List of the Southern Pacific Railroad Sacramento Shops Drawings MS 862

CSRM Library & Archives staff
California State Railroad Museum Library & Archives
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Abstract: Includes 2,318 varnished ink and pencil drawings drafted at the Southern Pacific shops in Sacramento, California. Used as patterns for locomotive engines, equipment, tools and other materials built in the Shops between 1868-1899.

Physical Description: The format of the drawings in this collection are ink and pencil on varnished board or ink on card stock. Varnishing drawings was a useful practice in the nineteenth century for protecting working drawings from smudges of oil or dirt while they were being used in the Sacramento shops. There are marks on many drawings, showing where they were pinned up to the drawing board in the Shops. The varnish provided short-term protection but has led to long-term destruction. It accelerated the acidity in the drawings and this has darkened some of the drawings and caused many of them to crumble. Many of the drawings are in pieces or are incomplete. Efforts to conserve and mitigate the damage to these drawings have been somewhat useful. Drawings with more varnish tend to have a poorer outcome.

Conditions Governing Access
Many of these drawings are very fragile and cannot be reproduced. Contact Library Staff for details.

Arrangement
These drawings are physically arranged by size. Most drawings 20 x 24" and smaller are stored in boxes. Larger drawings are stored in map case drawers.

There are two drawing lists. One is arranged by drawing number, and a second is arranged by subject.

Corporate History
In 1862, the Central Pacific Railroad was founded and began building eastward from Sacramento as part of the transcontinental railroad. This required a shop capable of keeping the railroad's equipment in running order. In 1867, in the swamps just north of town, the Sacramento shops were born. In 1870, a holding company was formed to include Central and Southern Pacific Railroad. When the Southern Pacific leased the Central Pacific Railroad in 1885, the Shops became known as the Southern Pacific Railroad Sacramento shops.

For many decades, the complex was the largest employer in the Sacramento area, employing carpenters, painters, draftsmen, boilermakers, electricians, clerks, upholsterers, and others. Employees designed, built, and maintained locomotives, freight and passenger cars, and other railroading equipment. The complex closed in 1999. Most of the area, popularly known as the Railyards, is set for redevelopment.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Southern Pacific Railroad Sacramento Shops drawings, MS 862, California State Railroad Museum Library & Archives, Sacramento, California.

Scope and Contents
These technical drawings are originals. They were created by draftsmen to communicate the designs and construction details to the builders of locomotive engines and shop equipment at the Sacramento Shops between 1868 and 1899. These drawings are a result of a collaborative process among engineers, draftsmen, and the workers who build them. While creating the working drawings, the draftsmen sometimes discovered flaws in the design. The engineer or architect could then go "back to the drawing board" and improve upon the design.

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the drawing board in the Shops. The varnish provided short-term protection but has led to long-term damage of the
drawings. It accelerated the acidity in them, causing many to crumble or pieces to break off. Many of the drawings are in
pieces or are incomplete. Efforts to conserve and mitigate the damage to these drawings have been somewhat useful.
Drawings that are more varnished tend to be less legible than those that were lightly varnished.
There are a few unusual elements about these early technical drawings. Each drawing component was not assigned a
unique number. Multiple drawings with same number and the same date exist in the collection. They usually show a
different component for the equipment. Today, each component drawing would have a unique drawing number. A
draftsman sometimes imposed a second number on each Shops drawing to differentiate each number that was used
multiple times. This number usually appears in red ink before the drawing number. These secondary numbers were not
always imposed and there are many still many drawings in this collection with the same numbers. To clear up some
confusion, the secondary number has been attached to the drawing number in the drawings database.
The earliest drawings in this collection were produced under the Central Pacific corporate name. After 1871, the Southern
Pacific name is shown sometimes, although it is not until after 1886 that the Central Pacific name is no longer in usage.
Today, engineering drawings are made on sheets of paper of standard sizes or designed digitally. These nineteenth century
Shops drawings are not standardized. Sizes range among 3-52 inches long / wide.
Existence and Location of Copies
SMCC drawer 216 contains 14 Central Pacific drawings (No. 2000) traced from the original 0 by David L. Joslyn in 1946.
Processing Information
These drawings were added to the CSRM Library & Archives technical drawing database over a period of 15 years. Until
2020, there were 983 drawings cataloged and available to researchers. Between December 2019 and August 1920, staff
and volunteers worked to conserve and catalog all of the remaining 1,334 drawings in this collection. Conservation
techniques included removing each drawing from its old glassine wrapping, cleaning each drawing and placing it into a
protective polypropylene sleeve or creating a sleeve using double-sided tape and polypropylene.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Donated by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, 1999
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