

The STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY of MISSOURI

R1314 Kansas City Southern Railway Company Collection, 1894-1968 Eleven folders

This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri](#).
If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

PROVENANCE

Sallie Beard of Joplin, Missouri donated this collection to the State Historical Society of Missouri on 6 March 2014, SHSMO –RA1604.

DESCRIPTION

This is a collection of Kansas City Southern Railway (KCS) items representing the careers of a father and son who, between them, had nearly 80 years of experience on the line. Frank Moore Switzer, born in Chillicothe, Missouri in 1873, was already a veteran of the Wabash Railroad when he became a brakeman for the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf (KCP & G) in 1897. Promoted to conductor in 1901, Switzer and his wife, Anna, made their home in Anderson, Missouri for many years. He was the senior conductor on the northern division (34 years service) at the time of his death in Pittsburg, Kansas in 1931.

His son, George M. Switzer, born in Kansas in 1902, began railroading in 1918-20 as a KCS crew caller and brakeman, and was promoted to conductor in 1937. In 1939 he was loaned to the Massman Construction Company, then building Grand Lake in Oklahoma. Returning to KCS train service in 1940, Switzer rose rapidly at Pittsburg and was promoted yardmaster, assistant trainmaster, and trainmaster, successively, in 1942-45. He became superintendent of the northern division in 1955, and took the same position in 1960 on the southern division, based in Shreveport, Louisiana. Switzer retired in 1968 after nearly fifty years of service with KCS. He died February 9, 1991.

Kansas City developer Arthur E. Stillwell organized what became KCS after having completed the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railway. Stillwell proposed a north-south railroad to the Gulf of Mexico as the route for exporting Kansas City grain and meat. The direct line, cutting across the grain of established transcontinental railroads, was 800 miles, a distance shorter by 400 miles than eastward routes to Atlantic seaboard ports. Stillwell organized the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf Railway in 1893 using the Belt Railway as the northern terminus, building as far as Joplin, and buying existing lines in Arkansas and Louisiana. Rejecting Galveston due to its vulnerability to hurricanes, Stillwell instead developed Port Arthur, Texas, named after himself, as the railroad's Gulf terminal. The costs of development of Port Arthur, along with 250 miles of new construction (built with Dutch capital) to connect extant portions in Arkansas and Louisiana, led the company into receivership and drove Stillwell from leadership. The Kansas City Southern Railway emerged from the receivership in 1900 and has operated under that name ever since. By the 1930s, KCS acquired a line to Shreveport and Dallas, and, by purchase of the Louisiana & Arkansas Railroad, gained direct access to New Orleans.

The smallest and last-built of Missouri's Class I lines, the Kansas City Southern Railway is the last of over 50 railroads that once bore Kansas City in their titles. The railroad has been solvent since 1900 and survived when larger regional neighbors failed by the movement of grain, oil and petrochemicals to and

from the Gulf. It avoided being swallowed up during the merger mania by railroads in the late 20th century and currently operates in ten states. Since passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, it has become an important link in an international rail system connecting the American Midwest through Mexico to the Panama Canal.

The earliest items in the collection derive from KCS predecessor KCP & G. Among them are an Emigrant Outfit Contract, way bills, train orders and the all-important rulebook, checked out to Frank Switzer when he hired on the KCS in 1897. Nearly all of the other material is post-1900 and is KCS in origin. Included are Frank Switzer's membership cards in the Order of Railway Conductors, travel passes, timetables, train orders, seniority rosters, company publications, equipment diagrams, and items advertising Kansas City Southern passenger service, notably the *Southern Belle* to New Orleans. In addition to papers, the collection includes over 200 photographs spanning the steam and diesel eras and showing Kansas City Southern locomotives, facilities and operations around Pittsburg and Shreveport. Some images are the work of company and commercial photographers, but many are snapshots collected by George Switzer in his capacity as trainmaster and division superintendent. A significant number show various wrecks and derailments, illustrating the travails of a railroad official charged with keeping trains moving, and the first on call when they didn't.

The collection adds to the Society's transportation holdings and those for the KCS, which include the first corporate minute book (SHSMO-Wunp5004).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection consists of papers, photographs and miscellaneous items pertaining to the Kansas City Southern Railway assembled by a father and son who had long careers on the line. Many of the photographs show wrecks and derailments in the northern and southern divisions, ca. 1955-1968.

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PREFERRED CITATION

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INVENTORY

Folder 01: Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf Railway, Rulebook, 1897

Folder 02: Frank M. Switzer, Order of Railway Conductors membership cards, passes, miscellaneous papers, and photographs, 1902-1923

Folder 03: Railroad passes, KCS and other railroads, 1903-1942

Folder 04: Miscellaneous waybills and papers (KCS and other railroads), 1894-1914

Folder 05: KCS timetables, ca. 1914-1968

Folder 06: George M. Switzer, Trainmaster (Pittsburg, Kans., and Shreveport, La.), papers, 1944-1968

Folder 07: KCS and other publications, ca. 1940s-1950s
(mostly passenger train operations)

Folder 08: KCS, General Description, Passenger Equipment (Folio 21)

Folder 09: KCS, General Descriptions, Freight Equipment (Folio 22)

Folder 10: KCS Diesel Locomotives, Vest Pocket Diagrams, 1953

Folder 11: Grand River Dam construction (Okla.), photographs and postcards, ca. 1939-1940

Folder 12: Photograph collection KCS photographs (mostly derailments), ca. 1940s-1960s

Approximately 200 black and white photographs (a few are color shots) collected by George M. Switzer during his various tenures at KCS. The collection includes views of steam and diesel locomotives in regular operations, facilities at Pittsburg, Shreveport and Port Arthur, derailments and wrecks at Pittsburg, Kans., DeQueen and Wade, Ark., and other unidentified locations. Some of the photographs bear data on the back, but many are unidentified.

OVERSIZE

- Three photographs of KCS locomotives and trains
- Memorabilia including one enameled KCS hat badge

INDEX TERMS

DeQueen (Ark.)
Grand River Dam (Okla.)
Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf Railway
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Switzer, Frank M., 1873-1931
Switzer, George M., 1902-1991
Wade (Ark.)