

# Union Station Construction Photographs (P41)

## *Introduction*

The Union Station Construction Photographs collection consists of 49 photographs of Kansas City's Union Station and corresponding infrastructure while under construction. The photos are identified, dated between 1910-1911, and offer insight into the scope of work put into the building that would serve as the primary transportation hub of Kansas City into the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## *Descriptive Summary*

Title: Union Station Construction Photographs  
Dates: 1910-1911 and n.d.  
Size: 0.2 linear feet, 1 box  
Collection Number: P41

## *Donor Information*

Purchased, 2017, MVR Club.

## *Citation Note*

Union Station Construction Photographs (P41), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

## *Administrative Information*

Additional form available: These photos have been digitized and are available for viewing via [www.kchistory.org](http://www.kchistory.org).

Related Collections: Additional information on the Union Station, architect Jarvis Hunt, and railroad history may be found in the Missouri Valley Special Collections local history collection as well as the main library catalog. An extensive collection of photographs, blueprints, and records of the Kansas City Terminal Railway Company is accessible at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas.

## *Historical Sketch*

Excavation officially began on the site for Kansas City's Union Station on August 27, 1910. The Union Depot in the West Bottoms had long been considered too outdated for the growing city's needs, and the devastating flood of 1903 exposed the vulnerability of locating the main transportation center in the flood plain of two rivers. A new, modern, and larger train station in a different part of town was needed. Railroad owners, investors, and city officials eventually settled on a new location in 1906. The site was along the southern edge of Kansas City, stretching from

Broadway to Grand, between 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> streets. The project was overseen by the newly formed Kansas City Terminal Railway Company (KCTR), a group of six (later 12) railroad companies working together on the design, construction, and operation of the new station.

Issues over financing and infrastructure postponed the start of construction for several years. Once begun, the building designed by Chicago architect Jarvis Hunt took another four years to complete. Buildings already on the site were demolished and city streets were vacated. Solid rock had to be blasted away with dynamite and debris removed with steam shovels. O. K. Creek, which ran through the middle of the site, was diverted and enclosed. Bridges were constructed for new train tracks, and older tracks were widened. Union Station finally opened to the public with a parade and massive civic fanfare on October 30, 1914.

### *Scope and Content Note*

This collection contains identified photographs of the Union Station construction site, as well as images of connecting bridges, freight railyards, and the old Union Depot. The photographer(s) is(are) unknown, but they were presumably employed by the KCTR.

The photos measure approximately 4.25 in. x 6 in., and are contemporary prints of the time. The only duplicates are two photographs labeled, “Shiffield [sic] Yard Looking North,” dated November 8, 1910. None of the photographs include any writing on the reverse side. The collection is arranged primarily by site location as identified on the photos, and therein chronologically where possible.

The records of the KCTR were donated to the Kenneth Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are available for research.

### *Collection Inventory*

- f. 1 Union Station site photographs, 1910-1911 and n.d.
  - #1 Excavation on Station Site [far view], 9/22/1910; Barcode: 10029481
  - #2 Excavation on Station Site [near view], 9/22/1910; Barcode: 10029482
  - #3 Steam Shovel #2000, 9/22/1910; Barcode: 10029483
  - #4 High Level Steam Shovel, 10/27/1910; Barcode: 10029484
  - #5 Station Site Looking East from Broadway, 1/23/1911; Barcode: 10029485
  - #6 Station Site 24<sup>th</sup> & Main Looking West, 1/23/1911; Barcode: 10029486
  - #7 Station Site 24<sup>th</sup> & Baltimore Looking West, 1/23/1911; Barcode: 10029487
  - #8 Station Site 24<sup>th</sup> & Baltimore North, 1/27/1911; Barcode: 10029488
  - #9 Well Drilling Outfit on Station Site, 3/1/1911; Barcode: 10029489
  - #10 Station Site Core of Hole No. 535, 3/1/1911; Barcode: 10029490
  - #11 Station Site Looking Southwest from Main Street, 3/10/1911; Barcode: 10029491
  - #12 Station Site Looking East from Terminal Warehouse, 11/7/1911; Barcode: 10029492
  - #13 Station Site High Level Steam Shovel Looking S.W., n.d.;

- Barcode: 10029493  
 #14 Station Site 24<sup>th</sup> & Main Looking N.E., n.d.; Barcode: 10029494  
 #15 Street South of Plaza Looking West from Wyandotte St., n.d.;  
 Barcode: 10029495
- f. 2 McGee Street Yard photographs, 1910-1911  
 #16 McGee Street Yard, 1/25/1910; Barcode: 10029496  
 #17 McGee Street Yard Looking North, 11/21/1910; Barcode: 10029497  
 #18 McGee Street Yard Looking East, 11/21/1910; Barcode: 10029498  
 #19 McGee Street Yard Looking East, 1/25/1911; Barcode: 10029499  
 #20 McGee Street Yard Looking West, 3/1/1911; Barcode: 10029500
- f. 3 Frisco Crossing photographs, 1910-1911 and n.d.  
 #21 Frisco Crossing, 2/28/1910; Barcode: 10029501  
 #22 Pipe Leads, Frisco Tower #1, 10/27/1910; Barcode: 10029502  
 #23 Switch Machine – Frisco Xing, 3/1/1911; Barcode: 10029503  
 #24 Electric Interlocking – Frisco Crossing, n.d.; Barcode: 10029504
- f. 4 Big Blue Yard photographs, 1910-1911  
 #25 Big Blue Yard Looking East, 11/8/1910; Barcode: 10029505  
 #26 Big Blue Yard Looking West, 11/8/1910; Barcode: 10029506  
 #27 Big Blue Yard Looking N.W., 1/23/1911; Barcode: 10029507  
 #28 Big Blue Yard Looking N.W., 1/25/1911; Barcode: 10029508  
 #29 Freight Line East from C. M. & St. P. Elevator, 2/28/1911;  
 Barcode: 10029509  
 #30 Big Blue Yard from C. M. & St. P. Elevator, 3/1/1911;  
 Barcode: 10029510
- f. 5 Sheffield Yard photographs, 1910  
 #31 Shiffield [sic] Yard Looking North [lighter], 11/8/1910; Barcode:  
 10029511  
 #32 Shiffield [sic] Yard Looking North [darker], 11/8/1910; Barcode:  
 10029512  
 #33 Sheffield Yard Looking North [far view], 11/8/1910; Barcode: 10029513
- f. 6 Union Depot photographs, 1911  
 #34 Train Shed [...] Union Depot, 3/1/1911; Barcode: 10029514  
 #35 Repairs to Umbrella Sheds at Union Depot, 3/30/1911;  
 Barcode: 10029515  
 #36 Interlocking Machine at Tower #2 Union Depot, 3/30/1911;  
 Barcode: 10029516
- f. 7 Assorted site and construction photographs, 1910-1911 and n.d.  
 #37 Armourdale Yard Looking East from 12<sup>th</sup> St., 6/29/1910;  
 Barcode: 10029517  
 #38 Repairs on Bridge #13, 10/1/1910; Barcode: 10029518  
 #39 Repairs on Bridge #13, n.d.; Barcode: 10029519  
 #40 Cribs Steam Shovel Bridge, 10/1/1910; Barcode: 10029520  
 #41 Pipe Bridge over Turkey Creek, 10/27/1910; Barcode: 10029521

- #42 Freight Line at Milwaukee Tower Looking South from Xing, 11/11/1910;  
Barcode: 10029522
- #43 Coburg Conn. Looking South from St. John Ave., 11/22/1910;  
Barcode: 10029523
- #44 Culvert Extension at Sta. 250 Main Line, 3/1/1911; Barcode: 10029524
- #45 Rock Creek Santa Fe Bridge Looking West, 3/10/1911;  
Barcode: 10029525
- #46 Rock Creek Santa Fe Bridge Looking East, 3/10/1911;  
Barcode: 10029526
- #47 Sewer Diversion Ninth and Hardesty, 3/22/1911; Barcode: 10029527
- #48 Retaining Wall Sta. 203 West, 3/22/1911; Barcode: 10029528
- #49 Retaining Wall at Sta. 203 Looking East, n.d.; Barcode: 10029529

**Processed by Kate Hill, Senior Archivist, September 2017.**