

Collection #
P 0695

INDIANAPOLIS STREET RAILWAY STRIKES PHOTOGRAPHS AND NEGATIVES, 1892, 1913

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 envelope 5x7 acetate negatives and 1 photographs folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1892, 1913

PROVENANCE: multiple

RESTRICTIONS: Items listed as being in cold storage need at least four hours to acclimate, so patrons are advised to call ahead of their visit if they wish to view those items to allow for thawing time. Viewing negative requires setting up an appointment in advance.

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America materials, 1913-1914, SC 3339; Chicago Pullman Strike reports, July 1894, SC 2857; Bass Photo Company Collection, P0130

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2002.0738, 2017.0320

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

On 1 January 1892, John P. Frenzel, president of the **Indianapolis Citizens Street Railway** (ICSR), made employees of the company turn in their badges that allowed them free streetcar access when not working. This and other issues, including long work hours, prompted the employees strike on 4 January. On 12 January, M.M. Dugan, president of the Brotherhood of Car Drivers, Motormen, and Conductors of Indianapolis, asked that ICSR enter negotiations with the employees over their grievances. Workers went back to operation on 14 January. ICSR returned the badges but did not hear other grievances, so employees decided to strike once more on 21 February. This time, the strike included workers physically preventing streetcars from operating.

Two days later, William P. Fishback, a Republican attorney, filed a motion with the Superior Court in Indianapolis for ICSR to go into receivership. Judge N.B. Taylor ruled in favor of the motion and appointed a receiver, noting that ICSR had failed in its duty to provide regular transportation for the city. Shortly after, employees returned to work. On 4 March, the court ruled to place total control of the company with Frenzel. Negotiations for the grievances were non-existent, but employees decided another strike would be futile.

In August of 1913, labor organizers of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America sought to unionize workers from the **Indianapolis Traction and Terminal Company** (ITTC). They found employees of the **Indianapolis Street Railway Company** (ISRC), which had been incorporated into the ITTC in 1899, eager to join, as they were subjected to long hours and low wages. The ISRC hired men to follow union men and organizers around out of fear of loss of employee control. Though the company stated they did not hire armed men, there was a violent altercation between the hired men and union men.

Pro-union employees of the ISRC decided to strike on 31 October 1913 in protest. Later the same night, union sympathizers attacked employees who remained on the job. They vandalized streetcars and halted business. The next day, strikers stopped sixty-five crews from operating the street cars and demanded that the ISRC recognize the union. Instead, the ISRC brought strikebreakers in from Chicago. Violence again broke out, resulting in one murder and many beatings of strikebreakers. Many street cars were also damaged and were not able to operate. This resulted in citizens having to ride bicycles or carpooling in wagons.

On 3 November, some strikers stoned the ISRC president and superintendent. The next day, Indiana Governor Samuel Ralston ordered 2,200 national guardsmen to stifle the violence. Ralston met with union men and ISRC men in separate meetings on 7 November to try and end the strike. Each side had proposals and counterproposals before an agreement was reached.

The agreement reached between the union men and the ISRC men included several provisions. First, strikers not involved in any violence, including any fired by the ISRC, could return to work. Any employees not let back to work could file an appeal with the Public Service Commission of Indianapolis (PSC). The workers were also entitled to file grievances with the ISRC. If the grievances were not heard, the workers could then file them with the PSC, who would hear them within 30 days and have final say.

The employees voted unanimously to accept this agreement, and the strike ended on 7 November at 6 p.m. An employee committee filed twenty-three grievances with the ISRC on 14 November. The company refused to hear the complaints, and so the grievances were filed with the PSC, who heard 153 witnesses from both parties over seven weeks. They released a final report on 9 February 1914 that stipulated the ISRC must increase wages for its employees and reduce the work day to nine hours. They also gave the employees the right to organize in a union.

Sources:

Barrows, Robert G., and David J. Bodenhamer, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Indiana University Press: Indianapolis, IN, 1994.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains three black and white photographs of the 1892 strike and two black and white negatives of the 1913 strike.

The images include crowds and damaged street cars.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Strike scenes, 1892

Strike scenes, 1913

CONTAINER

Photographs

Folder 1 of 1

Cold Storage:

5.x7 Acetate Negatives

Envelope 1 of 1