



BHC-MSS 0028

Guide to the Papers of A.L. Barber and S.T. Davis Jr.

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Amzi Lorenzo Barber, S.T. Davis Jr.

Title: Papers of A.L. Barber and S.T. Davis Jr.

Dates: 1890-1930s [bulk 1901-1919]

Quantity: 9.5 manuscript boxes, 2 additional boxes, 2 folders in oversize storage

Abstract: The Locomobile Company of America's first two presidents were father and son-in-law, Amzi L. Barber and Samuel T. Davis Jr. The close familial relationship the two had in running not only Locomobile but other business ventures as well, including Barber's asphalt company, is present and heavily represented in these papers.

Collection Number: BHC-MSS 0028

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical Information or Administrative History

Amzi L. Barber

Amzi Lorenzo Barber was born at Saxton's River in Vermont, 1843. His parents soon moved the family to Ohio, and Barber attended Oberlin College where he graduated from in 1867. For a while he flirted with post-graduate theological studies, but moved in the business world soon after. He began to make a headway in the business world by starting to pave roads with asphalt, which was a total novelty in the 1870s and into the 1880s. This company was christened the Barber Asphalt Paving Company in 1883.

This company went through several name changes, but the impact of paving did not go unnoticed - major roadways were beginning to take shape at this time. In 1898, as automobiles were being experimented with, A.L. Barber founded the Locomobile Company of America, a luxury manufacturer that would endure it was sold to Durant Motors in the 1920s (see below.)

Barber's personal life saw him marry twice. His first wife, Cecelia Bradly, died in 1870 after two years of marriage. He soon remarried, this time to Julia Langdon. Julia was related to Mark Twain.

The couple had children, with 4 who survived to adulthood. His son LeDroit died in 1905. One daughter Bertha married Charles Vance, and his daughter Lorena married Samuel T. Davis Jr., the president of Locomobile. Their son Roland died when he was only 7. In Barber's spare time, he

was an avid yachtsman.

Barber died from pneumonia in 1909.

Samuel T. Davis Jr.

Samuel T. Davis was born in Washington, DC, on February 8, 1873. He attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and graduated in 1893 at the head of his class. A keen engineer, he began to focus his energies on the developing motor world.

This interest brought him into contact with Amzi L. Barber, who was a major player in asphalt and paving at the end of the 19th century. Davis married into Barber's family, wedding Lorena in 1897. Together, Lorena and Samuel had a daughter, Irene.

When Barber acquired Locomobile in 1899, Davis became the treasure, and later the president of the company in 1909. Davis' intense enthusiasm for early motorcars saw him actually create a world's record for driving a steam car over Coney Island Boulevard in 1900 (1 minute and 15 seconds for a mile.)

Davis died from complications of ptomaine poisoning, the final cause of death being cerebral hemorrhage. It is unclear how the poisoning occurred.

Scope and Content Note

The Barber and Davis papers demonstrate close correspondence between both families, covering much of the time that Amzi L. Barber was Samuel T. Davis Jr's. father-in-law. In addition to the day-to-day workings of their various business ventures, personal correspondence is included. The dates cover the lifespan of the Locomobile Company of America until 1915 with Davis' death.

Arrangement Note

Material was found while cleaning back storage and originally thought to be a missed portion of the Records of the Locomobile Company of America (BHC-MSSS 0003.) Further examination proved that this was not the case, and *some* processing had been done, although not to current standards. One particular problem was the fact that the material written by Barber was mixed in with Davis (until 1909, the year Barber died), meaning that material from that time period needed to be parsed out. Some folders that proclaimed certain dates were incorrectly labeled, and at certain points "personal" papers had been separated out; likewise, 1912 was the only year to have correspondence parsed into months. Another correspondence series from 1903-1910 simply labeled Andsky-On-Hudson was separated out, and it is unclear if that was an original file label or not. Some correspondence subject files also existed.

As such, the archivist created the following series to deal with these problems: series 1 contains material related to A.L. Barber. Note that correspondence between Barber and Davis will likely also be in Davis' correspondence files.

Those correspondence files compromise series 2. Sub-series A contains correspondence to and from S.T. Davis Jr. arranged by year. Subseries B contains the so-called "personal" correspondence and the subject files. Note that 1916 onward relates to Davis' estate after his death.

Series 3 has the Andsky on Hudson papers. They are likely so-called due to number of correspondences addressed to that city.

The fourth series has paid bills from S.T. Davis, and series 5 is meant to catch all additional material included in the collection, including the will of A.L. Barber's wife Julia. The final series, series 6, contains canceled checks.

Material in this collection has been minimally processed. In the future it can undergo further refinement.

Provenance

Originally accession number 1997.008

Related Materials

For more Locomobile content, refer to the Records of the Locomobile Company of America (BHC-MSS 0003) and the Andrew Riker and Riker Family Collection (BHC-MSS 0004), both held by the Bridgeport History Center.

Name and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Barber, Amzi Lorenzo.

Davis, Samuel T., Jr.

Corporate names

Locomobile Company of America

Subject tracings

Automobiles--1890-1900.

Automobiles--1900-1920.

Automobiles Advertising.

Automobiles--American--1890-1900.

Automobiles--American--1900-1920.

Automobiles--Bodies--Design and construction--History

Automobiles Gas engines

Automobiles, Steam.

Locomobile automobile

Administrative Information

Preferred citation

Papers of A.L. Barber and S.T. Davis Jr. (BHC-MSS 0028), Bridgeport History Center.

Box and folder listing

Series 1, A.L. Barber

Box 1

1. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1890-1900
2. L.A. Barber correspondence, 1902-1910
3. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1901
4. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1901
5. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1901
6. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1902
7. Conveyance of Washington real estate from A.L. Barber to J.J. Albright, 1902
8. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1903
9. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1904
10. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1904
11. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1905
12. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1906
13. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1908-1909

Box 2

1. A.L. Barber correspondence, 1909
2. Other A.L. Barber writing and material
3. Barber obituaries, 1909
4. A.L. Barber's will, 1909

Series 2, S.T. Davis Jr.

Sub-series A, Dated correspondence

5. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1890s-1900
6. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1901
7. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1901
8. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1902
9. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1903
10. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1903
11. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence with Reginald Davis, 1904
12. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1904
13. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1905
14. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1906

Box 3

1. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1907
2. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1907
3. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1907
4. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1907
5. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1907
6. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1908
7. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1909
8. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1909
9. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1909
10. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1910
11. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1910
12. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1911

13. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1911

Box 4

1. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, January 1912
2. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, February 1912
3. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, March 1912
4. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, April 1912
5. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, May 1912
6. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, June 1912
7. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, July 1912
8. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, August 1912
9. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, September 1912
10. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, October 1912
11. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, November 1912
12. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, December 1912
13. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1913
14. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1913
15. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1913
16. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1913
17. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1913

Box 5

1. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1913
2. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1914
3. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1914
4. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1914
5. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1914
6. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1914
7. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1914
8. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, 1915

Box 6

1. Other correspondence, 1916
2. Other correspondence, 1917
3. Other correspondence, 1917
4. Other correspondence, 1918
5. Other correspondence, 1918
6. Other correspondence, 1918
7. Other correspondence, 1918
8. Other correspondence, 1918
9. Other correspondence, 1919
10. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, undated

Box 7

Subseries B, "personal correspondence" and subject file correspondence

1. S.T. Davis Jr. personal correspondence, January 10-April 25, 1910
2. S.T. Davis Jr. personal correspondence, May 10-December 13, 1910
3. S.T. Davis Jr. personal correspondence, January-August 1911

4. S.T. Davis Jr. personal correspondence, January-August 1911
5. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, Boy Scouts, 1911-1912
6. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, St. Davis-George Comstock, 1908-1914
7. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, prefabricated Southport house, 1914
8. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, Vanderbilt Cup Race, 1908
9. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, Roland Brooks in Mexico, 1914
10. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, University Club - Bridgeport, 1912-1915
11. S.T. Davis Jr. correspondence, University Club - New York, 1912-1914

Box 8

Series 3, Andsky on Hudson papers

1. Andsky on Hudson papers, 1903-1910
2. Andsky on Hudson papers, 1903-1910
3. Andsky on Hudson papers, 1903-1910
4. Andsky on Hudson papers, 1903-1910
5. Andsky on Hudson papers, 1903-1910
6. Andsky on Hudson papers, 1903-1910

Series 4, Bills

7. Bills, A-B, 1911
8. Bills, C-E, 1911
9. Bills, F-G, 1911
10. Bills, H, 1911
11. Bills, J-k, 1911
12. Bills, L-M, 911

Box 9

1. Bills, N, 1911
2. Bills, P, 1911
3. Bills, R-S, 1911
4. Bills, T-W, 1911
5. Bills, misc, 1911
6. Paid bills, Bridgeport-Fairfield, 1910
7. Paid bills, Bridgeport-Fairfield, 1910
8. Paid bills, Bridgeport-Fairfield, 1910
9. Paid bills, Bridgeport-Fairfield, 1910

Box 10

1. Paid bills, Bridgeport-Fairfield, 1910
2. Paid bills, Locomobile Company of America, 1910
3. Paid bills, Washington, 1910
4. Paid bills, 1930s

Series 5, Other material

5. Catalog, auction of Barber library, march 1916
6. Julia L. Barber correspondence, 1900s
7. Julia L. Barber's will, 1912
8. Julia L. Barber's estate inventory, 1912
9. Misc. Locomobile documents, 1903
10. Photograph of individuals including A. L. Barber in a Locomobile c. 1900s
11. Photograph of unidentified young man, may S.T. Davis Jr., undated

Oversized (see drawer w/ Locomobile material)

1. Caricature of S.T. Davis Jr. by "Scar" c. 1915
2. Caricatures of Locomobile staff, undated

Series 6, canceled checks

Box 11

1. S.T. Davis Jr. and A.L. Barber canceled checks, 1900s

Box 12

1. S.T. Davis Jr. and A.L. Barber canceled checks, 1900s