

C Carpenters' District Council of Greater St. Louis, AFL-CIO, Records, 1892-1979
3696 118 volumes and 290 folders on 34 rolls of microfilm

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INTRODUCTION

Minutes, correspondence, financial records, labor contracts, and apprenticeship records of the St. Louis District Council, one of four in the state of Missouri, which worked to unionize carpenter shops, provided benefits for members, and mediated jurisdictional disputes between unions.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Carpenters' District Council records were loaned for microfilming to the University of Missouri by the Carpenters' District Council of St. Louis, AFL-CIO on 19 June 1981 (Accession No. 4351).

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners was organized in 1881. Peter J. McGuire, who had worked to organize labor in other cities, went to St. Louis in 1878 and "actively participated in both the local Socialistic Labor party and the St. Louis Trades and Labor Alliance.

"In 1878 the Alliance had sent him to Jefferson City to work for passage of a State Bureau of Labor Statistics. When the legislature created the Bureau in 1879, McGuire served as its deputy commissioner. He returned to St. Louis in 1880 to again become active in trade unionism... His success in helping to increase wages and virtually eliminate piecework for carpenters in the city stimulated the creation of four branches of the local carpenters' union.

"But an influx of carpenters into the city, who were attracted by McGuire's achievements, erased the gains he had made. This had occurred in other unionized cities as well and moved them to urge McGuire to create a national union. On April 24, 1881, the St. Louis Carpenters Union created a five-man Provisional Committee of the Carpenters and Joiners National Union and instructed other carpenter unions across the country to send delegates to Chicago in August for the union's first convention.

"The 1889 national convention of the Brotherhood mandated the establishment of a district council in any city with two or more locals unions."* The District Council devoted most of its efforts to the unionization of all competent carpenters and of businesses that employed carpenters.

The Council enforces union rules by fining or tying union members who had broken them. It negotiated contracts with businesses that employed carpenters, and its business agents inspected jobs to make sure that union rules were followed and union men were employed.

In the event of a strike the Council provided strike benefits and was the bargaining agent for the unions. The Council also mediated jurisdictional disputes between the carpenters' unions and other labor unions.

During the Great Depression the District Council helped union members by dispensing

food and money to those in need.

*From "A Tradition of craftsmanship: The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in Missouri, 1881-1981," by Russell Clemens

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Carpenters' District Council records are arranged into the following series:

Minutes, 1892-1979

Financial Records, 1900-1968

Independent Allied Trades Union of Carpenters, Local No. 1

Correspondence, 1903-1950, n.d.

Contracts and Court Cases, 1900-1948, n.d.

Apprentice Indentures, 1911-1978, n.d.

Trade Rule Booklets, 1947-1977

Bills and Receipts, 1919-1925

Photographs, 1950s

Miscellaneous

More complete descriptions of these series is in the folder list that follows.

VOLUME AND FOLDER LIST

Minutes, 1892-1979. Minutes of the District Council. Each carpenters' union in the area would send delegates to the council meeting. The minutes consist of committee reports, financial reports and trials of union members accused of breaking union rules.

- v. 1-2 1892-1899 (some minutes missing)
- v. 2-5 1900s
- v. 5-10 1910s
- v. 10-16 1920s
- v. 16-25 1930s
- v. 25-32 1940s
- v. 32-39 1950s
- v. 39-45 1960s
- v. 46-59 1970s

Financial Records, 1900-1968. The earlier volumes also contain the building fund records and the record of overtime permits.

- v. 60-68 General funds and receipts, 1919-1939.
- v. 69-77 General funds and receipts, 1940s.
- v. 77-87 General funds and receipts, 1950s.
- v. 87-89 General funds and receipts, 1960-1961.
- v. 90-94 Trustees' reports, 1909-1965.
- v. 95-104 Initiation fees, 1920-1945.
- v. 105-106 Overtime permits, 1959-1968.
- v. 107 Permits, 1948-1950 (the type of permit is not clear).
- v. 108 Welfare fund, 1959-1963.
- v. 109-110 Per capita tax, 1961-1968.
- v. 111 New building funds, 1952-1955.
- v. 112-113 Rent, 1954-1968.
- v. 114 Miscellaneous building records, 1955-1957.
- v. 115-116 Crime books, 1900-1956. Crime books list union members who broke union rules and the fines they paid. Vol. 115 is arranged chronologically, Vol. 116 is arranged alphabetically.
- v. 117 Permits to work below the scale of wages, 1913-1966. Arranged alphabetically.

Independent Allied Trades Union of Carpenters, Local No. 1. Minutes of a union formed outside the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.

- v. 118 Minutes, 1906-1907

Correspondence, 1903-1950, n.d. Correspondence about wages, labor contracts, and infringement of union rules; with the head office of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners; and with other unions concerning jurisdictional disputes between unions and union and non-union jobs. Trial transcripts and appeals of charges brought against union members accused of breaking union rules.

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f. 36	1914 September-1916 March
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f. 177-180	1944
f. 181-186	1945
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f. 193-199	1947
f. 200	1948-1950
f. 201	n.d.

Contracts and Court Cases, 1900-1948, n.d. Contracts between the council and businesses agreeing to use union labor. Transcripts of court cases between the council and businesses concerning labor disputes.

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f. 212	1908-1913
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Contracts and Court Cases, 1900-1948, n.d. (con'd)

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Bills and Receipts, 1919-1925

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Photographs, 1950s

- f. 289 Two photos of a building with earlier Carpenters' District Council offices; one is of the entire building, the other is of the doorway to the offices.

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- f. 290 Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers' International Union of America Internal Trade Agreements booklet, 1915; three blueprints; Instructions for Founding or Installing New Unions of the United Brotherhood; petition form for requesting union charter; and a Job Insurance Policy booklet.

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