

The Filson Historical Society

**Louisville Transit Company
Added Records, 1953-1974**

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Special Collections.

Size of Collection:
3.0 cu. ft.

Locator Number:
Mss./BN/L888c

**Louisville Transit Company
Added Records, 1953-1974**

Scope and Content Note

Collection documents the business activities of the Louisville Transit Company for the years 1953-1974. Records show union agreements, operating revenues and expenses, passenger statistics, minutes of board of director meetings, legal interactions between the union and employees, invoices received by the company, and news clippings relating to dissolution of the company and the sale of the company's assets to Transit Authority of River City (TARC).

A small amount of material related to Louisville Investment Company is also included. Louisville Investment Company was a financial backer of Louisville Transit Company, and records include financial statements, correspondence, and dividend reports from businesses (chiefly prominent North American businesses) that the investment company held stock in.

Folder 1 contains booklets describing the agreements between the Louisville Transit Company and the Louisville Transit Employee's Union, Division 1447, Amalgamated Association of Street, Electrical Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America, A. F. L., for the years 1953-1967. These manuals explain wages, grievance procedures, benefits, and other aspects of the workplace for union members.

Folder 2 contains correspondence, draft proposals of the agreement of sale, objections to the sale, and news articles related to the sale of the Louisville Transit Company franchise and assets to the Louisville Transport Company, which may have been owned by Louisville Investment Company.

Folder 3 contains the final agreement selling the Louisville Transit Company franchise and assets to the Louisville Transport Company on 2 June 1958. The agreement lists real estate, tangible property (including vehicles), and operating rights owned by the Louisville Transit Company at the time of sale.

Folders 4-8 contain the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors of Louisville Transit Company for the years 1958-1974. The minutes list which officers were present at the meeting and provide a synopsis of decisions regarding matters such as bids for goods and services, vehicle replacement, licenses, operating costs, payments to creditors, and other company wide matters.

Folder 9 contains comparative weekly statistics showing revenue for the current and previous year, percentage change in revenue, revenue per mile for both years, revenue change per mile, number of miles for both years, and percentage change in miles between years for 1958-1974.

Folder 10 consists of correspondence related to labor matters, chiefly arbitration of union grievances and proposed changes to the union contract, for the year 1959.

Folders 11 and 12 contain documents relating to the creation of a Louisville ordinance regarding the operation of a bus franchise for the years 1959 and 1961.

Folders 13-26 contain correspondence between and to officers of the Louisville Transit Company, documents relating to operations of the company, financial statements, reports, and occasional news clippings for the years 1959-1974.

Folder 27 contains annual financial and statistical reports to shareholders for the years 1959-1973. These reports include a statement to the shareholders, the dollar amounts of assets and liabilities, statements of income, statements of changes in the company's final position, and operating statistics.

Folders 28-38 contain financial and statistical reports for the years 1959-1973 (annual results) and April 1965-July 1974 (monthly results). Reports show total operating revenues, operating expenses, income from transportation, non-operating income, gross income, net income, and the values of current assets and liabilities.

Folder 39 contains information concerning the total cost of various departments (personnel, goods and services, accidents, etc.) to the total gross revenue of the company. These figures are compared to the average (termed "par" in the document) for a transportation company. Records show statistics for the years 1964-1970.

Folder 40 contains a 1964 March bus route manual, a copy of the constitution and general laws for the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electrical Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America, and legal documents related to union grievances and proposed fare changes for the years 1971-1972.

Folder 41 contains correspondence with the Milwaukee & Suburban Transportation Company for the year 1965. The Milwaukee & Suburban Transportation Company and Louisville Transit Company may have been owned (wholly or in part) by the Louisville Investment Company.

Folders 42-46 consist of weekly passenger revenue and cash reports for the years 1966-1969 and 1972. Passenger revenue shows the amounts paid by passengers, the number of passengers carried, and miles operated for that week. Weekly revenue is further broken down by day. The cash report shows the amount of cash in various accounts and withdrawals (with an explanation of withdrawals) for that week. These documents were interfiled by the company for these years, and separated for the following years (see folders 47-54).

Folders 47-50 contain additional comparative weekly statistics for 1971-1974. Documents show daily weather, total revenue, total passengers, vehicle miles, vehicle hours, and are subdivided into various component categories. These documents are very similar to the previous weekly passenger revenue reports (folders 42-46) with the inclusion of vehicle and weather data.

Folders 51-54 contain additional cash reports for the years 1971-1974. Cash reports show the amount of cash in various accounts and withdrawals (with an explanation of withdrawals) for that week.

Folders 55-56 consist of invoices sent to Louisville Transit Company for the years 1967-1968. Invoices are primarily from the GMC Truck & Coach Division, but invoices from various other businesses are also included.

Folder 57 contains newspaper clippings dated 6 January 1974 – 29 August 1974 documenting the transition from Louisville Transit Company to the Transit Authority of River City (TARC).

Louisville Investment Company Records

Folders 58-66 contain Louisville Investment Company correspondence and financial reports for the years 1958-1962 and 1965-1968. Records include income, expenses, assets, liabilities, detail of investments, securities purchased, and capital gains and losses. Correspondence largely consists of notices of meetings of the board of directors.

Folders 67-77 consist of dividend reports for various companies which Louisville Investment Company held stock in for the years 1959-1960. These tend to be large, national companies, and the reports often include advertising material and notices to stockholders.

Louisville Transit Company Added Records, 1953-1974

Organizational History Note

The Louisville Transit Company, a successor of the Louisville Railway Company, was a private company that ran much of the mass transit in the greater Louisville area from the early 1950s through the early 1970s.

The Louisville Transit Company began operating under that name in 1950; it was formerly called the Louisville Railway Company. The Louisville Railway Company was created in 1890 from a merger of the two main streetcar transit companies in Louisville, the Louisville City Railway and the Central Passenger Railway. The merger occurred due to the costs associated with switching from mule-powered streetcar lines to electric operations. Ridership fluctuated throughout the first half of the twentieth century; an increase in automobile use, as well as the Great Depression, caused a decline in Louisville Railway Company ridership during the 1920s and 1930s, whereas World War II brought about an increase in passengers due to restrictions on automobile use. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, buses were slowly replacing streetcars; after World War II, the shift to buses was rapid. About 1950, the Louisville Railway Company's name was officially changed to the "Louisville Transit Company." On 2 June 1958 the Louisville Transit Company franchise and assets were sold to the Louisville Transport Company; the name "Louisville Transit Company" was retained.

Continuing decline in ridership left the Louisville Transit Company to post its first ever deficit in 1971; in 1972, the company gave notice that it would have to cease operations in 1974. In 1973, the Louisville and Jefferson County governments gave subsidies to enable lower fares, but Louisville Transit Co. remained in deficit. Also during this time, the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) was formed after the State of Kentucky authorized local authorities to operate mass transit services with local government funding. TARC purchased the Louisville Transit Company after a November 1974 voter-approved transit tax and an \$8.8 million federal grant.

The Louisville Investment Company was a financial backer in the Louisville Transit Company, and appears to have held a large amount of the company stock from at least 1958 through the dissolution of the Louisville Transit Company in 1974. The Louisville Investment Company invested in a wide range of companies and stocks, and did not limit itself to Louisville companies.

**Information for the above note was gathered from the “Streetcars” and “Transit Authority of River City” articles from *The Encyclopedia of Louisville* (edited by John E. Kleber; pages 855-857, 891-892).

**Louisville Transit Company
Added Records, 1953-1974**

Folder List

Louisville Transit Company Records

- Folder 1: Labor Agreements and Pension Plans, 1953-1967
- Folder 2: Correspondence and Drafts of Agreement Related to Sale of Louisville Transit Co.
Louisville Transport Co., 1958
- Folder 3: Final Agreement Between Louisville Transit Co. (Seller) and Louisville Transport Co.
(Purchaser) Joined in Indianapolis Transit System, Inc. and City of Louisville, 1958
- Folder 4: Board of Directors Minutes of Meetings, 1958-1960
- Folder 5: Board of Directors Minutes of Meetings, 1960-1963
- Folder 6: Board of Directors Minutes of Meetings, 1964-1966
- Folder 7: Board of Directors Minutes of Meetings, 1967-1969
- Folder 8: Board of Directors Minutes of Meetings, 1970-1974
- Folder 9: Comparative Weekly Statistics, 1958-1974
- Folder 10: Labor Correspondence, 1959
- Folder 11: Franchise Documents, 1959
- Folder 12: Franchise Documents, 1961
- Folder 13: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1959
- Folder 14: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1960
- Folder 15: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1961
- Folder 16: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1962
- Folder 17: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1963
- Folder 18: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1964
- Folder 19: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1965
- Folder 20: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1966
- Folder 21: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1968
- Folder 22: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1969
- Folder 23: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1970
- Folder 24: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1971
- Folder 25: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1973
- Folder 26: Correspondence, Documents, Financial Statements, Reports, 1974
- Folder 27: Annual Financial and Statistical Reports to Shareholders, 1959-1973
- Folder 28: Annual Financial Summary, 1959-1966
- Folder 29: Annual Financial Summary, 1967-1973
- Folder 30: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, April 1965 - December 1965
- Folder 31: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, 1966
- Folder 32: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, 1967
- Folder 33: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, 1968

Folder 34: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, 1969
Folder 35: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, 1970
Folder 36: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, 1971
Folder 37: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, 1972
Folder 38: Monthly Financial and Statistical Report, January 1974 - July 1974
Folder 39: Transit Pars, 1964-1970
Folder 40: Legal Documents and Manuals, 1964, 1971-1972
Folder 41: Milwaukee & Suburban Transportation Correspondence, 1965
Folder 42: Passenger Revenue and Cash Reports, 1966
Folder 43: Passenger Revenue and Cash Reports, 1967
Folder 44: Passenger Revenue and Cash Reports, 1968
Folder 45: Passenger Revenue and Cash Reports, 1969
Folder 46: Passenger Revenue and Cash Reports, 1972
Folder 47: Comparative Weekly Statistics, 1971
Folder 48: Comparative Weekly Statistics, 1972
Folder 49: Comparative Weekly Statistics, 1973
Folder 50: Comparative Weekly Statistics, 1974
Folder 51: Cash Report, 1971
Folder 52: Cash Report, 1972
Folder 53: Cash Report, 1973
Folder 54: Cash Report, 1974
Folder 55: Invoices, 1967-1968
Folder 56: Invoices, 1967-1968
Folder 57: Newspaper clippings, 6 January 1974-29 August 1974

Louisville Investment Company Records

Folder 58: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1958
Folder 59: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1959
Folder 60: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1960
Folder 61: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1961
Folder 62: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1962
Folder 63: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1965
Folder 64: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1966
Folder 65: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1967
Folder 66: Louisville Investment Company Correspondence and Financial Reports, 1968
Folder 67: Dividend Reports A-G, 1959
Folder 68: Dividend Reports H-Q, 1959
Folder 69: Dividend Reports R-Z, 1959
Folder 70: Dividend Reports A-C, 1960
Folder 71: Dividend Reports C-D, 1960
Folder 72: Dividend Reports E-G, 1960
Folder 73: Dividend Reports G-M, 1960
Folder 74: Dividend Reports N-O, 1960
Folder 75: Dividend Reports P-S, 1960
Folder 76: Dividend Reports T, 1960
Folder 77: Dividend Reports U-Z, 1960

**Louisville Transit Company
Added Records, 1953-1974**

Subject Headings

Advertising.

Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America.

Bus lines – Business records.

Bus lines – Cost of operation.

Bus lines – Kentucky – Louisville.

Buses – Kentucky – Louisville.

Business enterprises – Kentucky – Louisville.

Dividends.

Invoices.

Labor unions.

Letterheads.

Local transit – Kentucky – Louisville.

Louisville Investment Company (Louisville, Ky.).

Louisville Transit Employee's Union, Division 1447.

Transit Authority of River City.

Transport workers – Labor unions.

Transportation – Kentucky – Louisville.

Wages – Transportation.