

McLean County Historical Society

Barbara Egger Lennon Collection

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Collection Information

Volume of Collection:	3 Boxes
Collection Dates:	1896-1908, 1909-1949, 1905-1974, 1983
Restrictions:	Scrapbook and newspaper clippings very brittle. Use photocopies unless authorized by Librarian/Archivist.
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 list of Lennon-related objects in Museum collections, see Folder 33 in the John Brown Lennon Collection.

Historical Sketch

Barbara Egger was born September 18, 1884, in Switzerland. She lived the majority of her life in McLean County where she attended Bloomington public schools and was a member of many organizations. After high school she became a teacher, not only making it a career but devoting her life to it. Egger took courses at Illinois State Normal University and received excellent marks, graduating with a degree in Home Economics in 1928. After retirement from teaching in 1951, Barbara continued to be very active in her church and the community until her death in 1983.

Barbara married John Brown Lennon, a very close friend, in 1920, shortly after the death of his first wife. Lennon was a very influential labor leader in the U.S. and specifically McLean County (For more information on John Brown Lennon, see companion collection). Egger gave birth to their only son, Duncan, in 1921. Barbara's husband died in 1923 and she never remarried.

As a young woman, Barbara became very involved in functions at her school and in the community. She served as the editor-in-chief of the Bloomington High School newspaper, the "Aegis." She was also a member of the YWCA, or Young Women's Christian Association, and the Unitarian Church.

Barbara Egger's adult life was spent as an advocate for public education, and she was active in her own community as well as on a state level. She was a part of the Illinois State Teachers Association and spent time as a delegate for McLean County in the Illinois Education Association. Locally, Egger was a member of the Bloomington Federation of Education and also taught Americanization classes to foreign born people that needed help learning English and becoming accustomed to a new country.

After her husband's death, Barbara Egger Lennon became very dedicated to labor and union work, which was his life's work. She was a trustee of the Bloomington Trades and Labor Assembly. Her job as a trustee was to represent the organization at meetings. Egger was very involved in the Women's Trade Union League where she served as Bloomington chapter president, as secretary, on the executive board, and as chairman.

In 1948, Barbara Egger became very involved in politics, specifically the Democratic Party due to her strong support of Adlai E. Stevenson. She was an alternate delegate at the McLean County State Democratic Convention. The Illinois Democratic Women's Division was one of many female organizations that she belonged to, as well as the Women's Association of Commerce and the Women's Club.

Scope & Content Note

The Barbara Egger Lennon Collection contains many newspaper clippings, personal and professional correspondence, and certificates of achievement through college level schooling as well as certificates to teach in and around the Bloomington area. In addition, the collection contains several scrapbooks of her life as well as her husband's, a photo album, and a book given to her by her husband, John Brown Lennon, while he was married to his first wife. The collection also contains numerous journals that provide a detailed account of her life.

Barbara Lennon Collection

Box 1

Folder 1: Report Cards

1.1.1 School Grades For Barbara Egger (1896-1901).

Folder 2: Newspaper photo

1.2.1 Miss Barbara Egger, High School student (1901).

Folder 3: The Aegis

1.3.1 Bloomington High School Publication, September, 1901; Barbara was Editor-in-Chief.

Folder 4: Address by John Brown Lennon

1.4.1 A copy of his address that he sent to Barbara (1901).

Folder 5: Programs

1.5.1 Bloomington High School Prom (3), (1901 -1903).

1.5.2 Bloomington High School Alumni Association (2), (1907 & 1908).

Folder 6: Letters

1.6.1 From D.J. Foster to introduce Barbara Egger to John Wren (1902).

1.6.2 Letter of Recommendation for Barbara Egger from John Brown Lennon to J.W. Wren (April 26, 1902).

1.6.3 J.K. Stableton, Superintendent of City Schools in Bloomington, letter of recommendation for Barbara Egger (1904).

1.6.4 Letter of recommendation for Barbara Egger, Unsigned, possibly a Bloomington High School teacher.

1.6.5 Letter of Acceptance to teach (1902) – written by Jennie Cox.

1.6.6 Letter to R.J. Railsback from JBL to denying the request for Barbara Egger to take a leave of absence (October 31, 1904).

1.6.7 Letter to Barbara Egger from R.J. Railsback, discussing a misunderstanding and wanting her to come back and teach, (March 13, 1905).

Folder 7: Teaching Contract

1.7.1 To teach for McLean County schools, district no. 80, (September 7, 1903).

Folder 8: Newspaper Cartoon

- 1.8.1 Mailed to Barbara Egger by JBL at the beginning of the school year in Hopedale (1904).

Folder 9: Teaching Contracts

- 1.9.1 Second grade, County (1902-1904).
- 1.9.2 First grade, County (1905-1913).
- 1.9.3 Bloomington Public School (1913).
- 1.9.4 First Grade, State of Illinois (1914-1932).
- 1.9.5 Elementary School, State of Illinois (1930-1949).

Folder 10: Directory

- 1.10.1 Public schools (1919-1920).

Folder 11: Illinois State Normal University Certificates

- 1.11.1 Sociology (1918).
- 1.11.2 Social Problems (1919).

Folder 12: Assortment of Cards

- 1.12.1 Miscellaneous card from John Brown Lennon (1907).
- 1.12.2 Abraham Lincoln Centennial Card from JBL (1909).
- 1.12.3 Christmas cards from John Brown Lennon (1910, 1911, 1913, 1914).
- 1.12.4 Christmas cards from James Duncan (1922-1925).
- 1.12.5 Christmas card from Samuel Gompers (1922).
- 1.12.6 Miscellaneous Christmas Cards (8).
- 1.12.7 Other Miscellaneous Cards (4).
- 1.12.8 Valentine Card from Louis Thomas, student.
- 1.12.9 Valentine Card from Alberta Golden and Charles B. St. John, students (1910).
- 1.12.10 Drawing – “Miss Egger Teaching Music”, unsigned.
- 1.12.11 Valentine Card from Mosaic Circle (1905).

Folder 13: Marriage – Barbara Egger and John B. Lennon

- 1.13.1 Marriage license (1920).
- 1.13.2 Certificate (1920).
- 1.13.3 Newspaper clippings about JBL & Barbara’s marriage and honeymoon.

Folder 14: Payment for Duncan Lennon’s Birth

- 1.14.1 Receipt and check (September 23, 1925).

Folder 15: Letters to John & Barbara from James Duncan

- 1.15.1 Congratulations on the baby and appreciation of the name Duncan (1921).
- 1.15.2 Talks about his health and others they know (1922).

Folder 16: John Brown Lennon's Death (1923)

- 1.16.1.1 Newspaper article about the death and the accomplishments during his life (January 16, 1923).
- 1.16.2 J.B. Tobin about JBL's death (telegram).
- 1.16.3 Harvey A. Patterson about JBL's death (telegram).
- 1.16.4 W. D. Mahon about JBL's death (telegram).
- 1.16.5 Proclamation of the local union about the death of JBL.
- 1.16.6 F. Scoot McBride, State Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League of Illinois about JBL's death (letter).
- 1.16.7 Samuel Gompers & Frank Morrison about the death of JBL (telegram).
- 1.16.8 Charles S. _____, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America about JBL's death (letter-2).
- 1.16.9 Mary Burke East, condolences about John Brown Lennon (letter).
- 1.16.10 Proclamation of the Bloomington/Normal Council of the Boy Scouts of America about JBL's death.
- 1.16.11 John P. Burke, President-Secretary of the International Brotherhood of Pulp Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers to Barbara Lennon about JBL's death (letter).
- 1.16.12 Frank Duffy, General Secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners, letter to Barbara about JBL's death.
- 1.16.13 Letter to Frank Duffy from Will H. Hitchcock.
- 1.16.14 Frank Morrison, condolences to Barbara about John Brown Lennon's death (telegram).
- 1.16.15 Sam Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, letter to Barbara about JBL's death.
- 1.16.16 James Duncan, International President of the Granite Cutters' International Association of America, letter to Barbara sending condolences about JBL's death.

Folder 17: National Women's Trade Union League of America Programs

- 1.17.1 35th Anniversary (1939).
- 1.17.2 13th Annual Convention (1947).

Folder 18: Cards from Adlai E. Stevenson

- 1.18.1 Christmas Cards (1949 - 1952).
- 1.18.2 Post card with his picture.

Folder 19: Adlai E. Stevenson

1.19.1 Watchers Certificate, signed by Adlai Stevenson, Democratic Candidate for Governor.

1.19.2 Letter from the Stevenson-for-Governor Committee (1948).

Folder 20: McLean County Democratic Central Committee

1.20.1 Invitation to attend a dinner prior to the Democratic meeting (1948).

1.20.2 Invitation to attend a program for the State Democratic Convention as the delegate to represent McLean County (1948).

1.20.3 Invitation to the State Democratic Convention where Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. will be the keynote speaker (1948).

1.20.4 Illinois Democratic Women's Division Program (1948).

Folder 21: Awards of Merit

1.21.1 Women's Service League of Brokaw Hospital (1954-1956).

Folder 22: McLean County Historical Society

1.22.1 75th anniversary tea.

1.22.2 Guest Night – American Business Women's Association.

1.22.3 Newspaper clipping of the tea.

1.22.4 Picture of the tea.

Folder 23: Newspaper Clippings & Photographs

1.23.1 JBL, great labor leader.

1.23.2 American Federation of Labor.

1.23.3 Industrial Commission.

1.23.4 Photograph of JBL in his office – Eddy Building.

1.23.5 Photograph of James Duncan.

Folder 24: Barbara Egger Lennon's Death Records

1.24.1 Copy of Obituary (1983).

1.24.2 Last Will & Testament (1970).

Scrapbooks Etc.

Scrapbook #1 (1920 and beyond)

This scrapbook is mostly of activities and work that took place later in Barbara Lennon's life as well as items from her husband's work in the community.

There is correspondence about the marriage of John Brown Lennon and Barbara Egger, 1920. There are also work-related letters to John Brown Lennon.

There are newspaper articles about the death of John Brown Lennon and about speeches that he gave. Others are about the recognition of the good work that he had done. There are also articles about the groups that Lennon was involved with and what they did. The clippings related to Barbara's life mostly consist of her work and commitment to the Women's Club as well as the Teachers Association in Bloomington.

There are photographs of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations. There are also two photographs of his home at 614 E. Mulberry St. in Bloomington. One is just of the home and the other is of John Brown Lennon outside of his home. There is also a newspaper clipping of a photograph of the school on Grove Street where Barbara Egger was the principal.

John Brown Lennon's certificates from the American Federation of Labor in 1899, 1919, and 1922. See the John Brown Lennon Collection for more certificates. There are certificates for 1921, 1922, and 1924 through 1928 showing Barbara's services as a judge of elections for the commission. There are also many certificates for the different education organizations that Barbara was involved in.

There are numerous photographs within this scrapbook from 1927. There are two from the Illinois State Normal University homecoming parade. There is a photo with Barbara and son, Duncan Lennon. There is a photo of Barbara Egger Lennon and many unidentified others. Finally, there is a Jefferson School class photo where Barbara's students are in costume.

Scrapbook #2 (1900 – 1906)

This scrapbook is mostly a collection of activities and clippings about Barbara's life during high school and up to 1906. It contains some other miscellaneous items about John Brown Lennon, at the time a very close friend, later to become her husband. There are newspaper clippings about the Bloomington High School newspaper, "Aegis," some of her classmates, and speeches and labor work that John Brown Lennon was involved in. There are also programs of different activities that she attended or was involved in, such as the Young Women's Christian Association, the Letitia Green Stevenson Chapter of the NSDAR (February 12, 1903), and the Central Illinois Teachers Association (March 23-24, 1906). Programs that are affiliated with Bloomington High School are the senior class night, Bloomington versus Decatur debate (May 23, 1902), BHS Graduation (1902), McLean County Farmer's Institute (January 7-9, 1902), and the Bloomington High School Alumni Association fifth annual banquet and reunion

(June 8, 1906).

Scrapbook #3 (1899-1907)

This scrapbook is mostly a collection of her high school days and shortly after. This scrapbook contains programs of several Bloomington High School Graduation ceremonies from 1899 to 1904. Many invitations for graduation of friends and weddings are in this scrapbook. There is also an invite for the dedication of the New McLean County Courthouse on September 24, 1903. Similar to the other scrapbooks, there are numerous miscellaneous newspaper clippings. There are two letters from the Bloomington High School Alumni Association from March 8, 1907 and June 13, 1907.

Photo Album (up to 1915)

Contains pictures of trips that Barbara took with John Lennon and his first wife, Juna, as well as pictures of them and their home in Bloomington. Mostly pictures of friends and her fellow teachers. The places that she went either with the Lennon's or her friends and took pictures include Colorado, Virginia, California, Nebraska, and more. There are a couple pictures of John Brown Lennon that are related to his work.

Framed Certificate (1951)

This is a certificate given to Barbara E. Lennon, from the Board of Education in Bloomington, IL, upon her retirement.

Book

The book is a gift from John Brown Lennon to Barbara Egger for Christmas 1906. Her name is in typed print. It begins with a picture of John and his wife Juna and then shows his office, their home, and the rest of the town.

Box 2

Journals (1905-1940)

This box contains Barbara Egger Lennon's personal journals, offering a detailed account of her life from shortly after high school into her teaching career. It also mentions her marriage to John Brown Lennon and the birth of their son, Duncan and later the death of her husband.

Box 3

Journals (1940-1974)

This box of Barbara's personal journals accounts for the latter years of her life when she was very active in the community and her teaching career through her retirement and beyond.