
Inventory of the International Association Of Machinists, Lodge #68 Records, 1902-1980

Accession number: 1991/112

Labor Archives & Research Center

San Francisco State University
San Francisco, California

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Introduction

These records were donated by Raymond Ceballos, Secretary-Treasurer of the International Association of Machinists, Lodge #68 in 1991. The collection was processed by Janette Martin in the summer of 1998.

History

The International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge #68 is one of the oldest of the Bay Area Metal working unions and has a long and interesting history. San Francisco IAM lodge #68 gained an early reputation for militancy and self autonomy and was frequently in conflict with the Grand Lodge. Serious conflict with the International during the 1930's and particularly during World War II eventually led to the suspension of Lodge # 68, the dismissal of its executive and the seizure of its funds. The independence of Lodge #68 and its willingness to do combat has been documented in several secondary sources including, Mark Perlman's *The Machinists: A New Study in American Trade Unionism*, (1962), which gives a good account of the battles between the local and the grand lodge during the depression and the 1940's. Richard Prime Boyden's unpublished manuscript, *The San Francisco Machinists from Depression to Cold War, 1930-1950*, (1988) explores the militancy of the both San Francisco Lodge #68 and Oakland Lodge #284.

IAM San Francisco lodge #68 was organized on February 10th 1885 and is the oldest local affiliated with the IAM. The Lodge was already in existence when the IAM was established in 1888. Lodge # 68 was typical of the old style Californian craftsman union, which took pride in its autonomy and isolation from the national movements. Lodge #68's long history of trade disputes began with a prolonged and unsuccessful attempt to win the nine hour day during the summer and fall of 1901. Six years later, on 1907 May 1st, San Francisco lodge #68 and an Oakland militant machinist lodge, stimulated the Iron Trades Council to launch a drive for the eight hour day. After an uneventful strike the machinists reached a compromise agreement which awarded them the eight hour day in gradual installments. The agreement specified a gradual reduction in the working day over a three year period between Dec 1st 1908 to June 1st 1910.

The next big dispute involving lodge #68 was the 1916 Auto Mechanics Strike. On May 1st around 200 mechanics had gone on strike for a wage increase of \$4.50 against seven large auto agencies, beside the usual tactics of picket lines and boycotts, some of the machinists indulged in less above board practices, including industrial sabotage and the sending of spies posing as replacement worker (aka scabs). To harass the car dealers, lists were obtained from spies within the struck agencies of cars still under warranty, (most shops gave one year full coverage on vehicles they sold). The saboteurs would locate these vehicles and damage them with paint remover, knowing that the repair costs would be borne by the car dealer.

A key participant in the auto dealer conflict was Warren Billings who had been released from prison a year earlier after serving fourteen months for transporting dynamite during the PG & E strike. He acted as an union intelligence agent and fed information to Edward D Nolan, a machinist official at lodge #68. Nolan, a former member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), espoused the cause of industrial unionism and was a militant associate of Billings and Tom Mooney. The strike was still in progress on the day of the San Francisco Preparedness Parade of July 22nd 1916. As the parade passed along Market Street a bomb exploded killing ten and injuring forty people. The key suspects were Tom Mooney, his wife, Elena Mooney, Warren Billings, Israel Weinberg and Edward D Nolan. All five were arrested a few days after the blast.

Nolan would spend a total of nine months in jail. He was never brought to trial and was represented by Frank Mulholland, attorney for the IAM who secured his release under a \$2000 cash bond. After his release he continued to protest the innocence of Tom Mooney and Warren Billings who would each spend twenty three years in jail. The minutes of Lodge #68 record the resolutions on the case passed by the San Francisco machinists.

The militant reputation of IAM lodge #68 continued into the 1930's with appointment of Harry Hook and Ed Dillon as officials. The latter was suspected by the grand lodge of communist connections. Hook and Dillon clashed on several occasions with Arthur Wharton, the president of the IAM, on issues concerning local autonomy and in particular the failure to obtain strike sanctions. The animosity between lodge #68 and the international was so strong that the grand lodge took the unusual step of refusing to contribute to Dillon's salary as business agent and the full costs were paid by the lodge. Yet despite numerous transgressions Wharton failed to come down harshly on lodge #68, probably due to its powerful influence on the West Coast. Another rebel machinist lodge in Oakland, Lodge #284, also organized strikes without the authorization of the grand lodge or even a majority of its affected members. This time the IAM president reacted firmly and suspended the defiant lodge.

The notoriety of Hook and Dillon would continue to keep Lodge #68 in the spot light during World War II. San Francisco was crucial to the United States war effort, particularly in the manufacture of Liberty war ships which created a large demand for skilled machinists. Lodge #68 recognized that its 5000 highly skilled members were essential to many Bay Area metal working companies. They were prepared to fight for a fair share of the war profits and to defend any incursions into existing labor practices. Had the machinists been able to negotiate directly with the employers some conflict may have been avoided. However in January 1942 the Federal Government established the National War Labor Board (NWLB). This board was given the power to regulate wage scales (which generally meant a freeze in real wages) and arbitrate in labor disputes. The machinists resented the intervention of the NWLB and a series of strikes and disputes arose.

In December 1942 when the government introduced staggered shifts, lodge #68 refused to cooperate with the new system which would effectively eliminate double pay for the Sunday shift. This refusal grew into a strike against two Oakland ship yards. For two weeks, 1800 machinists refused to work on weekends without overtime pay. The dispute led to an assistant secretary of the Navy informing President Roosevelt that lodge #68 and another rebellious machinist lodge #1304, were 'uncontrollable' and 'in practical rebellion against government policy'. On January 1st 1943 Roosevelt wired the local lodges directing them to obey government policy and settle the dispute. A special team of arbitrators were sent by Labor Secretary, Frances Perkins, to San Francisco but their efforts were unsuccessful. When workers in Los Angeles also joined the protests and other machinists around the country mounted similar campaigns the government was forced to drop its initiative

Lodge # 68 machinists were involved in sub contract work for Liberty ship engines at a number of San Francisco and Bay Area machinists shops including Joshua Hendy Iron Works. A dispute occurred there when management tried to de-skill work classifications and pay scales after a massive government funded retooling of the plant. The machinists responded with strikes and slow downs. By the summer of 1943 Lodge #68 had succeeded in preventing the changes despite charges of callousness and a lack of patriotism. (For the war period in general Lodge #68 machinists had very low levels of absenteeism and, despite industrial action during the summer of 1943, they were producing one Liberty engine a day, one of the best production records in the nation).

In 1944, as war production declined, lodge #68 implemented an overtime ban, a long established technique designed to avoid layoffs. The ban was scheduled to go into effect on April 17th 1944 and was immediately put under NLRB arbitration. The dispute might have been solved peacefully if it were not for Federal Mogul Corporation, a machinist shop in San Francisco, which persuaded a minority of workers to break the over time ban. When these workers stayed on the job after eight hours on July 27th the rest of the shop walked out in protest. The company was deemed vital to the war effort and President Roosevelt issued an executive order directing the Navy to seize the Federal Mogul plant and four other machinist shops.

Vice Admiral Harold Bowen, a top ranking Navy official and specialist in plant seizures, quickly arrived on the scene. He met continued defiance and reacted with draconian measures. Bowen demanded that the FBI should arrest Hook and Dillon and sought to prosecute them under the Smith-Connally Act (also known as the War Labor Disputes Act 1943). The machinist officials were not arrested but the FBI did spend 2 days searching the lodge offices and agents questioned individual workers as to whether Hook and Dillon had ordered them not to work overtime. Lack of evidence meant they were unable to jail the union leaders but the Navy did attack the union's rights in a number of ways such as suspending collective bargaining agreements, union shop dues, grievance procedure and job referral through the hiring hall. The Navy and Federal agencies also mounted attacks on individual machinists. Bowen served fifty-eight machinists with their draft papers, canceled the gas rations of others and ordered the firing of eight machinists. Such measures did end the over time ban but did not have the desired effect of breaking the union.

A few months later, in the fall of 1944, another crack-down on militant machinists took place when Martin Joos and Arthur Burke, members of Lodge #68, were dismissed and black listed after protesting to management against members of another craft doing machinists work at Bodinson Manufacturing company. Again the machinists were dismissed not by the company but by the Navy who had seized over a 100 San Francisco machinist shops after prolonged disputes between the machinists, the employers association and the National War Labor Board. Before they were fired Joos and Burke were both interviewed by FBI agents who hoped to prosecute them for violating war time anti-strike legislation.

The final show down came after the war had ended in the spring of 1946. Following another bitter clash between the Grand Lodge and Lodge #68 over the terms of a post war agreement with the California Metal Trades Association, the executive council suspended Lodge #68, blocked all its bank accounts, and subsequently tried Hook and Dillon. For their transgressions against IAM rules Hook and Dillon were fined \$1000 and expelled. IAM Lodge #68 lost its charter and was taken into a trusteeship. (It was not reinstated until 1949). Hook and Dillon never regained admission to Lodge #68 and without its controversial executive the post war history of the Lodge # 68 appears to have been tame.

The notoriety of Lodge #68 during the 1930's and 1940's was largely due to the personality of its business agents. In his book *The Fighting Machinists*, Robert G Rodden, gives a colorful character sketch of Harry Hook and Ed Dillon: Oldtimers recall Hook as a talkative, two fisted tough who could belly up to the bar with the best. His side kick Dillon seemed to have no friends or interests outside the union hall. When Dillon mounted the rostrum at union meetings he would slam his coat to the floor, snap his suspenders and unleash a stream of fire-eating boss baiting oratory, bringing the members to a pitch of frenzied fury. Together Hook and Dillon were a formidable team. Hook was the muscle, Dillon the brains. (p.133)

During World War II, Lodge # 68 also clashed with the grand lodge over the admission of non white unionists as full members. As a response to discrimination against African-Americans in the defense industry, President Roosevelt appointed the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). By 1941 complaints had been filed against Lodge #68 of San Francisco for discrimination, and had not lodge # 1327 stepped in and opened up their union to African-Americans the matter would have undoubtedly been pursued further. (Lodge #68 had grudgingly allowed some African-Americans to work in ship yard machine shops but despite charging them a monthly fee for the privilege continued to bar them from membership). The machinists of Lodge #68 had a more enlightened stance on women members who were first admitted to the union during the World War II. Women machinists at the Joshua Hendy Iron Works were paid 75 cents an hour as 'production workers' although they were doing work identical to that performed by men at the 'specialist' rate of \$1.11. A six month campaign by Lodge #68 won women machinists at Hendy's equal pay for equal work.

Over the years Lodge #68 has operated from a number of locations, initially in San Francisco and in more recent years South San Francisco. Previous addresses include, The Machinists Hall at 284 Oak Street, San Francisco, The Labor Temple at 16th and Capp, San Francisco, 2940 16th Street, San Francisco, The Machinist Hall, 3157 Mission Street, San Francisco and the War Memorial Building at Daly City. On 31 August 1991, after a number of organizing battles, Lodge #68 merged with Lodge #1347 and began operations at its current address 924 El Camino, South San Francisco.

Lodge #68 has been affiliated with a number of labor organizations: District Lodge 115, (comprised of 8 lodges in Oakland), The California Labor Federation, The California Conference of Machinists, The Pacific Coast Metal trades and The Bay City Metal Trades Council. During the 1930's Lodge #68 was a close ally of militant Oakland machinist Lodge # 284, which after it was suspended by the IAM president Arthur Wharton regrouped as local #1304 SWOC-CIO. Lodge #68 defied IAM rules and continued to collaborate with local #1304 during the 1940's. An allegiance that contributed to the final conflict between the Grand Lodge and Lodge #68. The jurisdiction of Lodge #68 encompasses machinists employed in ship repair, breweries, maintenance on newspaper presses, while its geographic catchment area ranges from San Francisco to San Mateo. Major employers, past and present, include Dalmo, Krough Pump, Joshua Hendy Iron Works, The Call and San Francisco News,

Scope and Content

The files of IAM #68 are arranged into three series: Minutes, Membership and Treasury. Types of material in the collection include of bound volumes of minutes, financial ledgers and membership records. A detailed series list is attached.

The earliest material in the collection are membership dues ledgers from 1900-1903, membership applications (fees) from 1903-1940 and executive and regular meeting minutes from 1908. The minutes from 1908-1946 are complete.

Membership dues ledgers date from 1900 to 1903 and comprise of 5 volumes. These ledgers are organized by a key at the front of the volume, giving each members name and the relevant page number. The ledgers appear to have been used concurrently, the dates overlap and accounts were eventually transferred to the most current ledger.

The bulk of the collection is bound volumes of the minutes from the regular and directors meetings, with an assortment of documents pertaining to the union's business bound in. Where such papers were found loose they have been placed in into acid free folders immediately following the volume to which they pertain. The four earliest minute books include at the beginning of each volume an alphabetical index of matters discussed along with details of the relevant page number. Unfortunately by 1921 this practice was discontinued.

The scope of the minute books including the bound-in material should be emphasized. A typical volume includes correspondence from the law & legislative committee to the IAM Grand Lodge, correspondence from the San Francisco Labor Council, statements from the financial secretary, annotated local ballots, accounts of lodge discipline of unruly brothers, sick pay and boiler plate agreements.

The historical significance of Lodge # 68 is reflected in the minutes of the regular meetings which include a pledge of support for brother IAM unionists in LA on trial for an alleged dynamite attack on Oct 1st 1910 at the LA Times Building (p.20 Mar 1911-Feb. 1913), a resolution to support Ed Nolan (p 255 Vol 1915-1917) a prominent member of Lodge #68 who was arrested in connection with the 1916 Preparedness Day bombing, a resolution praising President Woodrow Wilson's intervention in the Mooney case (p 95 & p187 vol. Sept. 1917-Aug. 1919), IAM Lodge #68's overtime ban and subsequent clash with the NWLB (P 14 vol 1944-1946), and the dismissal of Martin Joos and Arthur Burke from Bodinson manufacturing company by the Navy (p 220 vol 1944-1946). The numerous skirmishes with the Grand Lodge, including the build up to the suspension of Lodge #68 are also recorded in the minutes of the lodge meetings.

Series I Minutes 1908-1980

Physical Description: 17 volumes and 2 folders

Scope and Content Note

The 15 volumes of lodge # 68 regular and executive meeting minutes form an unbroken chronological account of all lodge activities between 1908 and 1948. Besides detailed accounts of meetings, the minutes also include correspondence, resolutions and ballots. The amount of detail found in the last two volumes of the minute books (1946-1948) has decreased, perhaps reflecting the fortunes of Lodge #68. Minutes of lodge #68 Building Corporation Committee have survived from 1955 to 1980, however they are narrow in scope and only concern the problem of finding suitable premises for the union's relocations. The 1917-1921 Golden West Lodge #1 minute book is also included in this series. Golden West Lodge #1 was the benevolent organization for Lodge #68.

Series II Membership, 1903-1945

Physical Description: 7 volumes and 1 folder

Scope and Content Note

This series contains 5 volumes of membership dues ledgers, 1900-1903, membership application ledgers (fees) from 1903-1940, and initiation and reinstatement records 1937-1945. The membership series contains useful demographic and genealogical information including place of birth and indicates extent of lodge membership.

Series III Treasury, 1903-1933

Physical Description: 3 volumes

Scope and Content Note

The treasurer's account of Jan 1914-Oct 1917 and Sept 1917-Mar 1921 records the weekly balance of lodge # 68 funds, including deductions for sick and death benefits. The financial ledger of 1903-1933 comprises of a large file of loose sheets detailing all monies paid out by Lodge #68. The range of expenses recorded are diverse, from subscription to the *Labor Clarion*, to printing costs, loans to members, and payments to the numerous Labor Councils.

Descriptive Guide

Box-folder 1/0

Descriptive Guide August 1998

Minutes

Box-folder 1/01 **Regular and Executive Meetings Nov 1908-Mar 1911**
Box-folder 1/02 **Correspondence Relating to Lodge Meetings Mar 1917**
Box-folder 1/03 **Regular and Executive Meetings Mar 1911-Feb 1913**
Box-folder 1/04 **Regular Meetings Mar 1913-June 1915**
Box-folder 1/05 **Regular Meetings June 1915-Sept 1917**
Box-folder 2/01 **Regular Meetings Sept 1917-Aug 1919**
Box-folder 2/02 **Correspondence Relating to Lodge Meetings Dec 1917-Feb 1919**
Box-folder 2/03 **Regular Meetings Aug 1919-June 1921**
Box-folder 2/04 **Regular Meetings Feb 1921-April 1923**
Box-folder 2/05 **Regular Meetings April 1923-July 1928**
Box-folder 2/06 **Regular Meetings Aug 1928-June 1933**
Box-folder 3/01 **Regular Meetings June 1933-Dec 1935**
Box-folder 3/02 **Regular Meetings & Directors Meetings Jan 1936-Dec 1940**
Box-folder 3/03 **Regular Meetings & Directors Meetings Jan 1941-April 1944,**
Box-folder 3/04 **Regular Meetings & Directors Meetings April 1944-Mar 1946,**
Box-folder 4/01 **Regular and Executive Meetings June 1946-Dec 1947**
Box-folder 4/02 **Regular and Executive Meetings Jan- Dec 1948**
Box-folder 4/03 **Building Corporation Committee, Lodge # 68 April 1955-June 1980**
Box-folder 5/01 **Meetings of the Golden West Lodge #1 Mar 1917-Jan 1921**

Membership

Box-folder 5/02	Withdrawn/deceased Dues Cards, & Corresp. 1918-1945
Box-folder 5/03	Initiations and Reinstatements, Jan 1937- Dec 1945
Box-folder 6/01	Membership Dues, Ledger I 1900
Box-folder 7/01	Membership Dues, Ledger II ca.1901
Box-folder 8/01	Membership Dues, Ledger III ca.1901
Box-folder 9/01	Membership Dues, Small Ledger 1902
Box-folder 10/01	Membership Dues, Large Ledger 1902
Box-folder 11/01	Membership Application Fees Jan 1903-dec 1940

Treasury

Box-folder 12/01	Financial Ledger of Lodge #68 Jan 1903-mar 1933
Box-folder 12/02	Treasurers Account, Lodge #68 Jan 1914- Oct 1917
Box-folder 12/03	Treasurers Account, Lodge #68 Sept 1917 -Mar 1921