

## Summary Information:

**Collection Title:** Joliet Steel Companies Collection

**Collection Number:** MSS.23

**Date Range:** 1910-1926, 1942, 1971, 1986, 2006

**Size:** 1 Linear Foot

**Location:** RR.6.4, CO.OS.01

**Creator:** American Steel & Wire Company, United States Steel (US Steel), Joliet Iron Works, Illinois Wire Manufacturing Co.

**Abstract:** Joliet is known as the City of Steel and Stone, a slogan dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rich deposits of limestone led to a thriving quarrying industry, and in the years that followed the Civil War, a huge iron and steel producing industry emerged in the city. The Joliet Steel Companies Collection contains correspondence, company publications, invoices, registration records, and photographs pertaining to the history of various steel and wire manufacturing companies in Joliet.

**Acquisition Information:** This collection has been composed from various accessions relating to the history of steel companies in Joliet. There was no reasonable original order to these materials, so an order has been created for research purposes. All materials are appropriately labeled with their accession numbers, and more information regarding acquisition can be provided if requested.

**Separated Materials:** None

**Citation:** Item Description. MSS.23 Joliet Steel Companies Collection, Joliet Area Historical Museum. Box #, Folder #. Date Accessed.

**Restrictions:** None

**Processed by:** Kailee Lowry

## Background Information:

### History:

Joliet is known as the City of Steel and Stone, a slogan dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rich deposits of limestone led to a thriving quarrying industry, and in the years that followed the Civil War, a huge iron and steel producing industry emerged in the city. Thousands of European immigrants would find their way to Joliet to work low-paying, dangerous jobs at the Steel Mills, beginning with the construction of the Union Coal, Iron and Transportation Company located on Collins St. in 1869. The location of the plant was most likely selected in part for its proximity to the I&M Canal, but railroad lines were later extended to the site, providing immediate access to an additional transportation system.

In 1873 the company reorganized as the Joliet Iron and Steel Company, and in 1879 became known as just the Joliet Steel Company. Joliet Steel became part of the Illinois Steel Company in 1889, concluding the conversion of the site from iron to steel production only. The company operated as a Bessemer

plant, a process popularized in the States in the 1880s which made it possible to manufacture large quantities of steel at one time. The Bessemer process was particularly well-suited to making rails.

Over the years the production of steel in Joliet also attracted wire companies to the area such as the American Steel and Wire Company and the Illinois Wire Manufacturing Company. The growing demand for barbed wire in western states boosted the sale of steel to Joliet firms.

When United States Steel Corporation was formed in 1901, it brought under one corporate umbrella the Illinois Steel Company on Collins St and the American Steel and Wire Company on Scott St. and in Rockdale. After additional name and organization changes, local operations were absorbed into the parent corporation in 1963 and became known as the Joliet Works of United States Steel Corporation.

**Scope and Content Arrangement:**

The Joliet Steel Companies Collection contains correspondence, company publications, invoices, registration records, and photographs pertaining to the history of various steel and wire manufacturing companies in Joliet. The collection has been arranged into 3 series based on the document type and the materials in each series are arranged chronologically. There are several oversized photographs included in the collection. All oversized materials are listed in Series 3 of the collection and are recorded in the finding aid with their original series number as well. Oversized materials are housed in oversize storage drawer 5 in the Curator’s Office.

- Series 1: Records and Printed Materials
- Series 2: Photographs
- Series 3: Oversized Materials

**Related Materials:**

**Content Listing:**

**Series 1:** Records and Printed Materials, 1920-1926, 1942, 1971, 1986, 2006

**Location:** RR.6.3

**Scope:** This series contains correspondence, newspaper articles, purchase orders, company publications, and registration records relating to steel and wire companies in Joliet. Of note are issues of The Scott Street Splicer and The Mixer, two publications produced for steel workers by the American Steel and Wire Company and the Joliet Works Illinois Steel Company respectfully. All materials in this series are organized chronologically.

<b>Folder Title:</b>	<b>Folder #:</b>	<b>Box #:</b>
The Scott Street Splicer, 1920	1	1
Steel Works Club Christmas Party Program, 1920	2	1

The Mixer, January 1925	3	1
The Mixer, Dec. 1924-Sept. 1929, May 1931	4	1
The Mixer, October 1930	5	1
Truck or Tractor Driving Licenses, 1927, 1929	6	1
James A. Bell Retirement Dinner Invitation, 1931	7	1
Motor Vehicle Bond to Illinois Wire & MFG. Co., 1937	8	1
Motor Vehicle Title and Registration Applications, 1940-41	9	1
Correspondence, 1940-1943	10	1
Orders and Invoices	11	1
United States Steel Publications, 1942, 1971	12	1
Will County and the Barbed Wire Industry by Hope Rajala, 1975	13	1
Newspaper Articles, 1986	14	1
Joliet Iron Works Historic Site Program, 2006	15	1
Illinois Wire & MFG Co. Advertisements	16	1
Joliet Works Veteran List	17	1

**Series 2:** Photographs, 1910-1920

**Location:** RR.6.3

**Scope:** This series contains photographs of various steel companies including American Steel and Wire, Joliet Steel, and Illinois Wire and Manufacturing Co. Photographs include employee photographs as well as images of the factories. All materials in this series are organized chronologically.

<b>Folder Title:</b>	<b>Folder #:</b>	<b>Box #:</b>
American Steel and Wire Photo Album, C. 1910	18	1
Joliet Steel Employee Photographs, C. 1910-1920	19	1
Joliet Steel Employee Photographs, C. 1910-1920	20	1
American Steel and Wire Co., Rockdale Mills, Employee Photographs, 1916	21	1
American Steel and Wire Co., Scott Street Band Photograph, 1920	22	1
American Steel and Wire Co., Scott Street Works Photographs, 1920	23	1
Steel Mill Exterior Photographs	24	1
Illinois Wire and Manufacturing Co. Photographs	25	1
Illinois Wire and Manufacturing Co., Rockdale Mills Photo Album	26	1

**Series 3:** Oversized Materials

**Location:** CO.OS.01

<b>Folder Title:</b>	<b>Original Series:</b>
Billets & Barbs, U.S. Steel Publication, 1973-1974, 1978	Series 1
Illinois Wire & Mfg. Co. Advertisement	Series 1
Joliet Steel Companies Photographs (Folder 1 of 2)	Series 2

Joliet Steel Companies Photographs (Folder 2 of 2)  
Steelworks Club Photographs, 1914-1915

Series 2  
Series 2