Guide to the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen
MSS.0216

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November 26, 2012

Describing Archives: A Content Standard
Table of Contents

Summary Information ........................................................................................................................................ 3
Biographical/Historical note .......................................................................................................................... 4
Scope and Contents note ................................................................................................................................... 4
Administrative Information ............................................................................................................................. 5
Controlled Access Headings ......................................................................................................................... 5
Collection Inventory ....................................................................................................................................... 7
Summary Information

Repository: W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama

Creator: Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen

Title: Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen letter

Date: 1921 March 16

Extent: 0.05 Linear feet (1 item)

Language: English

Abstract: Letter dated 15 March 1921 from Brotherhood of Trainmen Vice President, Val Fitzpatrick, to union members concerning a strike against the Atlanta, Birmingham, and Atlantic Railway Company.

Preferred Citation note

Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen letter, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.
Biographical/Historical note

In 1883, eight men met in Delaware & Hudson R.R. Caboose No. 10 at Oneonta, New York, to talk about working conditions. A few days later on 23 September 1883, the Grand Lodge of the "Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen" (BRB) was organized. The Oneonta lodge was called "E.V. Debs Lodge No. 1" in honor of Eugene Victor Debs, Grand Secretary and Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. He provided a great assistance in forming the infant organization. On 1 January 1890, the name of the organization was changed to the "Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen" (BRT).

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) was North America's oldest rail labor union when it merged with the Teamsters in 2004. It had members in the eastern half of the United States and parts of Canada. Conductors were able to enter, but the union was not specialized to deal with their issues. The BLE was the first of the "Big Four" of railroad worker brotherhoods: 1) Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE, 1864), organized as Brotherhood of the Footboard in 1863. 2) Order of Railway Conductors (ORC, 1868). 3) Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen (BLF, 1873), later the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (BLFE, 1904). 4) Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen, (1883), later the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT). In 1969, all except the BLE joined with the Switchmen's Union to become the United Transportation Union (UTU). In the era after the founding of the Big Four, some sixteen other "brotherhoods" of railroad trades organized. Membership qualifications across trades shifted, and the alliances among the brotherhoods (and their chapters) are not always clear. After 1877, the BLE was considered less militant than some other brotherhoods, as well as the Knights of Labor and the American Railway Union.

In the 1920s, the members of Lodge 1 (which incidentally had changed its name to "Daniel Hopkins"), in order to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Brotherhood, located Caboose No. 10 which had deteriorated over the years. With the help of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, the caboose was brought back to Oneonta, restored to its original condition, placed under a pagoda in Newahwa Park in Oneonta, and on 23 September 1924, a ceremony was held there to celebrate the occasion. Four of the original eight founding members were still living and attended.


Scope and Contents note
The collection contains a letter dated 15 March 1921, from the Brotherhood of Trainmen Vice President, Val Fitzpatrick, to union members concerning a strike against the Atlanta, Birmingham, and Atlantic Railway Company.

Administrative Information

Publication Information
W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama February 2008

Conditions Governing Access note
None

Conditions Governing Use note
None

Provenance
unknown

Processed by
unknown, 2008; updated by Martha Bace, 2012

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

• Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic Railway. (1914-1926)

Genre(s)
• Commercial correspondence

Subject(s)

• Business and Labor
• Organizations
• Railroads--Employees--Labor unions--United States--History--20th century
## Collection Inventory

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