



## Lawrence M. Raftery Papers (S0462)

**Collection Number:** S0462

**Collection Title:** Lawrence M. Raftery Papers

**Dates:** 1900-1983

**Creator:** Raftery, Lawrence M., 1895-1983

**Abstract:** The Lawrence M. Raftery Papers contain correspondence, photographs, memos, and artifacts documenting Lawrence M. Raftery, a sixty-nine-year member of the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades (IBPAT). Raftery later served as vice president, general secretary-treasurer, and president of the IBPAT.

**Collection Size:** 2.4 cubic feet  
(32 folders, 53 photographs)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

**Restrictions on Access:** Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center). If you would like more information, please contact us at [stlouis@shsmo.org](mailto:stlouis@shsmo.org).

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Lawrence M. Raftery Papers* (S0462); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection by Lawrence Raftery on September 29 (Accession No.SA2564). Additions to the papers were made on October 25, 1983 by Lawrence Raftery (Accession No.SA2568); October 25, 1983 by Eloise Raftery (Accession No.SA2569); and November 11, 1983 by Josephine Monroe (Accession No.SA2574).

**Alternate Forms Available:** Some of the photographs have been digitized and are available online at: <https://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/imc/search/searchterm/S0462>

**Related Collections:** Additional materials related to the Lawrence M. Raftery Papers can be found in the following collections:

[\*Missouri State Labor Council, AFL-CIO Records\*](#) (C0216)  
[\*Oral History Collection\*](#) (S0829)

**Processed by:** Processed by WHMC Staff, 1981. Finding aid revised by Rachael Heriford and Issac Alexander, November 2023.

### **Historical Note:**

Born on February 27, 1895, Lawrence M. Raftery grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. His father, Sylvester Raftery, worked as a painting and decorating contractor. Lawrence Raftery joined the family trade in 1913 when he went to work for an uncle as a painter's apprentice. The following year, he joined Local Union 115 of the Brotherhood of Painters, Paperhangers, and Decorators of America, which changed its name to the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades (IBPAT) in the early 1970s. Raftery attained journeyman status on October 16, 1916.

Like his father, Raftery became active in the affairs of Local 115. He represented Local 115 in District Council No. 2, Building Trades Council, Central Trades and Labor Council of St. Louis, and the Missouri State Federation of Labor meetings. Raftery also served as Local 115's delegate to the St. Louis Central Trades and Labor Union and the St. Louis Building and Trade Council. He became Local 115's business representative in 1923. Two years later, Raftery became secretary-business representative of Painters District Council No. 2.

At the Fifteenth General Assembly in Buffalo, New York, members of the IBPAT elected Raftery as a vice-president of the IBPAT. He served in that capacity from 1937 to 1942, when he was elected Secretary-Treasurer, his first national office. Raftery held this position until 1952 when he was elected General President of the Brotherhood.

As General President, Raftery worked to provide employment opportunities for all union members, especially disabled veterans. He fought to stabilize wages in the painting industries after wartime wage restrictions. Raftery also sought to improve working conditions for IBPAT members. He played a principal role in IBPAT's affiliation with the Metal Trades Department of the AFL-CIO. This partnership provided work opportunities for IBPAT's members in shipyards, industrial plants, atomic energy installations, and commercial work not directly connected with the construction industry.

During Raftery's tenure as IBPAT General President, the materials and equipment used by the painting and allied trades industry grew in technological sophistication. Raftery addressed the need for labor and management to upgrade the apprentice and journeyman training program to reflect these changes at the 73rd Annual Convention of the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America in 1957. As IBPAT General President, Raftery later warned of the encroaching threats posed by automation and inflation to employment in the construction industry.

In addition to serving as General President of the IBPAT, Raftery held the position of Vice-President of the AFL-CIO's Executive Council from 1958 until his retirement in 1968. IBPAT also chose Raftery to represent the union and the labor movement in West Berlin, Geneva, and Japan throughout his career.

Raftery resigned as IBPAT General President at the 21st Brotherhood General Convention in Minneapolis in 1964. His son, Sylvester Frank "Bud" Raftery, succeeded his father as General President of the IBPAT. Lawrence Raftery died in St. Louis, Missouri, on June 18, 1983.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into the following four series with two sub-series:

Business Papers

Personal Papers

Artifacts

Buttons

Memorabilia

Photographs

Please note that this collection has been minimally processed and has not been heavily indexed.

**Scope and Content Note:****Business Papers**

The Business Papers series contains histories, a handbook, correspondence, membership books, and reports documenting Lawrence M. Raftery's involvement with the International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, Paperhangers of America (IBPAT) from his role as apprentice to General President of the IBPAT. The materials in this series span from 1915 to 1983 and are arranged alphabetically.

**Personal Papers**

The Personal Papers series contains newspaper clippings, a travel diary, correspondence, and reminiscences documenting the personal activities of Lawrence M. Raftery outside of his experiences as a member of the IBPAT from 1950 to 1979. The materials are arranged alphabetically by subject.

**Artifacts**

This Artifacts series consists of convention buttons and memorabilia collected by Lawrence M. Raftery as a lifelong union member. The series has been divided into two subseries: Buttons and Memorabilia.

The Buttons subseries includes convention buttons of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations; the Building and Construction Trades Department, American Federation of Labor; the International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America, AFL-CIO; the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO; labor federations; state federations of labor; the Missouri State Labor Council; and the Union Label and Service Trades Department. The materials in this subseries span from 1925 to 1979 and are arranged alphabetically by union names.

The Memorabilia subseries contains Raftery's membership cards in Northern California's Brotherhood of Painters Club, the Chicago Federation of Musicians, the Honorable Order of

Kentucky Colonels, and the International Association of Fire Fighters. The subseries also contains medallions, convention nametags, keys, and a Local Union No. 115 commemorative ashtray honoring Raftery for fifty years of membership. The materials in this subseries are arranged chronologically from 1941-1978.

## Photographs

This series contains 53 photographs of family members and labor and political leaders. Also in this series are Lawrence M. Raftery's oral history transcripts from T-870 and T-871. The tapes are in the Oral History Collection (S0829). The photographs have been arranged chronologically and contain materials from 1900 to 1979.

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	f. 3 History of International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America and obituary news clippings, 1983
	f. 4-7 Membership and dues book, 1915-1981
	f. 8 Memorandum of understanding between the International Union of Operating Engineers and IBPAT, 1980
	f. 9 Organizer's handbook, IBPAT, 1960-1969
	f. 10 The Painter and Decorator, 1969
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	f. 12 President Johnson's luncheon, 1964
f. 13-15	Personal Papers
	f. 13 Memento presented to Raftery at the Nineteenth General Convention of the Brotherhood Painter's District Council #5, 1954
	f. 14 Personal correspondence and recollection from Lawrence Raftery's brother, Sylvester Raftery, 1970-1979
	f. 15 Travel diary, 1950-1962
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	f. 23 Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO convention buttons 1954-1959
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