	North Carolina A, North Carolina B North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia 1961 – 1974
Lamb-01-096 – Lamb-01-135	Gulf States I Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia 1949 – 1985
Lamb-01-136 – Lamb-01-151	Gulf States II Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas 1951 – 1983
Lamb-02	
Lamb-02-001 – Lamb-02-022	Gulf States III Alabama, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee 1950 – 1976
Lamb-02-023 – Lamb-02-039	Gulf States IV Alabama, California, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee 1948 – 1985
Lamb-02-040 – Lamb-02-061	Texas A1 Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas 1953 – 1988
Lamb-02-062 – Lamb-02-080	Texas A2 Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas

1950 – 1988

Lamb-02-081 –
Lamb-02-102

Texas B1
California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico,
Texas
1968 – 1988

Lamb-02-103 –
Lamb-02-118

Texas B2
British Columbia, California, Colorado,
Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts,
Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire,
Pennsylvania, Quebec, Texas, Vermont,
Washington, Wyoming
1968 – 1981