

Independent Order of Odd Fellows

MS – 323

Special Collections and Archives

Wright State University Libraries

**Processed by:
Elaine Wallace
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Introduction

Records of the International Order of Odd Fellows were accessioned into the Wright State University Department of Archives and Special Collections on November 25, 2003. They were donated by Darlene Sizemore. The records and papers in this collection date from 1865-1945 and are contained in 12 Hollinger boxes. There are no restrictions on the use of this collection. The collection is arranged into seven series as follows:

Series 1: Gem City Dayton Lodge #795

Series 2: International Association of Machinists Lodge #608

Series 3: Rebekah Lodges #342 and 397

Series 4: Lodges of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen

Series 5: Annual Proceedings of the Ohio Grand Lodge

Series 6: Single Items from Various Lodges

Series 7: Unidentified Lodges

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Organizational Sketch

The first *Independent Order of Odd Fellows* in Dayton, Montgomery Lodge #5, was instituted under a charter dated April 19, 1833. The *Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Dayton Lodge # 273*, was instituted April 20, 1855, and later became the I.O.O.F. Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. The *Gem City Dayton Encampment #116* was instituted on May 21, 1869, by James Turner, G.P., and on July 16, 1891, *Gem City, Dayton Lodge #795* was instituted. For a number of years the meetings were held over Schoener's Clothing store; then the *Odd Fellows Temple*, a fine sandstone structure, was erected in 1870. The occasion of the laying of the cornerstone on June 14, 1870, was attended with elaborate and extensive public ceremonies.

The Temple at this time was owned by *Montgomery Lodge #5, Schiller Lodge #206, Wayne Lodge #10, and Dayton Encampment #2*. The other lodges held their meetings in other localities in the city. Because some lodges were either absorbed into other lodges, or else changed their lodge numbers, it is not possible to keep complete track of their individual histories. The "*History of the City of Dayton and Montgomery County, Ohio*" by Reverend A.W. Drury, published a list of *Odd Fellow Lodges* in Ohio, which can be found in the Special Collections and Archives.

The *Independent Order of Odd Fellows* is a benevolent and charitable organization with high moral principles seeking to aid and improve the life of good men. Much of their philosophy was to aid and protect its members, with visiting the sick, aiding the distressed, educating the orphan and burying the dead. Throughout the years

they have established over 60 retirement homes for the aged and orphans throughout the United States and Canada.

It is a worldwide organization having one sovereign leader. Lodges can be found in every continent of the world with a total membership of over one and a half million, and is the only fraternal society allowed by the United States Army to hold Memorial Services at the *Tomb of The Unknown Soldier*, in Arlington Cemetery. It supports and sends many young high school students every year to the United Nations.

The *Independent Order of the Odd Fellows* is one of the oldest and largest fraternal orders in the United States. *Odd Fellowship* was founded in England where it grew up during the 18th century. In England *The Patriotic Order* was followed by the *Union of United Orders*, and *The Loyal Order*. In 1813, various lodges of *The Union Order* organized the *Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows*. American *Odd Fellowship* was founded as the Washington lodge #1 in Baltimore in 1819, and the following year affiliated with the Manchester unity.

The name Odd Fellows has several origins. One old and apparently authoritative history of Odd Fellowship gives the explanation, "The common laboring man should associate themselves together and form a fraternity for social unity and fellowship and for mutual help. This was such a marked violation of the trends of the times (England in the 1700's) that they became known as 'peculiar' or 'odd', hence they were derided as *Odd Fellows*. Because of the appropriateness of the name, those engaged in forming these unions accepted it. When legally incorporated, the title *Odd Fellow* was adopted.

The Odd Fellow's Creed

I believe in the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man

I believe in Friendship, Love, and Truth as basic guides to the ultimate destiny of
all mankind.

I believe my home, my church or temple, my lodge, and my community deserve
my best work, my modest pride, my earnest faith, and my deepest loyalty, as I perform
my duty "to visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead, and educate the orphan",
and as I work with others to build a better world, because, in spirit and in truth, I am and
must always be, grateful to my Creator, faithful to my country, and fraternal to my fellow
man.

I am an Odd Fellow!

Scope and Content Note

Series One contains the records of Gem City Dayton Lodge #785 in five ledgers and a file folder. The contents of the ledgers deal with Memberships, Dismissals and Reinstatements, Minutes, Withdrawals and Transfers, and a file folder of Ephemera; with dates running from 1891-1945.

Series Two contains the records of the International Association of Machinists #608 in three file folders, two of which hold Financial Reports, and the other has Miscellaneous Correspondence. There are also seven ledgers mainly concerned with Membership, Dues, Roll Call and Minutes.

Rebekah Lodges, #342 and #397 takes up Series Three with three ledgers that contain Membership Attendance, Dues, Roll of Officers, and a file of correspondence which date from 1892-1917. In addition, there is a Proceedings Catalogue of an Ohio Rebekah Assembly, held at Portsmouth, Ohio, May 9th-10th., 1917 .

The Lodges #375 and #273 of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen makes up Series Four with certificates of Examination and Audit files, and Attendance and Dues ledgers dating from 1905-1946.

Series Five is entirely devoted to the Annual Proceedings of the Ohio Grand Lodge. The contents of this series are hardbound copies of the Grand Lodge meetings in various Ohio cities dating from 1896-1932, plus a large volume of Laws and Decisions of the Sovereign Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows, Constitution By-laws Rules of Order, and Analytical Index.

Single Items from various lodges are contained in Series Six. There is a Log Book from St. Paris Lodge #40, Cash Ledger from Hope Lodge #16, By-laws, Membership

Dues from Lodge #19, Receipts, By-laws from Fraternal Lodge #510, and Loans and Membership Dues Ledgers belonging to Lodge #253.

Unidentified Ohio Lodges are contained in Series Seven; and dating from 1885-1915 are Members Attendance, Dues, Funeral Book of Dues, and a Double-entry Cash Ledger.

Almost all of the ledgers in this collection are in some stage of deterioration, especially in their covers and bindings, and would have to be handled with care.

Box and Folder Listing

MS 323 Independent Order of Odd Fellows

Series I Gem City, Dayton Lodge #795

Box	Item	Date
1	Membership Applications Ledger	1891-1903
	Ex-members and Reinstatement Ledger	1892-1906
2	Record of Minutes Ledger	1908-1911
	Estimates and Proposals-file	1910-1925
	Ephemera file	1918-1945
3	Members Attendance, Due Bills Ledger	1934-1944
4	Gem City Encampment #116, Membership Degrees Withdrawals and Transfers Ledger	1893-1937

**Series II International Association of Machinists
Lodge #608**

5	Miscellaneous Correspondence File	1904-1969
	Monthly Financial Reports File	1915
	Monthly Financial Reports File	1932
6	Membership Dues Ledger	1905-1908
	Membership Dues Ledger	1913-1914
	Record of Membership Ledger	1915-1917
	Minutes of Meetings Ledger	1919-1922
	Membership Dues Ledger	1921-1923
	Membership Dues Ledger	1929-1940
	Roll Call and Minutes Ledger	1934-1938

Series III Rebekah Lodge #342

Box	Item	Date
7	Members Attendance Ledger	1892-1909
	Members Attendance, Dues Ledger	1908-1913
	Applications, Dismissals, Transfers, Correspondence file	1894-1941
	Galilee Rebekah Lodge #397 Roll of Officers Ledger	1917-1924
	Proceedings of Ohio Rebekah Assembly, Thirty-first Annual Session, Portsmouth, Ohio-May 9 th and 10 th .	1917

Series 1V Lodges of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen

8	Firemen and Enginemen Lodge #375 Attendance and Dues Ledger	1939-1946
	Firemen and Enginemen Lodge #375 Certificates of Examination and Audit file	1945-1946
	Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Lodge #273 Attendance Ledger	1905-1917
	Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Lodge #273 Attendance Ledger	1918-1920

Series V Annual Proceedings of the Ohio Grand Lodge

Box	Item	Date
9	Digest of Laws and Decisions of The Sovereign Grand Lodge Independent Order of Odd Fellows Constitution, By-laws Rules of Order, Analytical Index	1896
	Sixtieth Annual Session Cleveland, Ohio, May 17 th -20 th , 1892	1892

9	Sixty-seventh Annual Session, Toledo, Ohio, May 16 th -19 th , 1899	1899
	Sixty-eighth Annual Session Marietta, Ohio, Mat15 th -18 th , 1900	1900
	Seventy-fourth Annual Session, Cleveland, Ohio, May 15 th -18 th , 1906	1906
	Seventy-fifth Annual Session, Steubenville, Ohio, May21 st -24 th , 1907	1907
	Seventy-sixth Annual session, Put-in-Bay, Ohio, May 19 th -22 nd , 1908	1908
	Eighty-ninth Annual Session, Findlay, Ohio, June 21 st -24 th , 1921	1921
	Ninety-second Annual Session, Norwalk, Ohio, June 17 th -20 th , 1924	1924
	Ninety-eighth Annual Session, Cincinnati, Ohio, June 17 th -19 th , 1930	1930
	Ninety-second Annual Session, Hamilton, Ohio, July 8 th -9 th , 1931	1931
	Proceedings of Grand Encampment Hamilton, Ohio, July 8 th – 9 th , 1931	1931
	One Hundred Annual Session, Cleveland, Ohio, June 21 st -23 rd , 1932	1932
Series VI Single Items from Various Lodges		
10	Visitors Log Book, St. Paris Lodge #40	1865-1897
	Cash Ledger, Hope Lodge #16	1890-1899
	By-laws, Membership Dues Earl Auxiliary Lodge #19	1920-1958

**Series VI Single Items from Various Lodges
continued**

Box	Item	Date
10	Visitors Log Book, St. Paris Lodge #40	1865-1897
	Receipts Ledger, By-laws Fraternal Lodge #510	1872-1883
11	Membership Dues, Loans Ledger Fraternal Lodge #253	1923-1947

Series VII Unidentified Ohio Lodges

12	Members Attendance Ledger	1885
	Membership Dues	1894-1901
	Funeral Book of Dues	1892-1897
	Double-entry Cash Ledger	1913-1915
	Ohio Lodges	1900-1915