



**Special Collections and University Archives**

---

**William H. Sylvis Collection  
Manuscript Group 99**

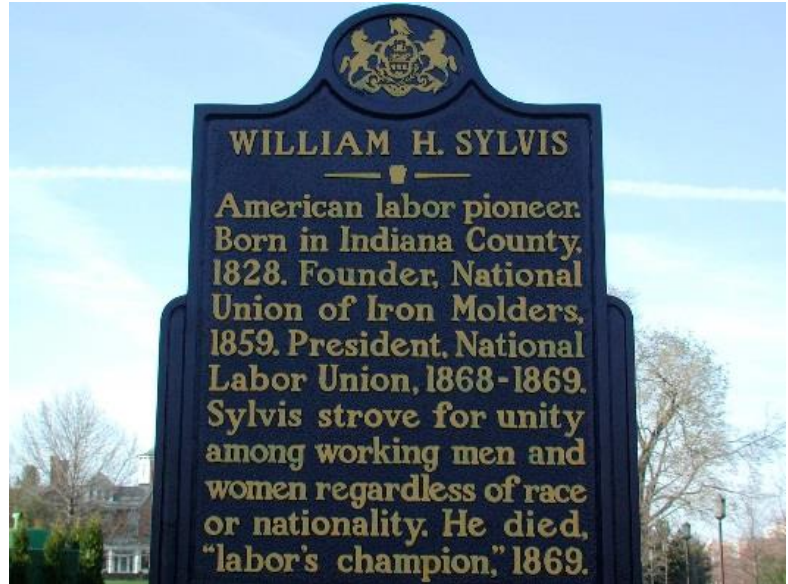
**For Scholarly Use Only  
Last Modified May 29, 2024**

---

**Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
302 Stapleton Library  
Indiana, PA 15705-1096  
Voice: (724)357-3039  
Fax: (724)357-4891**

**William H. Sylvis Collection, Manuscript Group 99**  
**Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Special Collections and University Archives**  
**4 boxes; 4 linear feet**

**Biographical Note**



[William H. Sylvis](#) (November 26, 1828-July 27, 1869), a native of Indiana County, was born in Armagh, Pennsylvania. His father, Nicholas Sylvis, worked as a wagon-maker. As a result of the Panic of 1837, the Sylvis family faced economic hardships and they scattered in search of employment. William Sylvis found his way to Union County, Pennsylvania, where he learned the iron molding trade at Forest Iron Works. In 1852, he married Amelia A. Thomas, and the couple settled in Philadelphia. After being elected secretary of the Iron Molders' Union, Sylvis proposed that a national meeting of iron workers convene. His dream became a reality in July 1859, when the Iron Molders International union held its 1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting. Sylvis gave a rousing speech to the delegates, and this address was incorporated as part of the preamble of the newly-created union constitution. In 1860, union members elected Sylvis treasurer of their organization. During the 1863 convention, held in Pittsburgh during the height of the Civil War, Sylvis was elected to the prestigious post of president of the molders' union.

For a year immediately after the Civil War, William H. Sylvis served as editor for the *Iron Molders' International Journal*, a monthly periodical (this serial is available for research in the IUP Special Collections and University Archives). As American labor leaders pressed for the establishment of a national trade union to unite the interests of workers, Sylvis advocated union solidarity. He was instrumental in the creation of the National Labor Union (NLU), instituted in 1868. In fact, Sylvis became president of the NLU and, in effect, was the spokesman for over 600,000 American workers. Sylvis advanced the labor cause, supporting the eight-hour day, arbitration of labor disputes, and tenement-housing reform during his tenure as NLU president.

At the apex of his career, William H. Sylvis died on July 27, 1869, at the age of 40. During his lifetime, William H. Sylvis had won the reputation as an ardent defender of the working class. His determination and dedication propelled him into the national spotlight as a popular labor leader a generation before the creation of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in 1890. For more information about the UMWA, see Manuscript Group 51 United Mine Workers of American (UMWA) District 2.

### **More information about William H. Sylvis (1828-1869)**

*The Moment Was Now*. (2019). Film of live performances of a musical taking place in 1869 featuring William Sylvis and other contemporaries. Playwright Gene Bruskin; Film by Mike Wicklein.

Information about the performances: <https://www.themomentwasnow.com/>

Full Movie: <https://youtu.be/g-H1YLNvorU>

### **Scope and Content Note**

#### **Series A: Iron Molders' Union Documents, Sylvis Society Files, and Pamphlets**

This series contains a wide array of documents relating to the American labor movement. Numerous files focus specifically on the International Iron Molders' Union of North America, a union which was in the forefront of labor relations for much of American history. A full-length history of the union is included in this series. In addition to housing Iron Molders' Union materials, this series contains information about labor leader William H. Sylvis, who was instrumental in the formation and early development of the Iron Molders' Union. Sylvis made many notable contributions and statements, and both a biographical file and a pamphlet of his collected quotations are of particular interest in Series A. Moreover, general pamphlets about labor unions are also housed in this series.

#### **Series B: Iron Molders' International Journal**

Series B is a set of issues of the International Iron Molders' Journal, a monthly periodical published by the Iron Molders' Union. Comprehensive in nature, this collection includes journals published from 1871-1988. All iron molders' journals are stored together on the shelves designated for rare book periodicals in the IUP Special Collections and University Archives. Journals for the years between 1871 and 1885 are unbound and stored in two archival boxes. The International Iron Molders' Journal from 1896 to 1972 are bound, and the issues from 1973 and 1988 are unbound and boxed, all of these are in the Rare Book Periodicals Collection.

#### **Series C: Books and other Publications**

54 books pertaining to the history of the labor movement in the United States are found in this series. The texts range from classic accounts of labor unions, to analyses of significant social and economic issues, to biographies of prominent labor leaders, and they are stored in the Rare Books Collection in the Labor and Industry collection.

#### **Series D: Oversized Materials**

Oversize materials in this collection include an original 20x24 framed portrait photograph of William H. Sylvis.

### Provenance

The collection was donated by the Sylvis Society.

### Restrictions

None, this collection is open for research. Property rights reside with Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), and the IUP Special Collections and University Archives.

Literary rights are retained by the creators of the records and their heirs. For permissions to reproduce or publish, please contact the [Special Collections Librarian and University Archivist](#).

### Processor

The collection was first organized by Phillip J. Zorich in 1983. The collection was re-housed and the finding aid was updated by Kaylee Becker-George on May 29, 2024.

### Content List

#### Series A: Iron Molders' Union Documents and Sylvis Society Files, and Pamphlets

##### Box 1 Iron Molders' Union Documents (15 folders)

1. Report of Proceedings of the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor, 1919.
2. Report of the Proceedings of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor, 1921. (2 copies)
3. Minutes of Meetings of Executive Board of the International Molders' Union of North America, 1912-1917. (3 copies)
4. Minutes of Meetings of Executive Board of the International Molders' Union of North America, 1907-1912.
5. Frank T. Stockton, The International Molders' Union of North America. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1921.
6. James E. Cebula, Glory and Despair, Challenge and Change: The Molders. Cincinnati: IM&AWU, 1976.
7. *Sylvis Said* Pamphlet of William H. Sylvis quotes (3 copies)
8. *Our Picture Gallery* International Molders' Union of North America Pamphlet (2 copies)
9. *Our 36<sup>th</sup> Convention* International Molders' Union of North America Brochure
10. Bowman, Appellee, v. National Graphics Corp., Appellant; Krause, Admr., et al, Appellees. Cite as Bowman v. National Graphics Corp. (1978) 55 Ohio St. 2d 222; Statement of the Case.
11. International Molders' Union of North America Local Union Directory
12. *Steward's Manual* (3 copies)
13. John P. Frey, The Ideals of the American Labor Movement.
14. William H. Sylvis Biographical Information
15. Todes, Charlotte. William H. Sylvis and the National Labor Union. New York: International Publishers, 1942.

##### Box 2: Sylvis Society Files and Pamphlets (79 folders)

1. Sylvis Society Correspondence
2. *Costing Economic Benefits*
3. *Thompson Hearings*
4. *Address by John P. Frey to the Army Industrial College*
5. *Research and Education Department of the International Molders' Union of North America Journal*
6. *International Comparison of Average Net Hourly Earnings in 1980*
7. International Molders' Union of North America Molders' Union Correspondence
8. Newspaper Articles
9. *Sand and Mold Handling Mechanized*
10. Labor Political Publications
11. Job Evaluation Training
12. Employment Rights and Regulations
13. *1983 Basic Steel Agreement*
14. *Workers Under Communism*, Winter 1983
15. *Occupational Projections and Training Data*, 1982 Edition
16. *The Reacting Americans*
17. *Automation and Major Technological Change* (A panel discussion)
18. *Canadian Labor Congress List of Audio Visual and Print Production*
19. *Expedited Labor Arbitration Rules of the AAA*
20. *Labor Arbitration: The Insecure Profession?*
21. *Labor Arbitration: Procedures and Techniques* (2 copies)
22. *Agenda*, February 1966
23. *Mobilize America's Resources to Cope with Automation*
24. *Reaganomics: The Second Dose*
25. *Information for Employers and Unions Entering into a Collective Bargaining Relationship for the First Time* (2 copies)
26. *Collective Bargaining: Democracy on the Job* (2 copies)
27. *Education for Employment*
28. *Made in America*
29. *The People's Lobby*
30. "Bulletins and Books"
31. "The Energy Crisis: Questions and Answers"
32. "An Economic Strategy for the 1980s"
33. "Coordinated Bargaining: Labor's New Approach to Effective Contract Negotiations" (3 copies)
34. "Brief History of the American Labor Movement" (1976 edition-2 copies; 1964 edition-1 copy)
35. "Point of Order"
36. "Songs for Labor"
37. "The Right to Strike and the General Welfare"
38. "Help for the Troubled Employee"
39. "AFL-CIO Songbook" (2 copies)
40. "Job Health, Safety, and You" (2 copies)
41. "What Is a Union?" (2 copies)
42. "What to Do When You Lose Your Job"
43. *Voter*, Winter 1985

44. "Men's Jobs for Women: Toward Occupational Equality" (3 copies)
45. "How to Run a Union Meeting" (3 copies)
46. "Rights and Responsibilities Under the LMRDA"
47. "The Layman's View of the National Labor Relations Act for Organizers"
48. "Sing for the Union"
49. "Playing Safe: Songs for Safety"
50. "ILPA Press Relations Guide"
51. "Employment Security in Transition"
52. "In-House Polling"
53. "Labor Looks at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress"
54. "Your Boss and the Union as Seen Thru [sic] the Eyes of a Baby" (2 copies)
55. "The National Energy Plan"
56. "Labor looks at Automation" (2 copies)
57. "Labor Relations in an Economic Recession"
58. "Cybernation: The Silent Conquest"
59. "A Union Member's Guide to the New Right"
60. "This Is the AFL-CIO"
61. "What Does Uncle Sam Say about Joining a Union?" (2 copies)
62. "Your Secret Weapon: Your Secret Ballot"
63. "The Worker's Stake in Social Security"
64. "Primer for Free Americans" (2 copies)
65. "Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know about Unions But Were Afraid to Ask"
66. "Four Good Reasons Why I Joined the International Molders' Union" (2 copies)
67. "When Great Men Agree" (2 copies)
68. "Strike Assistance" (2 copies)
69. "Future Aspects of Benefit Plan Bargaining"
70. "Black Trade Unions in South Africa"
71. "Union Membership in West Virginia: A Profile"
72. "The Future of Work"
73. "Work Measurement" (2 copies)
74. "Films for Labor" (2 copies)
75. "Delivering Your Message to Congress"
76. Labor Relations Reporter, Nov. 22, 1982
77. "A Layman's Guide to Basic law under the National Labor Relations Act"
78. "Seminar on Manpower Policy and Program: Measurement of Technological Change"
79. "Manufacturers' Industrial Relations Association: 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Memento"

### **Series B: Iron Molders' Union International Journal**

#### **Box 3 Journals, 1871-1880 (10 folders)**

bound journals 1896-1972 shelved with Rare Book Periodicals)

1. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1871
2. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1872
3. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1873
4. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1873-1874
5. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1874
6. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1875

7. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1876
8. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1877
9. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1878
10. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1880

**Series B: Iron Molders' Union International Journal  
Box 4 Journals, 1881-1895 (14 folders)**

1. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1881
2. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1882
3. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1883
4. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1885
5. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1886
6. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1887
7. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1888
8. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1889
9. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1890
10. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1891
11. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1892
12. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1893
13. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1894
14. Iron Molders' Union International Journal, 1895

**Series C: Books (in the IUP Libraries, Stapleton Library Circulating Collection or Special Collections, or the Orendorff Music Library)**

1. AFL-CIO. (1958). Union Security: The case against the "Right-to-Work" Laws. Stapleton Library (Circulating Collection): HD 6488 .A5
2. Barnes, Harry Elmer et al. (1926). New Tactics in Social Conflict. Ed. Harry W. Laidler and Norman Thomas. New York: Vanguard. Special Collections Call Number: HD 8072 .L258 1926
3. Barnes, Ralph M. (1980). Motion and Time Study: Design and Measurement of Work. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Wiley. Stapleton Library (Circulating Collection): T 60.4 .B39 1980
4. Cahn, William. (1972). A Pictorial History of American Labor. New York: Crown. (2 copies), Stapleton Library (Circulating Collection) and Special Collections Call Number: HD 8066 .C25 1972
5. Danish, Max D. (1952). William Green: A Pictorial Biography. New York: Inter-Allied Publications. Stapleton Library (Circulating Collection): HD 8073 .G7 D3
6. Debs, Theodore. (1973). Sidelights: Incidents in the Life of Eugene V. Debs. Terre Haute, IN: Moore-Langen. Special Collections Call Number: HX 84 .D3 D33 1973
7. Dyche, John A. (1926). Bolshevism in American labor unions: A plea for constructive unionism. New York: Boni and Liveright. Special Collections Call Number: HD 6515 .C5 D8 1926

8. Fryth, H. J., and Henry Collins. (1959). The Foundry Workers: A Trade Union History. Manchester: AUFW. Special Collections Call Number: HD 6664 .F7 1959
9. Gafafer, W. M., ed. (1977). Occupational Diseases: A Guide to Their Recognition. Washington: GPO. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: RC 964 .N37 1977
10. Glazer, Tom, ed. (1970). Songs of Peace, Freedom, and Protest. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett. Orendorff Music Library Call Number: M 1629.18 .G556 S6
11. Heilbroner, Robert L. (1999). The Worldly Philosophers. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HB 76 .H4 1999
12. Wall Street Journal. (1923). A History of Organized Felony and Folly: The Record of Union Labor in Crime and Economics. New York: Wall Street Journal. Special Collections Call Number: HD 6508 .W32y 1923
13. Committee for Economic Development. (1978). Jobs for the Hard to Employ. New York: CED. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HD 5724 .C6647 1978
14. Kellogg, Paul U. and Arthur Gleason. (1919). British Labor and the War. New York: Boni and Liveright. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: D 639 .L2 K4
15. Keynes, J. M. (1920). The Economic Consequences of the Peace. New York: Harcourt. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HC 57 .K4 1920
16. Marshall, F. Ray, Allan G. King, and Vernon M. Briggs, Jr. (1976). Labor Economics: Wages, Employment, and Trade Unionism. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Homewood, IL: Irwin. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HD 4901 .C34 1976
17. Mikusko, M. Brady. (1982). Carriers in a Common Cause: A History of Letter Carriers and the NALC. Washington: NALC. Special Collections Call Number: HE 6499 .M558 1982
18. Ozanne, Robert. (1967). A Century of Labor-Management Relations at McCormick and International Harvester. Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HD 9486 .U6 I77
19. Portenar, A. J. (1912). Organized Labor: Its Problems and How to Meet Them. New York: Macmillan. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HD 6511 .P7
20. Raddock, Maxwell C. (1955). Portrait of an American Labor Leader: William L. Hutcheson. New York: American Institute of Social Science. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HD 8073 .H8 R3
21. Robinson, Archie. (1981). George Meany and His Times. New York: Simon and Schuster. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HD 6509 .M4 R6 1981
22. Rubin, William Benjamin. (1921). The Bolshevists: a comedy drama. Boston: Cornhill, 1921. Special Collections Call Number: PS 3535 .U2 B6 1921
23. Schlossberg, Stephen I. and Frederick E. Sherman. (1983 and 1991). Organizing and the Law. Washington: BNA. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection: KF 3400 .S3



24. Schnapper, M. B. (1972). American Labor: A Pictorial Social History. Washington: Public Affairs Press. Stapleton Library (Circulating Collection and Special Collections) Call Number: HD 8066 .S35 1972
25. Sweeny, Vincent D. (1956). The United Steelworkers of America: Twenty Years Later, 1936-1956. Indianapolis: Allied Printing. Stapleton Library (Circulating Collection and Special Collections): HD 6515 .S57 S92
26. Walling, William English. (1926). American Labor and American Democracy. Vol. 1 New York: Workers Education Bureau of America. Special Collections Call Number: HD 8072 .W22 1926a
27. Wilber, Charles K. and Kenneth P. Jameson. (1983). An Inquiry into the Poverty of Economics. Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame Press. Stapleton Library Circulating Collection Call Number: HC 106.8 .W54 1983

**Series D: Oversized Materials**

1. Framed 20x24 Portrait Photograph of William H. Sylvis (1828-1869) as seen on page 2