

Information Sheet

R Knights of Labor. Local Assembly No. 1009 (Phillipsburg, Mo.).
198 Records, 1888-1896.
One volume and one folder.

MICROFILM

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

This collection consists of a minute book and miscellaneous papers of the local chapter of the Knights of Labor at Phillipsburg in Laclede County, Missouri. The records include minutes of meetings, membership information, miscellaneous correspondence, and circulars.

The Knights of Labor was an industrial rather than a trade union. It included both skilled and unskilled workers. It was founded in 1869 by Uriah Stephens, a tailor from Philadelphia, and other garment workers. The Knights supported an eight-hour day, arbitration and boycotts rather than strikes, a graduated income tax, and producers' cooperatives. Through the organization, members were eligible for disability payments and life insurance programs.

Founded as a secret society, membership in the Knights remained small until it was opened to the general public after 1880. Open to all gainfully employed individuals excepting gamblers, saloon-keepers and certain classes of professionals, the Knights reached a peak of around 600,000 members in 1886. Despite its early success, the organization declined precipitously in the late 1880s and 1890s. Its demise has been attributed generally to internal problems with job-conscious trade unions, the failure of its no-strike policy, collapse of the cooperatives, and unfavorable attention brought to organized labor by the Haymarket strike. By the 1890s, the American Federation of Labor completely overshadowed the Knights.

Local Assembly No. 1009 was organized at Phillipsburg on 24 March 1888. Its record book contains minutes of biweekly meetings through 19 August 1893, plus a single entry for 11 July 1896. The minutes reveal many facets of the group's national policies. Members discussed boycotts against the Liggett & Meyers Tobacco Company and St. Louis breweries, provided relief to disabled workers, and donated money to strikers at the New York Central Railroad and the "Homestead Sufferers." There are no indications that the Phillipsburg assembly championed any local causes. The St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad Company, whose main line passed through Phillipsburg, is not mentioned.

Miscellaneous papers removed from the record book have been filmed following the volume. Of interest are three applications for membership, circulars from national and district headquarters concerning boycotts, and quarterly reports of membership. Following the national course of the Knights, the Phillipsburg assembly, which had numbered twenty members in 1893, had dropped to only seven the next year.

r240

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Laclede County Museum

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Shelf List

This collection consists of a minute book and miscellaneous papers of the local chapter of the Knights of Labor at Phillipsburg in Laclede County, Missouri. The records include minutes of meetings, membership information, miscellaneous correspondence, and circulars.

Record book, 1888-1896.

This volume contains minutes of meetings beginning with the organizational meeting of 24 March 1888 and continuing through 19 August 1893. A single entry for 1896 follows the last minutes for 1893. Assessments against members were recorded at the end of the volume.

Miscellaneous papers, 1889-1894.

This folder contains materials removed from the record book, arranged in chronological order. Included are receipts, applications for membership, circulars to local assemblies, and notes.

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Index Cards

Barnhart, Benjamin Warren.
Everette, James.
Hefton, Elijah.
Industrial relations—Missouri—Laclede County.
Knights of Labor. Eleventh Congressional District (Rolla, Mo.).
Knights of Labor. Local Assembly No. 1009 (Phillipsburg, Mo.).
Laclede County (Mo.).
Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company.
McFarland, B. F.
Phillipsburg (Mo.).
Trade-unions—Missouri—Laclede County.