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International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftsmen, Local 16; Records

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M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
Title:	International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, Local 16 Records
ID:	apap010
Date [inclusive]:	1886-1930
Physical Description:	0.6 cubic ft.
Physical Location:	The materials are located onsite in the department.
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection contains meeting minutes from Bricklayers Local 16, Schenectady, NY.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, Local 16 (Schenectady, N.Y.) Records, 1886-1930. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, Local 16 Records).

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Biographical History

On July 11, 1886, a meeting of bricklayers was held in the city of Schenectady, New York, for the purpose of organizing a local union of that trade. The minutes for this meeting contain a cryptic note, which might indicate this local's connection to a previous local: the secretary is directed to communicate with the international union "and learn the Amount of Indebtedness of Union 13 up to date." [Bricklayers, Local 16. Minutes, July 11, 1886. An altered charter hanging in the meeting room of the Schenectady Labor Temple, lists a Bricklayers' union with the local number scratched out and "16" added in its place. This charter is dated March 1, 1867, and is probably the charter of Local 13.] By August, the new Schenectady local had elected its officers and received its charter (dated August 5, 1886) as Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers Union No. 16 of the City of Schenectady. [Ibid., August 5, 1886.]

This local was apparently reorganized in response to the large-scale building program begun by Thomas Alva Edison when he moved his Edison Machine Works to Schenectady in 1886. [Gugliuzza, Anthony. Interview, July 11, 1990.]

One of the earliest concerns of the local was the question of whether or not to amalgamate with other building trades unions. Apparently, an informal type of industrial unionism was being considered, most likely as a way to avoid jurisdictional disputes. As early as 1886, Local 16 had begun discussing this option, but had decided against amalgamating with the area's carpenters' and painters' locals. [Bricklayers, Local 16. Minutes, August 18, 1886; September 1, 1886.] Early the next year, the discussion continued with questions about the best way to work with carpenters "to procure the hours demanded the coming season," [Ibid., January 10, 1887.] and soon after the local voted for "partial amalgamation" with the carpenters. [Ibid., January 19, 1887.] Despite this concern with the hours of work, in 1888 the local instructed its delegate to the international convention to vote against the implementation of the eight-hour movement. [Ibid., June 4, 1888.] Other major concerns in the 1880s and 1890s were scab workers and contractors.

For its early years, Local 16 had no business agent. The union would, instead, instruct two of its members to examine the problems and situations in the area, and these men would report their findings to the local. Sometime during the 1920s, however, the local hired its first business agent, and until the local merged into Local 6 that tradition continued. [Gugliuzza, Anthony. Interview, July 11, 1990.]

During the late 1950s, Albany Local 6 went on strike for a small raise. The failure of this strike heightened awareness of the need for combining forces. As a result the locals in the Capital District formed a district council which held monthly meetings and negotiated area wide contracts. During the 1965 contract negotiations, the bricklayers' district council attempted to negotiate a shorter work week. Negotiations eventually failed, and all locals (except for the Glens Falls local which negotiated its contracts with the Upper Tier Executive Council) went on strike for thirteen weeks, from May until August. Because of the united efforts of the unions, a contract was finally agreed to that shortened the work week (over a period of five years) to 35 hours and which guaranteed double pay for overtime work. [Gugliuzza, Anthony. Interview, July 11, 1990.] After the expiration of this five-year contract in 1970, Local 16 negotiated a contract which included substantial raises and significant increases to benefits. The existence of a strong force for collective bargaining and the building of the South Mall (which led to a shortage in construction labor) seem to have been instrumental in winning this contract. [Gugliuzza, Anthony. Interview, October 29, 1990.]

On July 11, 1986, Local 16 voted to merge into Local 6 of Albany, and the merger was finalized in August. [Bricklayers, Local 16. Minutes, July 11, 1986.] Upon completion of this merger, the business agent for Local 16 became an assistant business agent in Local 6.

Business Agents of Local 16: T. "Tom" Ervin, 1930s-1947; Henry Reutzel, 1947-1967; Vincent Riggi, 1967-1976; Anthony Gugliuzza, 1976-1987.

New York State Capital Area Bricklayers, Masons, Plasterers Executive Council (Also called the Capital District Executive Committee or, simply, the District Council): Local 6, Albany; Local 8, Cohoes; Local 10, Troy; Local 16, Schenectady; Local 61, Amsterdam; Local 64, Glens Falls (Local 64, however, negotiated its contracts with the Upper Tier Executive Council); Local 67, Gloversville; Local 77, Saratoga Springs.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains photocopies of minutes from Bricklayers Local 16. In 1984 or 1985, water from a burst pipe in the Schenectady Labor Temple flooded the basement and destroyed many of the historical records union locals had stored there. Bricklayers Local 16 was one local that apparently lost some records. Because of this, there are gaps in the minutes. Fortunately, most of the early minutes have survived, which are the earliest labor union records ever discovered in Schenectady, New York.

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Arrangement of the Collection

The collection has no series, arranged chronologically.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Revision Description

Converted to EAD Encoded in EAD by Jodi Boyle 2015 December 2015

Processing Information

Processed in 1990 October 31 by Geoffrey A. Huth.

Acquisition Information

All items in this manuscript group were photocopied onto acid-free paper by the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, of the University at Albany, State University of New

York, on the premises of International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, Local 16, as a part of the Harry Van Arsdale, Jr., Labor History Project.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Schenectady, New York
- Labor
- Bricklayers -- Labor unions -- New York (State)
- Building trades -- Employees -- Labor unions -- New York (State)
- Labor unions -- New York (State) -- Schenectady
- Minutes
- Contracts
- Bylaws (administrative records)
- International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen. Local 16 (Schenectady, N.Y.)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Minute Book (1 of 2), 1886-1892	Box 1 (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craf)	Folder 1
Minute Book (2 of 2), 1886-1892	Box 1 (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craf)	Folder 2
Minute Book (1 of 2), 1917-1921 November 3	Box 1 (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craf)	Folder 3
Minute Book (2 of 2), 1917-1921 November 3	Box 1 (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craf)	Folder 4
Minute Book (1 of 2), 1921 November 10 - 1925 May 28	Box 1 (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craf)	Folder 5
Minute Book (2 of 2), 1921 November 10 - 1925 May 28	Box 2 (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craf)	Folder 1
Minute Book (1 of 3), 1925 June 4-1930-March 20	Box 2 (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craf)	Folder 2
Minute Book (2 of 3), 1925 June 4-1930-March 20	Box 3 (International	Folder 1

Union of
Bricklayers
and Allied
Craf)

Minute Book (3 of 3), 1925 June 4-1930-March 20

Box 3
(International
Union of
Bricklayers
and Allied
Craf)

Folder 2