

John C. Illman 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: John C. Illman Collection

Span Dates: 1946-1993

Creator: Illman, John C.

Extent: 3 linear feet

Language: English

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

Abstract: Collection, 1946-1993, of 6,994 railroad photographs from the United States and Canada, shot and collected by John C. Illman. Images span 25 U.S. states and nine Canadian provinces, with an emphasis on the Pacific Northwest, especially California.

Selected Search Terms

Country:

Canada

United States

State/Province:

Alaska

Alberta

Arizona

British Columbia

California

Colorado

District of Columbia

Florida

Idaho

Illinois

Louisiana

Manitoba

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota

Montana

Nevada

New Brunswick

New Hampshire

New Jersey

New Mexico

North Dakota

Nova Scotia

Ohio

Ontario

Oregon

Pennsylvania

Quebec

Saskatchewan

South Dakota

Texas

Utah

Washington

Wisconsin

Yukon

Railroad Name:

Alaska Railroad ARR	Lewis & Clark Railway LINC
Algoma Central Railway ACIS	Magma Arizona Railroad MAA
Amador Central Railroad AMC	McCloud River Railroad MCR
Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation) AMTK	Milwaukee Road MILW
Arcata & Mad River Railroad AMR	Missouri Pacific Railroad MP
Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway ATSF	Montana Rail Link MRL
Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)	Mount Rainier Scenic Railroad
Black Mesa & Lake Powell Railway BLKM	Mount Vernon Terminal MVT
Boston & Maine Railroad BM	Mount Washington Cog Railway
British Columbia Railway BCIT	Nevada Northern Railway NN
Burlington Northern Railroad BN	Northern Pacific Railway NP
California Western Railroad CWR	Northwestern Pacific Railroad NWP
Camino, Placerville & Lake Tahoe Railroad CPLT	Olympic Railroad OLYR
Canadian Forest Products (CANFOR)	Oregon, Pacific & Eastern Railway OPE
Canadian National Railroad CN	Pacific Great Eastern Railway PGE
Canadian Pacific Railroad CP	Pacific Lumber Company
Central Western Railway CWRL	Pend Oreille Valley Railroad POVA
Chehalis Western Railroad CWRR	Penn Central PC
Chelatchie Prairie Railroad CCPR	Pennsylvania Railroad PRR
City of Prineville Railway COP	Petaluma & Santa Rosa (P&SR)
Columbia & Cowlitz Railway CLC	Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad POTB
Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad (C&TSRR)	Port Townsend Railroad PTRR
Curtis, Milburn & Eastern Railroad CMER	Rayonier Inc.
Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad DRGW	Roaring Camp & Big Trees Narrow Gauge Railroad
Detroit & Mackinac Railway (DM)	San Francisco Municipal Railway (SFMTA)
Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad (D&SNG)	San Manuel Arizona Railroad SMA
Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway EN	Seattle & North Coast Railroad SNCT
Eureka Southern Railroad EUKA	Southern Pacific Railroad SP
Great Northern Railway GN	State Belt Railroad
Howard Terminal Railroad	Stockton Terminal & Eastern Railway STE
Klamath Northern Railway KNOR	Sumpter Valley Railroad
	Trona Railway TRC
	Union Pacific Railroad UP
	Union Railroad of Oregon UO
	United States Gypsum Corporation (USG)

Valley & Siletz Railroad VS
Ventura County Railway VCY
Via Rail Canada VIA
Walla Walla Valley Railway
Washington Central Railroad WCRC
Western Coal & Coke Company
Western Pacific Railroad WP

Weyerhaeuser Company
White Pass & Yukon Route WPY
Willamette & Pacific Railroad WPRR
Willamina & Grand Ronde Railway
WGR
Yakima Interurban Lines Association

Biographical Note

John C. Illman (1921-2013) was born on October 17, 1921, in Seattle, Washington. Growing up, he lived in Seattle; St. Vincent, Minnesota; and Vancouver, British Columbia. At age 14, he was in an all-city boy's band, the Kitsilano Boys Band, that toured in North America and England, traveling primarily on the Canadian Pacific Railway. This experience sparked Illman's lifelong interest in railroads.

Illman attended the University of Washington, from which he graduated with a master's degree in chemistry in 1943. Around the same time, he married Marjorie, and together they raised three children.

Illman worked for the Shell Development Company in Emeryville, California, developing plastics. He left Shell in 1972 when they relocated their laboratories to Houston, Texas. He then worked for the Shaklee Corporation until he retired in 1976. In retirement, he and Marjorie moved from Albany, California to Marrowstone, Washington.

Illman took up railroad photography at age 26, around 1948, and some of his favorite locations were in the Bay Area, including Giant, Pinole, San Francisco Bay, and east of Richmond, California.

To date, more than 500 of his photographs have been published in multiple books, as well as in *Trains*, *Classic Trains*, *Railfan & Railroad*, *Vintage Rails*, *Pacific Rail News*, *CTC Board*, *Passenger Train Journal*, *Model Railroader*, and *Railroad Model Craftsman* magazines.

Illman passed away on May 20, 2013, in Nordland, Washington.

Scope and Content Note

The John C. Illman Collection, 1946-1993, contains 6,994 railroad photographs from the United States and Canada, shot and collected by John C. Illman. Contents include 3,954 medium format black-and-white negatives and 3,040 black-and-white contact prints. Images at least span 25 U.S. states and nine Canadian provinces, with an emphasis on the Pacific Northwest, especially California. Illman created most of the images himself. The

collection also contains a small selection of railroad images (five prints) that Illman collected from other photographers (Robert M. Hanft and Stanley A. Snook).

Arrangement of the Collection

The collection follows Illman's original order. The first five boxes hold negatives, while the subsequent five binders hold contact prints. The processing archivist moved the oversized prints to Binder 10.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated to the Center for Railroad Photography and Art by Dick Dorn in January 2022 as acquisition no. 2022.1. The collection was originally sold to Dick Dorn by John C. Illman on March 9, 2003.

Processing History

Processing of the John C. Illman Collection lasted from June 2022 to February 2023. The negatives are rehoused in new sleeves within archival clamshell boxes and the contact prints are rehoused in archival binders.

Copyright Status

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Access and Restrictions

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

Container List

<i>Box</i>	<i>Sleeves</i>	<i>Contents</i>
Illman-01	001-381	1948-1950, United States. Black-and-white medium format negatives.
Illman-02	001-950	1949-1953, Canada, United States. Black-and-white medium format negatives.
Illman-03	001-925	1953-1966, Canada, United States. Black-and-white medium format negatives.
Illman-04	001-950	1966-1980, Canada, United States. Black-and-white medium format negatives.

Illman-05	001-744	1980-1993, Canada, United States. Black-and-white medium format negatives.
Illman-06	001-088	1948-1992, United States. Black-and-white contact prints.
Illman-07	001-082	1946-1993, United States. Black-and-white contact prints.
Illman-08	001-069	1950-1993, Canada, United States. Black-and-white contact prints.
Illman-09	001-085	1948-1989, Canada, United States. Black-and-white contact prints.
Illman-10	001-030	1947-1991, Canada, United States. Black-and-white contact prints.