



Granite Cutters' International Association of America Tool Sharpeners Local 1 Records

1896-1941

1 box (0.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 005

Collection overview

The Tool Sharpeners Local 1 of Granite Cutters International Association of America was established in Quincy, Mass., in 1896. The local represented the interests of one of the skilled trades within the Granite Cutters, which claimed for itself "jurisdiction over cutting, carving, dressing, sawing, and setting all granite and hard stone on which granite cutters tools are used," and further claiming that "no other other trade, craft or calling has any right or jurisdiction over" the these activities.

The minutebooks contain records of membership meetings of the Toolsharpeners Local 1 of the Granite Cutters' International Association. Spartan documents, these include notice of the election of officers, summaries of business, and occasional brief notes on grievances, communications with other locals, and new and departing members.

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Background on Granite Cutters

The Granite Cutters International Association of America, formerly named Granite Cutter's National Union, was a safe haven for workers who wanted support for the jobs they did. On January 2, 1877, the concept of an organization which provided support for the hundreds of working men began to form and on March 3, 1877, the Rockland Maine Branch was established. This would be the first of many branches across the United States that would eventually form. The main task of the Association was to discuss working conditions and pay as well as elect officers to represent the branch. For those who were injured, donations were collected from other members so that the man, who couldn't provide for himself or his family, could still survive.

In order to become a member, there was a .71 cent charge, but this fee covered the cost of supplies for the branch, furnishings for the offices and the cost of printing publications. Once a member of the Association, men

were encouraged to voice their opinions or concerns themselves rather than having a representative voice it for them, and each branch President encouraged a familial communication between the members so that no one felt persecuted for raising issues that were important to an individual.

Before the Granite Cutters International Association of America was established, the granite workers worked 10-12 hour days depending on the season. The very small amounts of money that they did make went to food and boarding houses where the men stayed. This meant that there was very little money left over to save or send home to their families. The Association was able to negotiate an 8 hour work day, 6 days a week with a half work day on Sundays. The minimum wage was increased from \$2.50 in the 1890s to \$8.00 in the 1920s. In the 1940s the work week decreased to 5 days a week at \$9.00 minimum pay. Besides an increase in pay, the Association was able to introduce safety and ventilation procedures when pneumatic tools and machines were invented to protect workers from the dust, which was a health hazard.

While the introduction of machinery allowed for work production to increase, it also resulted in a sharp decline in employment. In the 1920s there were roughly 10,000 members while by 1973, membership had declined to 3,033.

Scope of collection

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Inventory

Membership meeting minutebook	1896-1907
Membership meeting minutebook	1918-1928
Membership meeting minutebook	1928-1941

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired in 1984 from Rita MacDonald, Secretary to the President; Tile, Marble, Terrazzo, Finishers,

Shopworkers, and Granite Cutters International Union, AFL-CIO.

Processing Information

Processed by Chelsey Talbot, September 2013.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

- Labor unions--Massachusetts
- Stone-cutters--Labor unions--Massachusetts

Contributors

- Granite Cutters' International Association of America. Tool Sharpeners Local **[main entry]**
- Granite Cutters' International Association of America

Genres and formats

- Minute books

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