

MS 625 ISAAC "IKE" HENRY BROKAW PAPERS

1900-1956. 3 boxes + 1 half-box

This collection contains documents collected by Mr. Brokaw pertaining to his career in railroading and his personal interests after retirement.

This material has been arranged into two series:

Series 1. RAILROAD HISTORY RESEARCH

Subseries 1. Correspondence

Subseries 2. Research Notes

Series 2. SUBJECT FILES

Mr. Brokaw's collection of railway travel passes is filed with other examples of this format in the Museum's collection.

PROVENANCE Gift of Grace Grant, 2000 (387-1535)

HISTORICAL INFORMATION For fifty years Isaac Henry Brokaw was a station agent and telegrapher for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad at various locations in Iowa. He began his lengthy career in 1895 as a station helper in Rolfe, Iowa and was promoted to relief man shortly after. At Tara, Iowa he was a telegrapher for both the Rock Island and the Illinois Central. In 1898, he was appointed agent at Mallard, and moved to Gowrie on the Rock Island's Sibley Branch in 1899. In May 1901, Brokaw went to Gilmore City. In 1905, he was appointed division relief agent for the Des Moines Valley Division. From 1906 to 1908 he was an agent-operator at Manson and also Bonaparte. Brokaw attended the Gem City Business College and Institute of Shorthand and Typewriting and Normal Penmanship in Quincy, Illinois, where he won a medal. In September 1910, Brokaw came to Pocahontas from Keosauqua, where he remained station agent and telegraph operator until his retirement. An active member of the Order of Railroad Telegraphers throughout his career, Mr. Brokaw was the first ORT member of Division 35. Even after his retirement in 1936, he remained active in the Order.

Mr. and Mrs. Brokaw had three daughters. Mr. Brokaw served on the Finance Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Lake Park, Iowa for over twenty years. During his active retirement he enjoyed many trips by train, operated a rail travel service, investigated his own family genealogy and researched the pioneer railroads of Iowa.

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Series 1. RAILROAD HISTORY RESEARCH

Isaac Brokaw's research into the history of the pioneer railroads of Iowa has been arranged into two subseries:

Subseries 1. Correspondence

Subseries 2. Research notes

Subseries 1. Correspondence

Correspondents includes Iowa railroad employees, booksellers and railroadiana dealers, including notable dealer Grahame Hardy. Subjects include employee history, general railroad history, and Mr. Browkaw's acquisition of railroad passes, annual reports, magazines and railroad timetables to support his research interests.

Arranged chronologically.

Subseries 2. Research notes

Includes typed transcriptions of primary source documents such as local newspapers, the Association of American Railroads, historical atlases, the Iowa Commerce Commission, Poor's manuals, material from the Chicago Historical Society, County record offices and Iowa State Railroad Commission reports.

Arranged alphabetically by railroad. Not all letters of the alphabet are represented. Two folders with information about multiple railroads begin this subseries.

BOX LIST

Subseries 1. Correspondence:

Box 1

Folder 1 1950

Folders 2-3 1951

Folders 4-6 1952

Folders 7-8 1953

Folder 9 1954

Folders 10-11 1955

Folder 12 1956

Subseries 2. Research notes:

Folders 13-14 General information

Folder 15 "B"

Folder 16 "C"

Folders 17-18 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad

Box 2

Folder 1 Des Moines...

Folder 2 Des Moines & Fort Dodge Railroad

Folders 3-4 Des Moines Valley Railroad

Folder 5 Dubuque & Sioux City Railroad

Folder 6 "F"

Folders 7-8 Gowrie & Northwestern Railway

Folder 9 "I"

Folder 10 "K"

Folder 11 Lancaster & Chester Railroad

Folder 12 "M"

Folder 13 "P" - "S"

Folder 14 Toledo & Northwestern Railway

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Series 2. SUBJECT FILES

This series includes a variety of documents pertaining to Brokaw's employment, hobbies and personal interests.

Employment files include correspondence from the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway pertaining to promotions, transfers, salary increases, and position openings. Newspaper clippings include information about the Rock Island, the railroad industry in general, and railroad labor. Photographs include unidentified family, a 1901 freight derailment, and some portraits of a train crew.

Brokaw was a member of the Finance Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Lake Park, Iowa. 1934 church files include correspondence and financial records relating to the dismissal of a pastor. Later files include new building construction information. His genealogy files include correspondence and typewritten family histories for the Brokaw family extending back to the seventeenth century. Correspondents include other Brokaw family members who were trying to establish a family tree.

Order of Railroad Telegrapher files include seniority lists for 1910, 1914, 1945 and 1947, correspondence with union members and union leaders about working conditions, membership, conventions and union business. Also includes union mailings and newsletters. Also contains some historical information about the ORT.

The travel files include correspondence, itineraries, passes, hotel information and business cards for I.H. Brokaw's contacts and customers of his train travel business. Includes information about railfan trips organized by Mr. Brokaw.

The "Golden Journey" was an educational film distributed by the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. This file includes "Golden Journey" fliers, correspondence about the film, and information about Mr. Brokaw's efforts to distribute and show the film.

Personal documents files include correspondence between Brokaw and family friends, fellow retirees, relatives, a social security card, several business cards, dividend checks, a mason's card, a lodge card, a driver's license, Christmas cards, and telegrams. There is some material related to a family illness, seed catalogue orders, a reunion and charitable donations.

Arranged alphabetically by subject.

BOX LIST

Box 2

Folders 15-18 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, 1899-1904

Folders 19-21 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, 1909-1913

Folder 22 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, 1922

Folder 23 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific -- Paycheck record, 1922-1935

Folder 24 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific -- Retirement, 1945

Box 3

Folder 1 Genealogy, undated

Folder 2 Genealogy, 1909-1910

Folder 3 Genealogy, 1942

Folders 4-7 Genealogy, 1951-1956

Folder 8 "Golden Journey," a movie about the streamliner "Golden Gate," 1952

Folder 9 Methodist Episcopal Church, 1934

Folder 10 Methodist Episcopal Church, 1938

Folder 11 Methodist Episcopal Church, 1953-1955

Folder 12 Newspaper clippings, 1908, 1941-1953

Folder 13 Order of Railroad Telegraphers, 1910-1914

Folder 14 Order of Railroad Telegraphers, 1917

Folders 15-21 Order of Railroad Telegraphers, 1942-1956

Folder 22 Personal documents, undated, 1937-1947

Folders 23-27 Personal documents, 1951-1957

Folder 28 Photographs

Box 4

Folders 1-6 Travel, 1949-1955

Filing Location: B1g Four Building ID 2549