Unexpected Research Value in the Transportation Library’s Collections

Rachel Cole
rachel.cole@northwestern.edu

Inland Water Pamphlets Collection
Today’s Discussion

• Environmental Impact Statements
  • Case study: Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company and Grand Trunk Western Railroad Company Abandonment of Cross Lake Michigan Car Ferry Service (WI, MI) : Environmental Impact Statement.
    • History of Great Lakes shipping and regional history as told through an EIS, illustrated by items from annual reports, circulating collections, and special collections
    • What is an EIS and what information does it contain?

• Annual Reports

• Government Documents

• How to locate these collections at Northwestern University’s Transportation Library
  • Locating EISs, annual reports, and government documents
Transportation Library

- Founded in 1956 as the Transportation Center’s library
- Largest transportation information research collection in the United States
- Supports the research needs of the Northwestern University Transportation Center
- Focus: Emerging technologies, ACES (automated, controlled, electric, and shared mobility)
EIS Collection
This map from the Pere Marquette System’s 1904 annual report shows the railroad’s rail and ferry services in the area surrounding Lake Michigan.

The lake provided a natural barrier to east-west travel; the congested rail hub of Chicago also encouraged the need for new routes across the lake in the 1890s.

During this era, the Pere Marquette introduced a new technology: roll-on, roll-off service, where ferries were fitted with railroad tracks so that rail cars could roll on ships directly without having to be loaded and reloaded in port. The routes shown across Lake Michigan on this map: from Manitowoc, Kewuanee, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Ludington, Michigan, were still in operation when the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad later absorbed the Pere Marquette, and they were the same routes the railroad operated when it sought, in 1975, to abandon ferry service on the lake.
Passenger Travel: “2000 Miles of Blue Sky and Water”

Passenger travel on the lakes really came into its own in the 1920s, alongside the growth of resorts in the upper Great Lakes region during this era. Travelers were promised an escape from the polluted city to fresh air and sunshine, on board and at resorts. Passengers could take week-long trips on Lake Michigan, with the allure of “2,000 miles of blue sky and water,” traveling from Chicago to Mackinac Island to Niagara Falls to Buffalo, for example. Ships hosted big bands, offered fine dining, and onboard entertainment: many of the same amenities one could expect to find on an ocean liner. The timetables shown here are from our Inland Water Pamphlets collection and date from 1914, 1922, and 1937.
Auto Ferries

Car ferry service in the early years had mostly meant rail cars.

Auto ferries are introduced as auto travel became more popular and automobiles started to represent the "freedom of the open road."
Shown here is a map from the Pere Marquette system, from the railroad’s 1940 timetable, illustrating the same routes across Lake Michigan shown in the 1904 map we looked at in the beginning of this presentation.
Coal and the C&O

- The Pere Marquette was merged into the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad System in 1947.
- C&O was known for shipments of coal.
C&O Launches the S.S. Badger

Internal company file photograph folder produced by the C&O Railroad for the SS Badger and SS Spartan
The Decline of C&O Cross-Lake Service

Freight volume began to deteriorate in the mid-1960s; strong passenger numbers were not enough to maintain profitability:

- 1961: 132,000 freight cars, 54,000 autos, 153,000 passengers
- 1975: 41,770 freight cars, 54,429 autos, 168,395 passengers
- Losses of $4 million/year
- C&O sought to discontinue ferry service; this necessitated the production of an EIS.

Gary Gelzer Collection
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Signed in 1970
- First major federal environmental law in the United States
- EISs are required for any proposals for legislation and other major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment

The Act recognized six specific responsibilities. Among those were:
1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
2. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
What’s in an EIS?

- History – essentially all of the history to this point comes from the EIS on this project
- Description of the proposed action and its relationship to land use plans, policies, and controls

**Summary of environmental impacts**
If car ferry service continued:
- Recommendations included filters to improve air and water quality with existing service

If car ferry service was discontinued:
- Freight traffic: 92% to be rerouted through Chicago
  - Additional 68,000 rail cars/year (271/day), vs. annual traffic volume of 4.5 million
- Passenger traffic would be split between Chicago and the Upper Peninsula: 244 cars daily rerouted through each route
  - About a 1.5% increase over the Mackinac Bridge
  - Chicago’s existing traffic volume was 244,000 vehicles
Environmental Impacts, Continued: Oil vs. Coal

• The existing situation saw the burning of around 70 tons of coal per boat per day, or 57,000 tons annually.
• Rerouting freight and auto traffic would have resulted in nearly an additional million gallons of oil annually, with automobiles averaging 18 MPG.

Unique situation: the energy crisis of the mid-1970s
• Report distinguished between “essential” energy vs. “non-essential” energy sources
• This served as the basis for arguments for keeping the ferry.

- Public Attitudes
  - Passengers: the ferry trip was part of the vacation experience.
  - Impacted communities: fears of job losses
  - Railroads’ operational philosophies
- Impact on economy, employment
- Historical considerations
- Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments
  - Job losses, permanent shift in fuel sources
- Alternatives Considered
  - Denial of Abandonments
  - Retention of Routes to Optimize Passenger Operations
  - Retention of Routes to Optimize Freight Operations
In waiving the impact statement on the expansion of the hot air balloon park, the City of Livonia has made a decision that is in the best interest of the community. This decision is based on the fact that the expansion will bring additional economic benefits to the city, including increased tourism and job creation.

The city has conducted a comprehensive environmental impact assessment of the project, which concluded that the proposed expansion will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. The assessment also considered the potential impacts on traffic, noise, and air quality, and found that the project will not result in any significant changes in these areas.

In conclusion, the City of Livonia is confident that the expansion of the hot air balloon park will provide significant benefits to the community, and the decision to waive the impact statement is in the best interest of the residents.

[End of statement]
The ICC did give the Chesapeake & Ohio permission to discontinue its carferry service. The Badger was sold, along with its sister ship the Spartan, a few years later. The purchasing company later went bankrupt, and ferry service was ended after 98 years.

The following year, Ludington native Charles F. Conrad, son of a carferry worker and founder of a company that manufactured test chambers, purchased the steamships and conducted a major overhaul of the Badger for passenger travel. It still operates today on Lake Michigan.
EIS Collection at Northwestern

• 1992: donation of over 20,000 EIS titles from Northwestern faculty H. Paul Friesema
• A collection for the public good
• The collection now numbers over 33,000 titles
• What do we collect?
  • Draft and Final EISs, no Environmental Assessments, Reports.
• Formats
  • Print, microfilm, CD-ROM, electronic formats
Transportation Library

The Northwestern University Transportation Library is one of the largest transportation information centers in the world, encompassing information on all transportation modalities, including: air, rail, highway, pipeline, water; urban transport and logistics. It includes significant collections on law enforcement, police management and traffic enforcement. Its collection of environmental impact statements is one of the most complete in the country.

Find out more about the Transportation Library
Environmental Impact Statements: Getting Started

New Resources

Transportation

Environmental Impact Statement Collection

The Transportation Library holds one of the largest collections of environmental impact statements (EISs) in the nation. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to prepare detailed analyses of the impacts that their actions are likely to have on the environment. Environmental impact statements (EISs) are the result of this requirement. EISs have been produced since 1969, in virtually every type of activity, from street construction to animal research in laboratories, and from creation of wind farms to construction of coal-fired power plants.

The library collection began as a Saddle River (now 20,000 volume) collection from Northeastern University. Paul Prentice, a librarian in the environmental management division, initiated the development in the University’s Environmental Policy and Culture Library.

Since the initial donation, the library continues to collect EISs and currently holds over 40,000 items in print, microfilm, CD-ROM, and electronic format. EISs from our collection display by subject are available in full text through NIH's National Library of Medicine’s online database.
Annual Reports

Mid-20th Century design:

• Saul Bass for Continental
• Massimo Vignelli for American Airlines (the eagle was added later by the Office of Henry Dreyfuss)
• Alexander Girard for Braniff International
• Herbert Matter for the Boston & Maine and New Haven Railroads
ANNUAL REPORT 1954
Annual reports used in digital exhibit Independence in the Air: African Aviation in the 1960s

Primary sources documenting expansion of airlines and expression of national identity in the decades surrounding the 1960s.
In July of 1961, Air Congo became the national airline of the newly independent nation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, replacing the Belgian operator Sabena just one year after the country achieved its independence. Air Congo’s Board of Directors immediately embarked on an extensive training program with an emphasis on promoting personnel throughout the country, with a goal of Congolese representation in all positions across the airline, particularly at the pilot and executive officer levels. This program was highlighted in its annual report alongside pilot training classes and photographs of employees at the pilot, flight attendant, and administrative levels.
From early on, the bold liveries of Ethiopian Airlines carried symbols of national pride wherever the airline flew. The Ethiopian flag, with the Lion of Judah set atop a background of red, green, and black, was transposed onto the airline’s planes: a golden lion on its hind legs, it was featured with a stripe of red, green, and black running down the plane’s sides.

The airline’s annual reports from 1955, 1956, and 1966 offer a glimpse at the airline’s branding.
Urban planning, history of cities, sprawl, and livability - transportation shapes our cities, and these government reports help to tell that story.
portland transit mall
Please contact us to schedule a research consultation:

Transportation Library: libraries.nu/transportation

Rachel Cole, Public Services Librarian: rachel.cole@northwestern.edu

Roberto Sarmiento, Transportation Library Director: r-sarmiento@northwestern.edu

Twitter (for Transportation Library news, new books, and more): NUL_Transport

Instagram (for transportation history through special collections & archives): transportationlibrary