

Collection #  
SC 3339

**AMALGAMATED ASSOCIATION OF STREET AND  
ELECTRIC RAILWAY EMPLOYEES OF AMERICA  
MATERIALS, 1913–1914**

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Processed by

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder, 2 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1913–14

PROVENANCE: Raymond M. Featherstone, Jr., Indianapolis, IN; February 2001

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2001.0388

NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America (A.A.S. & E.R.E. of A.) was conceived at an American Federation of Labor (AFL) meeting in 1891. AFL President Samuel Gompers was asked to invite local street railway associations to form an international union. In 1892, the A.A.S. & E.R.E. of A. was founded. The union's first convention began on 12 September 1892 in Indianapolis. About 52 delegates attended the meeting. At this convention William J. Law was named the union's first president and Detroit was named its headquarters, after some disagreement. The union's first year went poorly, as it achieved little progress in its goals and had almost no money. The second union convention was held in Cleveland and began on 9 October 1893. Only 20 delegates representing 15 divisions attended the meeting. At this time William D. Mahon was named the union's new president, a position he held until 1946. The union was later renamed the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America. In 1964 the name was again changed to the Amalgamated Transit Union, which it maintains today.

In August 1913, organizers from the union attempted unionizing employees of the Indianapolis Traction and Terminal Company. Violence erupted between the organizers and company agents. On 31 October 1913, striking streetcar operators vandalized streetcars and closed down business by preventing non-striking employees from moving the streetcars. They sought recognition of the union, higher wages, and improvements in working conditions. The company imported strikebreakers from Chicago. Further violence left one man dead and others injured. City police attempted to control the chaos. However, some officers refused to ride streetcars to protect the strikebreakers. By November 4th, Governor Ralston ordered 2,200 National Guardsmen to the city to control the violence. The strike ended on November 7th with an agreement between the union and the company which allowed employees to present their grievances to the Public Service Commission for consideration.

Sources:

Amalgamated Transit Union Staff. "A History of the Amalgamated Transit Union." (Washington, D.C.; Amalgamated Transit Union, 1992).

Bodenhamer, David. J and Robert G. Barrows, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains a 1914 article from the *Indianapolis Star* regarding a federal street car injunction suit and an A.A.S. & E.R.E. of A. membership certificate for George Miller in Division 645 in Indianapolis, dated 11 November 1913. Also included in the collection are union buttons for Division 645 dated October 1914 and December 1914.

## **CONTENTS**

### CONTENTS

A.A.S. & E.R.E. of A. materials, 1913–14

2 A.A.S. & E.R.E. of A. buttons, 1914

### CONTAINER

Folder 1

Artifacts: 2001.0388