BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE FIREMEN AND ENGINEMEN,
EUREKA LODGE NO. 14 (INDIANAPOLIS)
RECORDS, 1875–1975

Collection Information

Historical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Pamela Tranfield
22 April 2002
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 17 bound volumes, 1 manuscript box, 3 oversize folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1875-1975
HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen was formed on 1 December 1873 at Jervis, New York. Medical insurance and funeral benefits were the main incentives for membership in this labor union.

Eureka Lodge no. 14 was organized in Indianapolis, Indiana, on 21 February 1875. That year the union’s second annual convention was held in Indianapolis. Delegates voted that the union was to work for “protection of its members in industrial relations” in addition to existing as a life insurance organization. At that time the organization had 900 members in twenty-nine lodges across the United States and Canada.

The union merged with the International Firemen’s Union in 1879. By 1894 membership had grown to 26,000 members. In 1902 membership was opened to locomotive engineers, and in 1906 the name of the organization was changed to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. The union lost membership in the 1920s for a number of reasons, including the formation of the rival United Enginemen’s Association.

World War II provided a period of full employment and growth for the union. During the 1940s the brotherhood won major wage increases, a five-day week for yardmen, and an agreement that firemen would be retained in the cabs of diesel locomotives used in passenger service. This issue precipitated a 1962 strike that resulted in the removal of firemen-helpers from a number of freight and yard jobs. Several union members were jailed in 1966 over the issue.

On 1 January 1969 the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen joined with the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and Switchmen’s Union of North America to form the United Transportation Union.

Socialist leader Eugene Debs (1855-1926) was Grand Secretary of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen from 1880-92. He was a charter member of the Vigo Lodge, Terre Haute, Indiana.

Sources:
Inventory of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen/Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen Collection, MS 3, California State Railroad Museum (www.oac.cdlib.org), accessed 21 March 2002.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection includes seventeen minute books dating from 21 Feb. 1875 to 1 May 1969. These items are stored as Bound Volumes 3429-3445. This is not a complete set of minutes, as there are no books for the periods July 1877-June 1882, Jan. 1887-April 1889, Sept. 1902-Aug. 1905, and May 1910-Dec. 1916.

The volumes are arranged in chronological order. Loose items were removed from the books for conservation reasons. These items are stored in folders in M 0774. The documents include minutes dating from 13-17 June 1907 (folder 18), financial reports, and lists related to payment of dues. Other material includes letters concerning funeral services (folder 9), correspondence with the Westinghouse Air Brake Company (folder 14), and the Constitution of the Indiana State American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), 1960. These items are stored in Series 1: Bound Volumes and Enclosures.

Series 2, Business Records, consists of items that may have been originally stored in the bound volumes, but were loose items at the time of processing. These items include minutes of 7 Nov. 1882 (folder 27), applications for relief and sickness benefits (folder 28), and the annual report of the union dated 30 June 1901 (folder 30). Other material includes election ballots (stored as OM 00395) and a seniority roster of firemen and engineers on the Pennsylvania Railroad (Western Region, Indianapolis Division, 1 January 1948). This item is stored in flat file FF 14-0.

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**CATALOGING INFORMATION**

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: [http://157.91.92.2/](http://157.91.92.2/)
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, BV 3429).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.