

**SCREWMEN'S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW ORLEANS  
RECORDS**

Mss. 1785  
Inventory

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections  
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library  
Louisiana State University Libraries  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

Reformatted 2003  
Revised 2025

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## SUMMARY

<b>Size</b>	0.9 linear ft., 1 vol.
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	New Orleans, La.
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	1851-1917, undated
<b>Bulk Dates</b>	1861-1871
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Summary</b>	Records of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association of New Orleans consist principally of documents related to the organization's finances. Among the other documents in the collection are booklets containing the by-laws and constitution, and the organization's official act of incorporation. An accompanying journal kept by the association's treasurer records receipt of dues, payments to creditors, and bank balances. Some later records pertain to the Association's African American chapter.
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	None.
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<b>Copyright</b>	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
<b>Related Collections</b>	None.
<b>Citation</b>	Screwmen's Benevolent Association of New Orleans Records, Mss. 1785, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La.
<b>Stack Location(s)</b>	A:18, H:16

## **BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

The Screwmen's Benevolent Association of New Orleans was a trade union founded in 1850 by longshoremen who were specially trained in tightening bales of cotton with screw-jacks to improve and increase the storage in cotton merchant ships, making them more profitable. The organization was formed to fight for fair wages and equal treatment of workers, but it also supported members financially in case of an emergency or illness and provided death benefits to surviving family members. The Association was less active during the Civil War but increased activity sometime after the war's end. A separate faction of the organization was formed in 1875 for African American workers, and both the white and Black chapters survived until the early 1900s when the industrialization of cotton compression made screwmen obsolete.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Screwmen's Benevolent Association of New Orleans Records contain the collected papers of the organization from the years 1851 to 1917. The items that make up the largest portion of the collection are bills from various businesses for goods and services rendered, including advertisements for obituaries, funeral services, medical care, and printing. The collection also contains relief orders listing sick and disabled members of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association and the monetary support provided to them and their families. Printed materials, including several copies of the organization's constitution and by-laws (1867-1892) and booklets pertaining to the African American chapter, are also present. An accompanying journal kept by the association's treasurer records receipt of dues, payments to creditors, and bank balances (1850-1878).

## **COLLECTION DESCRIPTION**

Records of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association of New Orleans consist principally of documents related to the organization's finances and are arranged chronologically. Selected items are listed in more detail below.

The Act of Incorporation, or the legal document establishing the Screwmen's Benevolent Association of New Orleans, is among the earliest documents in the collection (1851). Other early records include a document itemizing damage done by a fire to the Association's meeting hall (1859), a legal statement involving the non-payment of goods to John Rose, letters requesting the payment of relief orders, and a letter regarding Louisiana's right to take dues from the "Society" [presumably the Screwmen's Benevolent Association] (1860).

Records from 1861-1862 include a document certifying an Association member's inability to work due to heart disease, a certificate naming George Lyons as "a member in good standing," a letter regarding dues owed by a member who was unable to pay them personally, and a letter regarding the funeral expenses of a member with a request for payment assistance.

Lists of members and dues owed can be found in the collection for 1861-1862 and circa 1880. Reports of relief committees listing sick and disabled officers, other members of the Association, and minutes from various meetings can be found for 1861-1869. Vouchers made out to the treasurer of the organization cover the dates 1860-1871.

Documents from 1869-1870 include a resolution asking for a fine to be rescinded and several applications from men desiring to be in the Screwmen's Benevolent Association. Records from 1880-1889 include a form letter informing the recipient (a member of the Association) of his duties as tax collector for the Screwmen's Benevolent Association.

Later records in the collection include letters regarding payment of membership dues to various members of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association (1905-1911), a membership card from 1904, a "John Fitzpatrick for Treasurer" clipping (undated), multiple copies of the Association's constitution and by-laws (1867-1892), and booklets containing the rules of conduct for both the white and Black chapters (1908-1917).

## **INDEX TERMS**

Materials relating to these people, places, and things can be found throughout the collection.

<b>Fraternal organizations—Louisiana—New Orleans.</b>
<b>Labor unions—Louisiana—New Orleans.</b>
<b>Labor unions—Louisiana—New Orleans—African American membership.</b>
<b>Working class—Louisiana—New Orleans.</b>
<b>Dues—Louisiana—New Orleans.</b>
<b>New Orleans (La.)—Economic conditions—19<sup>th</sup> century.</b>
<b>Receipts (financial records)</b>
<b>Vouchers.</b>
<b>Letters (correspondence)</b>
<b>Checks (bank checks)</b>
<b>Minutes.</b>
<b>Bylaws (administrative records)</b>
<b>Constitutions.</b>
<b>Journals (accounts)</b>
<b>Screwmen's Benevolent Association (New Orleans, La.)</b>
<b>Stevedores--Labor unions—Louisiana—New Orleans.</b>

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
A:18	1	1	"Act of Incorporation," certified copy signed by Charles Gayarré as Secretary of State, 1851
		2	Bills, receipts, and fire loss statements, 1851-1859
		3	Bills, receipts, and relief orders, 1860
		4-5	Minutes and committee reports, June - December 1861
		6	Bills and receipts, 1861
		7-9	Vouchers, April – December 1861
		10-11	Minutes and Committee Reports, 1862
		12	Bills and receipts, 1862
		13-18	Vouchers, 1862-1863
	2	1	Bills and receipts, 1864-1868
		2-5	Vouchers, 1868
		6	Correspondence, Bills, and Receipts, 1869-1879
		7-9	Vouchers, 1870
	3	1	Vouchers, June – December 1871
		2	Letter, Bills, and Receipts, circa 1880-1888
		3	Bills and Receipts, 1892
		4-5	Bills and Receipts, 1894
		6	Bills and Receipts, 1897-1898
		7-8	Correspondence, 1905-1911
		9	<i>Constitution and By-Laws of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association, 1867</i>
			<i>Constitution and By-Laws of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association, 1877</i>
			<i>Constitution and By-Laws of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association, 1887</i>
			<i>Constitution and By-Laws of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association, 1894</i>
			<i>Constitution and By-Laws of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association, 1897</i>
		10	<i>Conference Rules of the Stevedores &amp; Longshoremen's Benevolent Association, 1892</i>
			<i>Memorandum of Agreement Between Screwmen's Benevolent Association and Screwmen's Benevolent Association No. 1 (Colored) and The Steamship Agents, 1908</i>
			<i>Contract and Rules of Screwmen's Benevolent Association and Screwmen's Benevolent Association No. 1 (Colored): Rules of the Screwmen's Joint Conference, 1909</i>

**SCREWMEN'S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW ORLEANS**      **Mss. 1785**  
1851-1917, undated      **LSU LIBRARIES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

<u>Stack</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
<b>A:18</b>	3	10	<i>Memorandum of Agreement Between Screwmen's Benevolent Association and Screwmen's Benevolent Association No. 1 (Colored) and the Steamship Agents and Stevedores, 1917</i>
		11	Printed material, 1904, undated
<b>H:16</b>	--	Vol. 1	Treasurer's journal, 1850-1878