

Collection #  
P 0908

**MCDONALD BROTHERS PHOTOGRAPH,  
CA. 1910S**

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22 May 2025

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 photograph folder

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1910s

PROVENANCE: Gift from June D. Meggenhofen Halliday of Zionsville, Ind., 1987

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: SC2021, Genealogy Notebook originally kept by Charles Meggenhofen, Jr., ca. 1900, with updates added by June Meggenhofen Halliday, contains information about the Meggenhofen, McDonald, and Paulus families; OVA photograph of Lewis McDonald on train.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1987.0698X

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lewis W. McDonald married Catherine M. Jackson on 8 January 1857 in Clark County, Indiana. They were the parents of John Milton, William Carl, Thomas B., Sylvanus Clifton, and Violette May. The father and the four sons all worked as engineers for the Monon Railroad. In 1860, the family lived in Clark County; in 1870 they lived in Bloomington in Monroe County; and in 1880 they lived in Rensselaer in Jasper County. By 1900 most of the family had moved to Fairfield in Tippecanoe County.

Lewis Whiteside McDonald was born on 26 February 1836 in Muddy Fork, Clark County. At the time of the 1860 census, he was working as a cooper. He and his wife and first child lived near Muddy Fork in Carr Township. By 1870, Lewis had become an engineer for the railroad. He was an engineer for the New Albany and Salem Railroad and its successor, the Louisville, New Albany, & Chicago Railroad, and later for the Monon Railroad, also known as the Chicago, Indianapolis, & Louisville Railway. After he was injured ca. 1891, he worked as an engine inspector in the railroad's round house.

Early on the morning of 3 May 1907, Lewis McDonald headed to work as usual, by boarding a Monon day coach, which was used as part of the milk train, at Hartford Street in Lafayette. His wife, Catherine, and their granddaughter, June (the donor of this collection), boarded the train at Salem Street, intending to spend the day in Chicago. They were seated in the ladies' coach when Lewis came into the car and told Catherine that he was feeling dizzy and very sick. He soon became unconscious. When they reached the North Street station, he was carried into the baggage room. A doctor was called, but Lewis died before the physician arrived. His body was taken to Bradshaw-Schlesselman undertaking parlor. Coroner Guy P. Levering determined the cause of death to be hemorrhage of the brain. Lewis's remains were taken to the family home at 1133 N. Seventh Street in Lafayette, and later to Borden in Clark County for burial.

John Milton McDonald was born 28 October 1857 in Borden, Clark County. He married Martha J. Harding (1857–1939) on 2 September 1885 in Lafayette. He was employed by the Monon Railroad for sixty-five years, most of that time as an engineer, until he retired in 1937. The 1940 census shows John as a widower with his brother Sylvanus and his wife, Etta, living with him. A 1942 newspaper article indicates that Etta took care of Martha during her final illness and then took care of John and his home during his final years. John was a member of Masonic lodge no. 123 and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, local no. 7. He died on 22 January 1942 in Lafayette.

William Carl McDonald was born on 28 June 1860 in Clark County. In November 1883, he married Jeanette "Jenny" Roley (1860–1924) in Lafayette. They had four children: Edna (Vaughn), William Paul, Earl Raymond, and Wilbur Carl. In the fall of 1878, William began working for the Monon Railroad as a fireman. He was promoted to freight train engineer in 1882. In 1890 he was assigned to the southern division of the Monon as passenger train engineer. For many years he ran trains 11 and 12 from Lafayette to French Lick. After forty-six years of service with the Monon, he made his last trip on 18 June 1924. He died on 27 June 1924 at his home in Lafayette after a short illness, the day before what would have been his 64<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and of Odd Fellow's lodge no. 22.

Thomas B. McDonald was born on 2 July 1862 in New Albany, Indiana. He was an engineer for the Monon Railroad for many years, retiring ca. 1906. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, lodge no. 123, and the Baptist church. His father's 1907 obituary mentions that Thomas lived in Ohio at that time. Thomas died on 4 March 1921 in Lafayette and was buried in Borden.

Sylvanus Clifton McDonald was born on 19 January 1866 in New Albany. He married Etta Grant Harvey (1872–1956) in Cass County in August 1895. They had one son, Henry Herbert. In 1900, when his father and three older brothers were all living in Tippecanoe County and working as engineers for the Monon Railroad, Sylvanus was living near Royal Center in the Boone Township of Cass County with his wife and her parents and was working as a farm laborer. He was still farming in Cass County in 1935, but by 1940, Sylvanus and Etta were staying with his brother John in Lafayette. Even though census records indicate that he was a farmer in Cass County for decades, other sources show that Sylvanus was an employee of the Monon Railroad. An 1891 Lafayette directory lists him as a fireman, which was likely a position with the Monon. An 1898 newspaper article mentions him as an engineer for the Monon, as does his brother Thomas's 1921 obituary, and Sylvanus's death certificate states that his usual occupation was engineer. It seems likely that he both farmed and worked for the railroad. His father's 1907 obituary mentions that Sylvanus lived in Peru, Indiana. Sylvanus died on 30 January 1946 in Logansport and was buried in Cass County.

Violette May was born on 25 January 1869 in New Albany. On 2 September 1896, she married Charles William Meggenhofen in Tippecanoe County. Their daughter, June Dorcas, the donor of this collection, was born on 1 June 1897 in Lafayette. By 1900, the family lived in Indianapolis. Violette died on 5 December 1905 and was buried in Borden.

June married William Halliday on 18 April 1917 in Marion County. At least from 1930 to 1950, June lived in Detroit, Michigan. She died in Carmel, Indiana, on 25 March 1997, a couple of months shy of her 100th birthday.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com (Accessed 20 May 2025):

- Find a Grave
- Indiana, U.S., Death Certificates, 1899–2017
- Indiana, U.S., Marriage Index, 1800–1941
- Indiana, U.S., Marriages, 1810–2001
- Indiana, U.S., Select Marriages Index, 1748–1993
- Lafayette, Indiana Directories, 1885–1891
- United States Federal Census, 1860–1950
- U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995

“A Fireman Killed.” *The Lafayette Daily Courier*, 22 September 1898, p. 4.

“Death Claims T. B. M’Donald: For Many Years Engineer on Monon Railroad....” *The Lafayette Journal Courier*, 5 March 1921, p. 5.

“Dies on Milk Train: Aged Engineer Passes Away Very Suddenly In Passenger Coach.” *Lafayette Daily Courier*, 3 May 1907, p. 1.

Indiana Historical Society Collections: SC2021, Genealogy Notebook originally kept by Charles Meggenhofen, Jr., ca. 1900, with updates added by June Meggenhofen Halliday, contains information about the Meggenhofen, McDonald, and Paulus families.

“McDonald Estate Is Left to Relatives.” *Lafayette Journal and Courier*, 31 January 1942, p. 11.

Obituary for John M. McDonald. *Lafayette Journal and Courier*, 22 January 1942, p. 11.

Obituary for Louis [sic] W. McDonald. *The Lafayette Sunday Times*, 5 May 1907, p. 5.

“Veteran Monon Engineer Dead.” *The Bedford Weekly Mail*, 10 May 1907, p. 2.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of a mounted oval photograph of the four McDonald brothers – John, William, Thomas, and Sylvanus – who, along with their father, Lewis McDonald, all worked as engineers for the Monon Railroad. The photograph is by Smith of Lafayette, Indiana, ca. 1910s.

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Group portrait of the McDonald brothers. On the back, their names are written in this order: Will McDonald, Tom McDonald, Vanus McDonald, John McDonald.

### CONTAINER

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