

Information Sheet

R 731 Ancient Order of United Workmen. Fruitland Lodge No. 429 (Fruitland, Mo.).

Records, ca. 1889-1900.

One folder.

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

These are records of the Ancient Order of United Workmen's lodge at Fruitland in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri. Much of the information is related to the fraternal organization's primary function of providing life insurance to its members.

The Ancient Order of United Workmen (AOUW) was founded in 1868 as a fraternal society. By October 1869 it had been effectively transformed into a mutual insurance association, one of the first to offer life insurance to blue-collar laborers. It retained the trappings of a fraternal secret society, and by 1885 it was the "largest fraternal benefit society in America." Gradually the fraternal order aspect of the society declined, and the insurance funds either failed or were converted into mutual insurance companies. By 1980 the AOUW itself was active in only one state, and it is currently defunct. For more information see Alvin J. Schmidt, *Fraternal Organizations* (Westport, Ct.: 1980), pp. 356-358.

The records in this collection provide lists of members, officers, and useful personal information, but they do not include minutes of meetings.

Volume 1, the "Roll Book," notes a member's age, residence, occupation, and status within the order for a period from about 1889 through 1892. Some pages are obviously missing. The great majority of the members were farmers. The final page of the volume is a "List of Expelled Members sent by Grand Recorder," with names from several states.

Volume 2 is a "Register of Beneficiary Certificates," again including the ages, residences, and occupations of policy holders, and adding valuable information concerning their beneficiaries, including their names and their relationship to the insured.

Volume 3 is a "Remittance Report" to the Grand Lodge of Missouri, 1898-1900, summarizing payments for policies in effect, and noting increases or decreases in membership, including the names of, and pertinent data concerning, new or former members. Volume 4 consists of two pages removed from an otherwise unused volume, with the "Semi-Annual Return" to the "Grand Recorder of A.O.U.W. of Missouri" for 31 December 1889 and 31 December 1890. This return lists the elected officers of the local lodge, and notes that membership increased from 23 to 26 during this period.

Shelf List

These are records of the Ancient Order of United Workmen's lodge at Fruitland in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri. Much of the information is related to the fraternal organization's primary function of providing life insurance to its members.

Volume 1: Roll Book, ca. 1889-1892

Volume 2: Register of Beneficiary Certificates, ca. 1890-1898

Volume 3: Remittance Report, 1898-1900

Volume 4: Semi-Annual Return, 1889-1890

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04 September 2001

Mary Oliver Kuhnmuench

Gift

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