

Finding Your Ancestors in Company Employee Magazines and Trade Magazines

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Company employee magazines (formerly referred to as “house organs”) are perhaps one of the most underutilized genealogical resources for researching twentieth-century ancestors. These magazines are often jam-packed with information on our ancestors. Types of articles that frequently appear in these magazines include articles on employees’ hobbies, military service, and family vacations; birth, death, and marriage announcements of employees and their families; photographs of employees’ children; articles and photos of employee sports teams; and announcements of promotions and retirements.

It’s rare to find employee magazines that have been digitized, but here are a couple of examples of ones that are available online:

- *Frisco System Magazine/The Frisco-Man/The Frisco Employes’ Magazine* (employee magazines of the St. Louis–San Francisco Railway [aka “The Frisco”]), 1902–1935, Springfield–Greene County [Missouri] Public Library website, <http://thelibrary.org/lochist/frisco/magazines/magazines.cfm>
- *The Wingfoot Clan* newsletters (published by the Goodyear Company in Akron, Ohio), 1939–1946, Summit Memory website, <http://www.summitmemory.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/AkronNP01>

The Missouri Historical Society Library & Research Center holds runs of numerous St. Louis–area employee magazines, many of which are indexed in the Genealogy and Local History Index (genealogy.mohistory.org).

A publication titled *Printers’ Ink Directory of House Organs*, published in the 1940s and 1950s, contains a listing of company employee magazines arranged alphabetically by state and city. So, if you know the name of the company an ancestor worked for, you can consult this publication to determine if that company published an employee magazine and, if so, what the title of the magazine was. For a list of employee magazines published in 1925, see *Employee Magazines in the United States* (New York: National Industrial Conference Board Inc., 1925).

Once you determine the title of an employee magazine, consult Worldcat.org to try to locate which libraries hold issues of the magazine. Then search for the magazine title in Google Books (<https://books.google.com/>) and the HathiTrust Digital Library (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>) in case issues of the magazine have been digitized. Also search Google and sites like eBay, which often has issues of employee magazines for sale.

If the company is still in existence, contact the company to see if they retain a collection of old employee magazines.

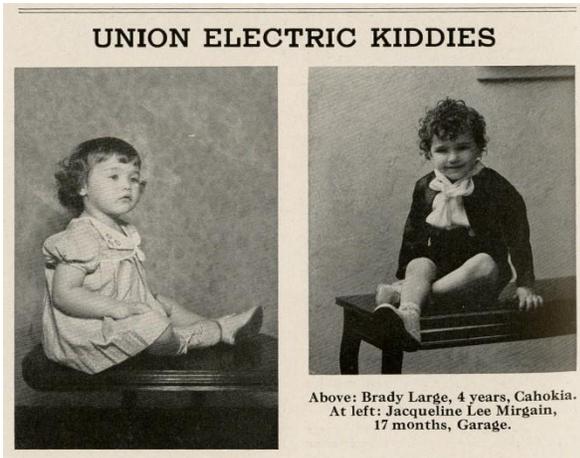


Photo of covers of several St. Louis company employee magazines.

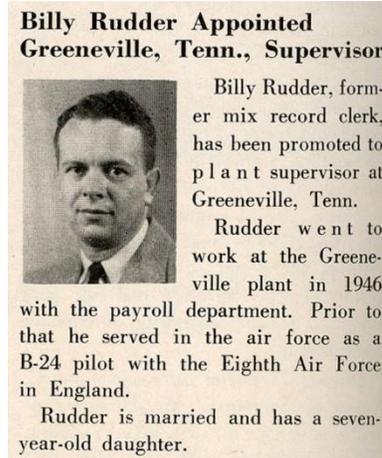
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|--|---|
| Edison Bros. Stores, Inc., 315 Washington | (8), "Lubrite News" (1) |
| "Edisonian" (1) | Southwestern Bell Telephone Co., 1010 Pine |
| Emerson Elec. Mfg. Co., The, 8100 W. Floris- | St. (1), "Southwestern Telephone News" |
| sant Ave. (21), "Voice of Emerson" (1) | (1) |
| Facture, Inc., 918 So. 17th St. (3), "Postal | Steelcote Mfg. Co., 3418 Gratiot (3), "Steel- |
| Paragraphs" (X) | cote News" (X) |
| Falstaff Brewing Corp., 3684 Forest Park Blvd. | Stix, Baer and Fuller, 7th and Washington |
| (8), "The Falstaff Shield" (1) | (1), "Flying Horse" (1) |
| Famous-Barr Co., 6th—Olive—7th—Locust | Streckfus Steamers, Inc., Ft. of Washington |
| (1), "Store Chat" (1) | Ave. (2), "Streckfus Steamers Magazine" |
| Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 411 Lo- | (X) |
| cust St. (2), "Four Fov: News" (1) | Sunnen Products Co., 7900 Manchester Ave. |
| General American Life Ins Co., 1501 Locust | (17), "Sunnen-Snooper" (1) |
| St. (3), "Leadership" (X); "Observer" | Union Electric Co. of Missouri, 315 N. 12th |
| (1) | Blvd. (1), "Electric Farm News" (X) |

Image from *Printers' Ink Directory of House Organs* (1947) showing some of the employee magazine titles published in St. Louis.

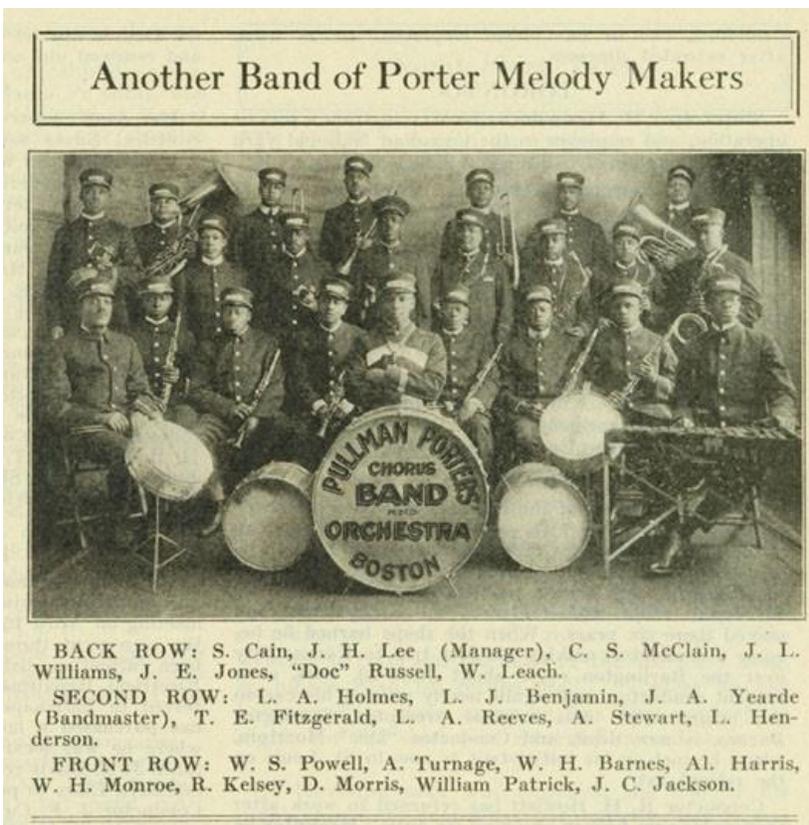
Here are some examples of the genealogically valuable content in company employee magazines:



Union Electric Magazine, May 1935



Pet Milk Magazine, May 1954



Pullman News, June 1923

**Five Generations Represented
at Birthday Celebration**



Mrs. Eva Wolters (top left) labor statistical clerk, stores accounting department, St. Louis, was justly proud when—at the 2nd birthday party of Mrs. Flora Herod, of Atchison, Kans., (shown front row, right) she arranged for the above picture—showing representation of five generations of her family, including baby James Michael Ryan, shown on lap of his mother, Mrs. James Ryan; his grandmother, Mrs. Wolters; his great grandmother, Mrs. Herman Heldberg of St. Louis—back row—right, and his great great grandmother, Mrs. Herod. The baby's father worked for the railroad at one time and is now employed as signal maintenance man for the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis. May good health, happiness and many happy birthdays be on the pathway of this outstanding family group!

Missouri Pacific Magazine, November 1948

Trade journals focus on a trade or industry and can also include valuable information about our late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century ancestors. Digitized trade journals can sometimes be found on sites such as Google Books (<https://books.google.com/>) and the HathiTrust Digital Library (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>).

Here are some examples of the genealogically valuable content in trade journals:

INFORMATION WANTED.

Of Bro. C. J. Hurtt, a former member of L. U. No. 552, Grinnell, Ia., but recently a resident of So. Chicago. Notify F. O. Wallace, Rec. Sec., L. U. No. 552, Grinnell, Iowa.

Of Bro. Chas. M. Weston, who lived in Peoria, Ill., in 1903, 1904. He is a sign painter and decorator about 45 years of age, 5 ft., 10 in. in height, has sandy mustache and light blue eyes. Please notify Geo. Moody, 107 S. 2nd St., San Jose, Cal.

Of Bro. J. W. Cross, recently discharged from the Vanderbilt Clinic Outdoor Camp of the Roosevelt Hospital, New York City. A member of L. U. No. 497, Portchester, N. Y. Please forward information to Bro. James Frost, care C. A. Thompson, Adeo St., Portchester, N. Y.

The Painter and Decorator, December 1911



The Suppan Family. This halftone is from a retouched daguerreotype which was made in 1852, at Styria, Austria. To the right is Benjamin A. Suppan, to the left, Mrs. Benjamin Suppan, and the youngster between them is Master Benjamin A. Suppan, Jr., who is the father of Leo Suppan, associate professor of pharmacy and chemistry at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy and editor of the *National Druggist*.

Meyer Brothers Druggist, December 1918

Applications for Membership.

3, Cincinnati, Ohio.—V. E. Miketta, Jr., and Herman C. Wenzel, both learned trade in Cincinnati and have not worked elsewhere.

3, St. Louis, Mo. (Mailers).—Mr. Weybaum, learned trade in this city.

9, Buffalo, N. Y.—George N. Netter, stereotyper, age 24 years; William Nase, age 33 years, learned trade in Lockport; C. J. Amschles, age 22 years, worked in Chicago at Clancy's in 1894; George M. Geyer, age 38 years, learned trade at Mt. Holly Springs, Pa.; H. J. De Bock.

The Typographical Journal, Feb. 18, 1896

MARRIED.—Bro. H. N. Vaughan to Miss Mabel Smith, at Cleburne, Texas, on February 9. Miss Smith is the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Dr. A. L. Smith, of Cleburne, and Bro. Vaughan is the proprietor of the Hotel Cleburne. They will make their future home in California, where Bro. Vaughan will again return to the key. Congratulations.

The Railroad Telegrapher, March 1900