

S0462 Raftery, Lawrence M. (1895-1983)
Papers, 1915-1983
31 Folders

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Mrs. Lawrence M. Raftery and Josephine Monroe donated the Lawrence Raftery papers, 1916-1983, on September 29 and November 11, 1983.

Lawrence M. Raftery was born in St. Louis on February 27, 1895. His father, Sylvester Raftery, worked as a painting and decorating contractor. Lawrence Raftery joined the family trade in 1913 when he went to work for an uncle as a painters' apprentice. The following year, at the age of 18, he joined Local Union 115 of the Brotherhood of Painters, Paperhangers and Decorators of America, which changed its name to the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades in the early 1970s. Raftery attained journeyman status on October 16, 1916.

Like his father, Raftery became active in the affairs of Local 115. He represented the local in District Council No. 2, Building Trades Council, Central Trades and Labor Council of St. Louis and the Missouri State Federation of Labor. Raftery also served as Local 115's delegate to the St. Louis Central Trades and Labor Union and the St. Louis Building and Trade Council. He became its business representative in 1923. Two years later Raftery became secretary-business representative of Painters District Council No. 2.

IBPAT elected Raftery vice-president at its Fifteenth General Assembly, held in Buffalo, New York in 1937. He served in that capacity until 1942 when he was elected Secretary-Treasurer, his first national office. Raftery held this position from 1937 until September 1952, when he was elected General President of the Brotherhood.

As General President, Raftery worked to provide employment opportunities for all union members, especially disabled veterans. He fought to stabilize wages in the painting industries after the removal of war restrictions. Raftery sought to improve working conditions for IBPAT members. He was a key figure in IBPAT's affiliation with the AFL-CIO's Metal Trades Department, a move that provided work opportunities for IBPAT's members in shipyards, industrial plants, atomic energy installations and commercial work not directly connected with the construction industry.

In 1958, Raftery was elected Vice-President of the AFL-CIO's Executive Council, a position he held until his resignation in 1965. IBPAT chose Raftery to represent the union and the labor movement in West Berlin, Geneva, and Japan throughout his career.

During Raftery's tenure as IBPAT General President, the materials and equipment used by the painting and allied trades industry grew in technological sophistication. Raftery addressed the need for labor and management to upgrade the apprentice and journeyman training program to reflect these changes at the 73rd Annual Convention of the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America in 1957. As IBPAT General President, Raftery later

warned of the encroaching threats posed by automation and inflation to employment in the construction industry.

Raftery resigned as IBPAT General President at the 21st Brotherhood general convention in Minneapolis in 1964. His son, S. Frank "Bud" Raftery, was elected to succeed his father the following March. Lawrence Raftery died on June 23, 1983. He was survived by his widow Eloise, eight children, approximately 48 grandchildren and 59 great-grandchildren.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Lawrence M. Raftery Papers, 1915-1983, reflect Raftery's involvement in the International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America. The collection includes documentation of his apprenticeship in the St. Louis Local Union 115 to his thirteen year term as General President of IBPAT, 1952-1965.

The collection is divided into five series: 1. Business Papers, 1915-1983; 2. Personal Papers, 1950-c.1970s; 3. Artifacts, 1925-1978; 4. Tapes T-870 and T-871, 1975 and 1979; and 5. Photographs 5079-5131, 1900-1970s.

Series 1, Business Papers, 1915-1983, f.1-12, includes a history of the International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America (IBPAT) and Raftery's involvement in the union; IBPAT financial reports and organizer's handbook; an official 1923 Souvenir Program of the 30th Anniversary and Dedication of IBPAT's Painter's District Council home at Grand and Page in St. Louis; Raftery's membership and dues books, 1915-1981; a bound copy of Painters and Allied Trades Journal, 1981; Raftery's invitation to a luncheon with President Johnson, January 7, 1964, and his acceptance letter; a letter of congratulations from President Johnson to Raftery on his 70th birthday and the installation of Raftery's son, S. Frank Raftery, to the General Presidency of IBPAT. Arranged alphabetically.

Series 2, Personal Papers, 1950-c.1970s, f.13-15, includes a group of newsclippings concerning the 19th National General Convention of IBPAT held in Seattle, Washington in 1954; personal correspondence and recollections from Raftery's brother, Sylvester Raftery, c.1970s; and Raftery's travel diary from 1950-1962. Arranged alphabetically.

Series 3, Artifacts, 1925-1979, f.16-30, is divided into two sub-series: Buttons, 1925-1979, and Memorabilia, 1941-1978. The Buttons sub-series, f.16-27, includes convention buttons of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations; the Building and Construction Trades Department, American Federation of Labor; the International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America, AFL-CIO; the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO; labor federations; state federations of labor; the Missouri State Labor Council; and the Union Label and Service Trades Department. Arranged alphabetically by union names. The second sub-series, Memorabilia, f.28-30, includes Raftery's membership cards in Northern California's Brotherhood of Painters Club, the Chicago Federation of Musicians, the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels, and the International Association of Fire Fighters. The second sub-series also includes medallions, convention nametags, keys, and a commemorative ashtray honoring Raftery for fifty years of membership in the Painters Local Union No. 115. Arranged chronologically.

Series 4, Tapes, T-879 and T-871, 1975 and 1979. The Tape series includes two interviews with Raftery concerning family history and his involvement with IBPAT.

Series 5, Photographs, 462.1-462.53, 1900-1970s, includes family members, labor and political leaders. Arranged chronologically. Located in photograph collection. Interview transcripts 1975 and 1979.

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2. Financial Reports, 1975-1980
3. History of IBPAT; and Obituary Newsclippings, 1983
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5. Membership and Dues Book, 1929-1943
6. Membership and Dues Book, 1944-1958
7. Membership and Dues Book, 1959-1981
8. Memorandum of Understanding between the International Union of Operating Engineers and IBPAT, March 10, 1980
9. Organizer's Handbook, IBPAT, c.1960s
10. The Painter and Decorator, October, 1969
11. Painters and Allied Trades Journal, 1981
12. President Johnson's Luncheon, January 7, 1964

SERIES 2 - PERSONAL PAPERS

13. Memento presented to Lawrence Raftery at the Nineteenth General Convention of the Brotherhood Painter's District Council #5, 1954
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15. Travel Diary, 1950-1962

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21. International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America, AFL-CIO, Convention Buttons, 1925-1941

22. International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America, AFL-CIO, Convention Buttons, 1941-1969

23. Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO, Convention Buttons, 1954-1959

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24. Miscellaneous Labor Federation Buttons, 1941-1956

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28. Raftery Membership Cards, Medallion, and Key, 1941- 1978

29. Raftery Convention and Conference Name Tags, 1967- 1973

30. Painters Local Union No. 115 Commemorative Ashtray honoring Raftery for his fifty year membership, June 5, 1966

31. Photographs 462.1-462.53

32. Interview transcripts 1975, and 1979

OVERSIZE

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