

McLean County Historical Society

John Brown Lennon Collection

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Collection Information

Volume of Collection:	2 Boxes (Box 2 – Flat Box)
Collection Dates:	1884,1893,1894-1922,1952,1967,1976
Restrictions:	Scrapbook and newspaper clippings very brittle. Use photocopies unless authorized by Librarian/Archivist. Must talk to a Librarian/Archivist to obtain copies from the scrapbook in Box 2.
Reproduction Rights:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History.
Location:	Archives
Notes:	For additional information see: Barbara Lennon Collection. For list of Lennon-related objects in Museum collections, see Folder 33. For additional photographs, see Lennon folder in Photograph Collection.

Historical Sketch

John Brown Lennon was born on October 12, 1850. He moved from his hometown to different cities across the United States, including East Aurora, New York and Denver, Colorado. It was not until 1896 that he moved to Bloomington in hopes of building a strong labor front in the Midwest. He resided in Bloomington until his death in 1923. He is buried at Park Hill Cemetery. During his time in Bloomington, he was a prominent labor leader, religious advocate, alcohol prohibitionist and family man. Lennon married his first wife Juna in 1871 and they had one child together. She lived in Bloomington with Lennon where she was very active in the Daughters of the American Revolution and other women's groups. They resided on E. Mulberry St. in Bloomington. After her death in 1919 he quickly remarried a much younger, very close friend of their family, Barbara K. Egger. Egger was a McLean County native who was a teacher for many years and was very active in the community. They had one child together, Duncan, born in 1921 shortly before his father's death. Wife Barbara and son Duncan remained in Bloomington after inheriting his entire estate. Barbara remained in Bloomington as an important part of the town until her death in 1983 (For more information about Barbara Egger Lennon, see companion collection.)

Lennon served as national treasurer of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) from 1890 to 1917. During his time in the AFL, he fought against the proposed alliance with liquor dealers. Lennon was also the general secretary of the Journeymen Tailors Union of America for about twenty years. He traveled throughout the United States speaking at different conventions and programs to stress the importance of maintaining a strong labor front.

Lennon was also appointed a delegate to the U.S. Department of Labor's Commission of Conciliation (1914-1920). He also served on the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations (1917-1918). During this time, Lennon traveled all over the United States for public hearings about private and public employment, efficiency systems and labor, etc.

Lennon was a participant in the Bloomington community. He was active in Masonic and temperance organizations, and in 1919, he ran unsuccessfully for mayor under the Labor Party ticket. He regularly attended both Presbyterian and Unitarian churches. He believed that the church and labor unions stood together on many issues, such as the abolition of child labor, temperance, racial prejudice and women's suffrage.

Scope & Content Note

The John Brown Lennon collection contains newspaper articles, personal and professional correspondence, certificates of membership and merit, and published and unpublished written works. The box also contains items from his first marriage, a scrapbook, as well as personal papers. The following is an itemized list of the collection's contents.

John Brown Lennon Collection

1 Box

Folder 1: John Brown and Juna Lennon

- 1.1.1 Christmas Card (1910).
- 1.1.2 Letter to Juna Lennon from Samuel Gompers about her stamp collection (1907).
- 1.1.3 Letter to JBL: about the death of Juna Lennon from Sister _____.

Folder 2: John Brown Lennon's Personal Papers

- 1.2.1 Personal letterhead.
- 1.2.2 Calling cards.
- 1.2.3 Book plates.

Folder 3: Membership Cards / Certificates

- 1.3.1 Bloomington Consistory A.A.S.R. (1920-1922).
- 1.3.2 Ancient Tree & Accepted Masons (1918-1921).
- 1.3.3 Mohammed Temple (1916, 1918-1920).
- 1.3.4 Royal and Select Masters of Illinois (1919-1921).
- 1.3.5 Royal Arch Masons of Illinois (1919).
- 1.3.6 The National Jefferson Society (1916).
- 1.3.7 American Academy of Immortals – East Aurora, NY.
- 1.3.8 The Roycroft Shop – lifetime membership receipt (1900) East Aurora, NY.
- 1.3.9 Certificate of membership – Ye Twilight Club (1895) New York.

Folder 4: JBL appointment and account books

- 1.4.1 1918.
- 1.4.2 1919 - 1920.

Folder 4B: Appointment and account books continued

- 1.4B.1 Account book, unidentified year.
- 1.4B.2 Appointment book, unidentified year.
- 1.4B.3 1919.

Folder 5: Receipts

- 1.5.1 Tax receipt – 1915.
- 1.5.2 Receipt – 1905.
- 1.5.3 \$1000 receipt to pay on a note – 1897.
- 1.5.4 \$500 receipt to pay on a note – 1899.

- 1.5.5 \$300 to be paid on mortgage and note for the house and lot at 612 E. Mulberry–1899.
- 1.5.6 Check for \$750 – paid to the McLean County Bank of Bloomington.
- 1.5.7 Check to JBL for the amount of \$22.50, a rebate for a cancelled bond of the Americana Bonding Co. of Baltimore, August 1, 1910.

Folder 6: Income Tax Returns

- 1.6.1 1918.
- 1.6.2 1920.

Folder 7: Cards/Invitations/Misc.

- 1.7.1 Christmas Card (1922).
- 1.7.2 Post Card/Invitation from Knights Templar (1902).
- 1.7.3 A passage - “The Pilgrimage” - Associated with The Knights Templar.
- 1.7.4 Dues paid and an invite (1922).
- 1.7.5 Rainier Club Invite (1914).
- 1.7.6 Invite in honor of President and Mrs. Wilson.

Folder 8: John B. Lennon and The Brotherhood Teamsters Union

- 1.8.1 Letter to JBL from the Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America regarding money that will be turned over to the teamsters union.
- 1.8.2 JBL’s personal record of the money July 17, July 18, and September 30 – from the time it was received to the time it was withdrawn from his account on September 30th to be delivered in Indianapolis on October 1.
- 1.8.3 Check from JBL to the Teamsters union in the amount of \$35,000 dated October 1, 1903.

Folder 9: Labor Day Carnival Program

- 1.9.1 Elgin, Illinois - JBL is the main speaker (1901).

Folder 10: Menus

- 1.10.1 Randall Hall Association (1903).
- 1.10.2 Rever House - 2 copies.

Folder 11: Worlds Fair

- 1.11.1 Program (1903).
- 1.11.2 Souvenir (1904).

Folder 12: Admissions Tickets

- 1.12.1 William Jennings Bryan Lecture (1907).
- 1.12.2 Bryan & Stevenson Meeting.

Folder 13: Program

- 1.13.1 New England Arbitration and Peace Congress where JBL spoke on “Labor’s Interest in World Peace” (1910) – (3 copies).

Folder 14: Convention Admission Tickets

- 1.14.1 Democratic National Convention (1916).
- 1.14.2 Republican National Convention (1912). Note: See Scrapbook #2 in the *Barbara Lennon Collection* for more convention) tickets

Folder 15: Letters to JBL

- 1.15.1 From E.V. Debs (1894) – original & copy.
- 1.15.2 From James Duncan (1919).

Folder 16: Certificate of Nomination

- 1.16.1 Nominated for mayor - February 25, 1919.

Folder 17: Newspaper Articles

- 1.17.1 JBL on the arrests of Gompers, Morrison, and Mitchell (1908).
- 1.17.2 John Brown Lennon’s accomplishments and about a speech that he gave at the Broadway Theater – October 24, 1916.
- 1.17.3 Lennon appointed by President Wilson to sit on the council to assist in the war labor program – January 16, 1918.
- 1.17.4 Wrote to the paper about his belief that the clothing and tailor trade should be united into one union – February 17, 1920.
- 1.17.5 Nominations for delegates to the AF of L – March 23, 1920.
- 1.17.6 John Brown Lennon appointed to a board that will draft a proposed act dealing with air navigation and civil aviation in the U.S. – October 17, 1919.
- 1.17.7 JBL and wife attend dinner hosted by the secretary of labor for the President – March 20, 1914.
- 1.17.8 JBL speaks against newspaper publication at a meeting of city and county liberty bond workers.
- 1.17.9 “President Held Friend to Labor” - JBL briefly mentioned at the end of the article for speaking on the aims and work of the trades union.
- 1.17.10 “The Unspoken Speech” – JBL backed the president in the prosecution of war.
- 1.17.11 Letter to the Editor from JBL about the negative article in the Chicago Tribune that made false statements about Bloomington’s Unions.

- 1.17.12 Letter to the General Secretary of the JTU of A from JBL about recognizing the United Garment Workers and the Ladies' Tailor International Union March 30, 1920.
- 1.17.13 "How Time Flies" - 75 yrs. ago - celebrating 8 hour work days (1901).
- 1.17.14 "How Time Flies" (1962) - 50 yrs. ago - 100 prominent men to speak at Religious Education Association (1912).
- 1.17.15 "How Time flies" - 50 yrs. ago - mediator to the dept. of labor (1917).

Folder 18: Bloomington Lodge Annual Reports

- 1.18.1 1922.
- 1.18.2 1923 - talks about the death of JBL and the contribution he made to the lodge.

Folder 19: Ads for speeches by JBL

- 1.19.1 Free Lecture; JBL to preside and introduce the speaker at Mount Vernon Square Public Library, Tuesday evening, March 31.
- 1.19.2.1 JBL to speak on Social Service, and the "Button Workers Lockout" at the YMCA, Sunday at 3 p.m.
- 1.19.2.2 JBL to speak about Church and Labor; outside of flier says "Men Wanted"; speech held at the Twelfth street Presbyterian Church, Sunday at 7:30p.m.

Folder 20: JBL and liquor

- 1.20.1 Published written works on the liquor question.
- 1.20.2 Notes on the saloon & its affect on child labor & education.

Folder 21: Journeymen Tailors Union of America

- 1.21.1 Membership books - (1884, 1894-1922).
- 1.21.2 Convention program - (1905).
- 1.21.3 Union Labels.
- 1.21.4 Official letterhead.
- 1.21.5 Constitution of the JTU of A (1900-English, 1904-German).

Folder 22: JTU of A Publications

- 1.22.1 "The Tailor" - JTU of A publication (September 1901).
- 1.22.2 Proceedings of a meeting for the Law & Audit Committee: (August 5, 1901).
- 1.22.3 Speech Notes to publish on the tailors union. Note: See actual article in scrapbook #2 of the *Barbara Lennon Collection* – entitled "Four Unions in One"

Folder 23: Correspondence

- 1.23.1 Concerning the retirement of JBL from the JTU of A, June 21, 1910.
- 1.23.2 Proclamation that JBL should turn over the general secretary money to his successor in the amount of \$2570.23.
- 1.23.3 Check from JBL to Eugene J. Brais in the amount of \$2570.23, June 30, 1910.

Folder 24: American Federation of Labor Program

- 1.24.1 For the Executive Council, given by the Labor Organization of Denver.

Folder 25: American Federation of Labor Certificates

- 1.25.1 General Organizer (1889, 1900).
- 1.25.2 Certificates of membership (1920-1921).

Folder 26: AF of L reading for the convention

- 1.26.1 By Henry D. Lloyd – “The Safety of the future lies in Organized Labor” (1898).

Folder 27: Church & Labor

- 1.27.1.1 Newspaper clippings (3) – JBL spoke at 3 churches in Bloomington on the temperance situation.
- 1.27.2 Correspondence – from Reverend Fredrick Bowen of the First Congregational Church (1901).
- 1.27.3 Speech Notes & program for speech (1911).
- 1.27.4 Program: Christ Church in Philadelphia (1914).
- 1.27.5 Correspondence – from Edgar DeWitt Jones, the President of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ, telling JBL to speak on “Industrial Democracy” from a labor standpoint (1919).
- 1.27.6 Speech Notes: “Labor and Industry”.
- 1.27.7 Proclamation by the McLean County Ministerial Association expressing their thanks to JBL for working against the National Liquor Dealers Association.
- 1.27.8 Speech Notes - “Christianity & Industry”.

Folder 28: Department of Labor – Commissioner of Conciliation

- 1.28.1 Certificate of performance in the conciliation division during the war.
- 1.28.2 Letter about the certificate – signed by the director of conciliation (1920).
- 1.28.3 Telegram Cards (3) – issued to JBL to deal with government business while working for the U.S. Department of Labor.

Folder 29: United States Commission on Industrial Relations Programs & Reports

- 1.29.1 Public Hearings; San Francisco, Ball Room, Palace Hotel, August 25 - September 3, 1914 (3 copies).
- 1.29.2 Public Hearings; Butte, Montana, First Division, Second Judicial District Court, Court House August 6-8, no year (4 copies).
- 1.29.3 Public Hearings; Los Angeles, Blanchard Hall, September 8 - 15, 1914.
- 1.29.4 Public Hearings; Portland, Oregon, Assembly Hall, Public Library, Aug. 20-22, 1914 (4 copies).
- 1.29.5 Public Hearings; Chicago, Hotel La Salle, – July 21-25, 1914 (4 copies).
- 1.29.6 Public Hearings; Manhattan, New York City, City Hall – May 18 - June 12, 1914 (6 copies).
- 1.29.7 Public Hearings; Manhattan, New York City, City Hall – June 1 – June 12, 1914 (2 copies).
- 1.29.8 Public Hearings; Manhattan, New York City, City Hall – June 8-June 12, 1914 (3 copies).
- 1.29.7 Public Hearings; Seattle, WA, Circuit Court Room No. 2, Post Office – August 10-14, no year (3 copies).
- 1.29.8 Public Hearings on collective bargaining, conciliation, and arbitration; Washington D.C., Shoreham Hotel – April 6-9, 1914.
- 1.29.9 Public Hearings on efficiency systems and labor; Washington D.C., Shoreham Hotel – April 13-15, 1914.
- 1.29.10 First Annual Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations, Washington D.C., (1914), 79 pgs.
- 1.29.11 Final Report of the Commission (1916), 6 pgs.

Folder 30: Work and Findings of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations

- 1.30.1 Written draft.
- 1.30.2 Typed drafts with hand written revisions (2).

Folder 31: United States Commission on Industrial Relations

- 1.31.1 Letter to JBL about being appointed the commissioner of conciliation in the Department of Labor (1918).
- 1.31.2 Letter to JBL about his query to return home early (1919).
- 1.31.3 Letter notifying JBL that he has been selected to represent the Department of Labor on the Joint Army & Navy Board on Aeronautics (1919).
- 1.31.4 Letter notifying JBL of a meeting in Atlantic City (1920).
- 1.31.5 Memorandum to JBL from John F. Curry about a draft of a “bill”.
- 1.31.6 Draft of the “bill”.
- 1.31.7 Minutes of meeting of committee on aerial navigation.
- 1.31.8 Minutes of the meeting of the sub-committee on aerial navigation.
- 1.31.6 Letter about the completion of laws, rules, and regulations (1919).
- 1.31.7 Articles about air navigation and aeronautics.
- 1.31.8 Newspaper photograph – Industrial Commission (all members listed by name).
- 1.31.9 Photograph – JBL’s house @ 614 E. Mulberry.

- 1.31.10 Article by Mrs. K. Borden Harriman – Member of the Industrial Relations Committee.
- 1.31.11 Official Letterhead.

Folder 32: Memorial/Burial Arrangements/Will

- 1.32.1 Draft of will.
- 1.32.2 Actual will; with certificate from probate court issuing Barbara K. Lennon the executor of his will, signed January 24, 1922.
- 1.32.3 Memorial card; states his name, date of death, age at death, and a poem.
- 1.32.4 Original Deed for a plot at Park Hill Cemetery; Lot no. 41, section D, purchased December 19, 1919.
- 1.32.5 Duplicate Deed for plot.
- 1.32.6 Receipt for lot purchased.
- 1.32.7 Funeral arrangements made through John A. Beck, May 10, 1919 and paid for July 1, 1919. Requests included: door flowers, funeral notice in The Pantagraph twice, funeral notice in the Bulletin once, grey casket, 8 dozen chairs, 3 five passenger cars, 1 seven passenger car, 2 five passenger cars for P.B., black hearse

Folder 33: Items

- 1.33.1 List of Items for the Lennon Collections; both John Brown Lennon and Barbara Egger Lennon.

Folder 34: Lennon Collection Background

- 1.34.1 Letter from Duncan Lennon to Greg Koos, lists some of the items that he will be sending to the museum, tells of a Bloomington resident that is a Egger descendant that has materials concerning Barbara Egger's parents and siblings, December 9, 2 pages.
- 1.34.2 A letter from Duncan Lennon to Greg Koos, talks about items that he will be shipping to the museums about John Brown Lennon and his wife, November 13, 1997, 2 pages.
- 1.34.3 The complexity of a "simple" donation, from the board meeting on December 17, 1997, tells a short background about JBL, tells about who is donating the materials (Duncan Lennon), it also gives a detailed process of what happened to the collection once it was at the museum, 2 pages.
- 1.34.4 A letter sent via fax from Patricia Hamilton to Duncan Lennon about the collection, December 20, 1997, 2 pages.
- 1.34.5 McLean County Historical Society Gift Agreement, signed by Patricia Hamilton and Duncan Lennon about the inventories of the Lennon Collection, October 13, 1997.
- 1.34.6 Letter from Duncan Lennon to Greg Koos about the books he sent to the museum, also includes a list of books, December 5, 1997.

- 1.34.7 A list of books donated by Duncan Lennon, including The Tailor, Organized Labor by John Mitchell, The Birth of Freedom by H.B. Salisbury, and many more.
- 1.34.8 A list of other books sent by Duncan Lennon, copy of a hand written list, received November 19, 1997, 2 pages.
- 1.34.9 A list of items sent to the McLean County Historical Society, copy of a hand written list, December 9, 1997, 3 pages.
- 1.34.10 A list of papers and pictures shipped to the McLean County Historical Society by Duncan Lennon, December 9, 1997, 5 pages, 1 typed copy, 2 pages, 1 copy of a hand written list, 3 pages.
- 1.34.11 Project budget for the Lennon Collection, a request of \$6000, includes supplies, conservation, binding and repair, and staffing, December 19, 1997, 2 copies, 1 typed and 1 hand written), also includes a fax cover sheet.
- 1.34.12 Letter from Greg Koos to Duncan Lennon, discussing the plans for the collection, November 18, 1997.
- 1.34.13 Comments on the JBL and Barbara Eggers Lennon Collection written by Mike Matejka, editor of the *Livingston & McLean Counties Union News*, tells what the collection contains and the importance of both stories.
- 1.34.14 "M. Lennon Goes to his Reward", article from the Gilroy Advocate about the life of Matthew Lennon, July 23, 1904.
- 1.34.15 Lists of items from Duncan Lennon, including *Items Left in Charlotte*, 4 pages, *Contents of Box*, 1 page, *To McLean County Historical Society*, 7 pages, *Books of John B. Lennon*, 3 pages, *Other Books*, 2 pages, *Volumes of the Tailor*, 2 pages, typed list of JBL and Barbara Egger Lennon items, 1 page., October 31, 1997.
- 1.34.16 List of Barbara Egger Lennon Diaries, 1905-1937, 1939,1941, 1943-1956, 1958-1966, 1968, 1971-1974, November 19, 1997.
- 1.34.17 Typed list of items sent to the McLean County Historical Society from Duncan Lennon, 3 pages.
- 1.34.18 Copy of a letter to Kevin _____ from Duncan Lennon, about the unidentified people in some of the photographs of the Barbara Egger Lennon items, December 10, 1997.
- 1.34.19 Letter to Carol Chrisman, Chair of the Hon Sessions Memorial Award Committee, from Greg Koos, about the history of McLean County organized labor and John B. Lennon, December 23, 1997.
- 1.34.20 John Sessions Memorial Award Nomination Form, tells the type of project, personnel involved, description of the project, assessment of the project, and labor contacts, December 19, 1997, 2 pages.
- 1.34.21 Letter to John Sessions Memorial Award Chair and Committee from Mike Matejka, about the relationship between the Bloomington & Normal Trades and Labor Assembly and the McLean County Historical Society, also talks about the proposal of the John B. Lennon Collection, also includes information about what the collection contains, 3 pages.
- 1.34.22 Letters, appraisals, and invoice to Greg Koos and Duncan Lennon from Brian K. Simpson, owner of Babbits Books in uptown Normal, lists of the books and what he thinks their values are, total value equals \$10,850, 8 pages.

- 1.34.23 John Sessions Memorial Award, information, 3 pages.
- 1.34.24 Letter to the museum from Peter Lennon, about his father sending the Lennon collection to the historical society, June 1, 2003.
- 1.34.25 Email to Peter Lennon from Greg Koos, telling Peter what had so far been done with the collection and future plans, June 1, 2003.

Scrapbooks & Etc.

(for additional scrapbooks about JBL, see the Barbara Lennon Collection)

Juna Lennon's DAR scrapbook: 1893 – 1907

The scrapbook contains newspaper clippings about the Daughters of the American Revolution. It also contains Juna Lennon's receipts for paying her dues and correspondence that was sent to her about the DAR.

Something of Men I Have Known

Written by Adlai E. Stevenson, this was given to JBL by Barbara Egger for Christmas in 1909. Inside the note reads: "John B. Lennon, with love and best wishes – from Barbara"

John B. Lennon's Scrapbook: late 1800s to early 1900s

He used a regular book and turned it into a scrapbook. The book is title Report of Board of Mediation and Arbitration. It contains pictures of influential men in the labor industry and mostly newspaper clippings. The clippings are about labor situations, the speeches that Lennon gave and his writings and quotes in the paper. There is also an article about the idea of nominating Lennon as a candidate for state senate in 1900.

“A Token of Esteem”

A book signed by the committee of the Union-Label Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, January 1, 1912. It was a gift for Lennon, as retiring president of this committee, to show their appreciation for his work.

2 Box (Flat Box)

Scrapbook: (approx. 1894 – 1905)

This Scrapbook contains mostly newspaper clippings of John Brown Lennon’s work in the labor industry as well as important events that took place. It also contains invitations and correspondence. The scrapbook gives reference to the many different clubs/groups that he was involved in.