

LABOR ARCHIVES

Supplement to

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT FOR LABOR MATERIALS:  
SELECTION/ACQUISITION AIDS

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Institute of Industrial Relations Library  
University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

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## LABOR ARCHIVES

A discussion on collecting labor materials is incomplete without some reference to archival materials, even though there are now only a few full-fledged Labor Archives in the country. The efforts of labor historians and the Committee on Labor Archives of the American Society of Archivists, in publicizing the importance of identifying, locating and preserving the source materials in labor history, the publication of the journal Labor History, plus a growing interest on the part of the unions in their own history, are contributing to a more widespread recognition of the necessity for systematic preservation of such materials.

However, the cost of establishing and maintaining a labor archives is a limiting factor for many libraries and many unions. To develop an archives collection in any subject area requires time, money, effort, patience and dedication. Those in the field emphasize that a trained archivist equipped with a basic knowledge of archival enterprise and collecting, along with an indefinite commitment to the project, is the key ingredient in developing a substantial labor archives collection. Even in libraries having extensive collections of printed labor materials, the labor archival materials are frequently administered as a separate collection, or as a part of the library's general archives and manuscripts collection.

Although the University of California libraries hold some labor archival materials, scattered in various collections, there has been insufficient personnel to staff an active labor archives collection program. Since we lack experience in this specialized field, we offer here only a few general comments on sources and materials for labor archives. We recommend that anyone seriously considering a full-fledged labor archives program contact the experts for advice and assistance: the members of the Committee on Labor Archives of the Society of American Archivists. The Committee Chairman is Dr. Dennis East, Archivist, Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. 48202. Dr. David B. Gracy, II, Archivist of the Southern Labor Archives and a member of the Committee, offers to correspond with and assist however he can persons who are inaugurating a labor archives program. His article also provides helpful advice:

"Starting a Labor Archive," Georgia Archive, vol. 1, p. 20-29, Fall 1972.

Labor archivists report that most materials are acquired from unions, labor officials, and other persons prominent in the labor field, although some come from private collectors, researchers, etc., interested in labor history. Most materials are donated, or the archives is the designated depository for certain union records and files. Personal contacts and acquaintance with union officials and researchers are all important in conducting a successful collection program. Some archives employ knowledgeable field representatives to seek out materials and arrange for donations or occasional purchases. Apparently dealers do not handle much archival

labor materials. Articles and obituaries in union and daily commercial papers provide leads to persons who have personal papers. Staff research on historical research trends and historically prominent unions in the collection area influence decisions on collection policies and priorities.

What types of materials are collected for labor archives? Large collections include all types of material, including personal and official correspondence; minutes, reports and other official records; leaflets, pamphlets, clippings, news releases; films, photographs, tape recordings; oral histories; memorabilia or three dimensional objects, etc. Current union papers, convention proceedings, and collective bargaining agreements may be acquired and processed by a general library unit instead of by the labor archives. The scope of any collection is necessarily limited. Selections for archival collections may be limited to a particular geographical area, certain unions or industries, to only certain types of materials, etc.

Descriptions of the holdings of established labor archives provide a good answer to questions about types of materials collected and the limitations placed on the scope of collections. Seven major labor archives collections are listed at the end of this section, with at least one citation to a published article, brochure or other description of each collection. These archives are at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Georgia State University, Pennsylvania State University, Tamiment Library, University of Texas at Arlington, Wayne State University, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

In addition to these large special labor archives collections, some historical societies (other than Wisconsin) collect labor archival materials, and various university and public libraries collect some labor archival material as part of a regional history collection or a general manuscript and archives collection. For example, the notable collection of Southern Tenant Farmers Union Papers is located in the University of North Carolina Library's Southern Historical Collection. Since the location of labor archives and related collections is of interest to librarians in the labor field, we are citing a few additional sources for collection descriptions that have come to our attention. The articles in the American Archivist are included here since they report some early efforts to locate and inventory labor archival materials.

Lewison, Paul. "The Archives of Labor," American Archivist, vol. 17, no. 1, p. 19-24, January 1954.

A preliminary and general report based on then currently available knowledge on the existence of labor records in the U.S. and abroad, prepared by the Committee on Labor Records, Society of American Archivists.

Lewison, Paul. "State Labor Agencies: Where are Their Records?" American Archivist, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 45-50, January 1956.

Survey, by the same Committee, based on questionnaire, of the retention-disposition policies, and location of records of state labor agencies.

Lewison, Paul and Morris Rieger. "Labor Union Records in the United States," American Archivist, vol. 25, no. 1, p. 39-55, January 1962.

An inventory of union records held by individual labor unions, compiled from questionnaires submitted to unions in late 1960.

U.S. National Historical Publications Commission. A Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States. Philip M. Hamer, editor. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961. xxiii, 775 p.

Includes descriptions of labor archive holdings, but it is difficult to use on a subject basis. <sup>Arrangement</sup> ~~Arrangement~~ is by name of depository and it is indexed chiefly by personal names and organization titles. A new edition is in preparation.

The collection descriptions listed below were published in issues of Labor History.

Blum, Albert A. "Local Union Archives in Michigan," vol. 3, no. 3, p. 335-340, Fall 1962.

Brickett, Margaret. "Labor History Resources in the U.S. Department of Labor Library," vol. 2, no. 2, p. 236-240, Spring 1961.

Di Roma, Edward. "Notes on Resources for Research in Labor History in the Reference Department of the New York Main Library," vol. 4, no. 1, p. 93-99, Winter 1963.

Gates, Francis. "Labor History Resources in the Libraries of the University of California, Berkeley," vol. 1, no. 2, p. 196-205, Spring 1960.

Fishbein, Meyer H. "Labor History Resources in the National Archives," vol. 8, no. 3, p. 330-351., Fall 1967.

Harvey, O.L. "Inventory of Department of Labor Archives," vol. 4, no. 2, p. 196-198, Spring 1963.

Heffron, Paul T. "Manuscript Sources in the Library of Congress for a Study of Labor History," vol. 10, no. 4, p. 630-638, Fall 1969.

Johnpoll, Bernard K. "Manuscript Sources in American Radicalism," vol. 14, no. 1, p. 92-97, Winter 1973.

Lehning, Arthur. "Sources on Labor History" [European], vol. 8, no. 2, p. 183-193, Spring 1967.

Lovett, Robert. "Labor History Materials in the Harvard University Archives," vol. 4, no. 3, p. 273-279, Fall 1963.

Morris, Richard B. "American Labor History Prior to the Civil War: Sources and Opportunities for Research," vol. 1, no. 3, p. 308-318, Fall 1960.

Onsi, Patricia Wilson. "Labor History Resources of the University of Illinois," vol. 7, no. 2, p. 209-216, Spring 1966.

Scanlan, Eleanor. "The LaBadie Collection," vol. 6, no. 3, p.244-248, Fall 1965.

The "News Notes" sections in Labor History include announcements and brief descriptions of new labor archive acquisitions. These notes not only provide an update for earlier descriptions or guides to established labor archives, but also identify additional collectors.

Many events of historical importance in the labor movement occur at the local union level, but their records which are of great value for labor archives collections are frequently not preserved. Librarians will serve union history if they encourage and assist the union locals in their communities to collect and preserve the raw data from which their history can be written--records which may later be donated to an archives collection. The following pamphlet, written by the Coordinator of the Penn State USWA Oral History Project as a guide for unionists, should be of interest to non-archivist librarians as well:

Hoffman, Alice. Preserving the History of the Local Union. Pamphlet no. PR-212. Pittsburgh, Pa., United Steelworkers of America [1972]. 11 p.

#### Major Labor Archives Collections

Southern Labor Archives  
Georgia State University Library  
104 Decatur Street, S.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Archivist: Dr. David B. Gracy, II.

Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University. [Atlanta] Georgia State University [n.d.] 5 p.

Manuscript Holdings (Cumulative list no. 1); Donors of Archival Material, 1973-1974.

Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University. [Atlanta] Georgia State University [1975] 3 p.

Collections Processed, April 1974-March 1975; Donors of Archival Materials, 1974-1975.

Labor Management Documentation Center  
Martin P. Catherwood Library  
New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York 14850

Archivist: Dr. C. Herbert Finch  
Associate Archivist: Richard Strassberg

Guide to the Records: Labor Documentation Center. Ithaca, N.Y., Library,  
New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University,  
1963. [1] 62, iv p. mimeo.

Labor Management Documentation Center. Ithaca, N.Y., Martin P. Catherwood  
Library, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell  
University [1973?] 4 [1] p.

Miller, J. Gormly. "Labor Resources in the Cornell University Libraries,"  
Labor History, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 319-236, Fall 1960.

Labor History Collection  
University Library  
Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

The Past is Prologue: Securing Labor's Future through Preserving the Past.  
Historical Collections, the Pennsylvania State University Library.  
University Park, Pennsylvania State University Library [n.d.]. folder.

Filipelli, Ronald L. "Labor Manuscripts in the Pennsylvania State University  
Library," Labor History, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 79-88, Winter 1972.

Tamiment Library  
New York University Libraries  
Washington Square  
New York, N.Y. 10003

New York University Libraries. Bulletin of the Tamiment Library. Published  
occasionally since January 1957.

Earlier issues, Library Bulletin, published by the Tamiment Institute  
Library (incorporating the Meyer London Memorial Library of the Rand School  
of Social Science). Issues are devoted to descriptions and checklists of  
collections and accounts of new acquisitions.

Bell, Daniel. The Tamiment Library. New York, New York University  
Libraries, 1969. 27 p. (Bibliographical Series no. 6)

The archival collections are broader than just labor, but include much  
unique material relating to American workingclass reform movements, social-  
ism, and radicalism.

Division of Archives and Manuscripts  
University of Texas at Arlington Library  
P.O. Box 19218  
Arlington, Texas 76019

Director of Archives: Dr. Robert A. Gamble.

Cohen, Jan Hart, comp. A Descriptive Guide to the Collections, April 1, 1974.  
Edited by Robert A. Gamble. Arlington, Texas, Division of Archives and  
Manuscripts, University of Texas at Arlington Library, 1974. [2] 32 p.  
mimeo.

Most of the collections relate to organized labor and labor leaders in Texas.

Labor Archives in the University of Texas at Arlington Library. Arlington,  
Texas, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, University of Texas at Arling-  
ton Library [n.d.]. folder.

Lackman, Howard and George Green. "Origin and Programs of the Texas Labor  
Archives," Labor History, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 341-344, Summer 1970.

Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs  
Wayne State University  
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Director: Professor Philip Mason  
Archivist: Dr. Dennis East

Wayne State University. Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs. News-  
letter. Published irregularly. vol. 1, no. 1, Winter 1971-

Temporarily suspended with vol. 2, no. 3, Summer 1973. Publication to be  
resumed in 1976.

Provides information about the Archives collections and programs, and re-  
search use of the collection.

Pflug, Warner W., comp. A Guide to the Archives of Labor History and Urban  
Affairs, Wayne State University. Detroit, Wayne State University Press,  
1974. 195 p.

All collections acquired prior to January 1, 1974, are either described or  
listed.

Collections of the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs. Detroit,  
Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University [n.d.].  
folder.

Preserving the Heritage of the UAW. Detroit, Archives of Labor History and  
Urban Affairs, Wayne State University [n.d.]. folder.

Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs. Detroit, Wayne State University, 1975. [12] p.

Booklet issued for the dedication of the building housing the archives and library. Includes brief descriptions of the collections.

Mason, Philip P. "Labor History Archives in Wayne State University," Labor History, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 67-75, Winter 1964.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
816 State Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Ham, F. Gerald, comp. Labor Manuscripts in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967. 48 p. (Guides to Historical Resources)

Ham, F. Gerald. "Labor Manuscripts in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin," Labor History, vol. 7, no. 3, p. 313-342, Fall 1966.

Wisconsin. State Historical Society. Labor Papers on Microfilm: A Combined List. Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1965. iv, 66 p. (Guides to Historical Resources).

### Oral History

Tape-recorded interviews with union leaders, union members, and other persons who have participated in labor movement activities or influenced labor history, are included in some labor archive or other special collections. Some are transcribed and available as edited manuscripts, but others are on tape only. Conducting an oral history program is another specialty which we mention only briefly. Those who wish information about initiating an oral history program will find the following booklet useful:

Baum, Willa K. Oral History for the Local Historical Society. [2d ed.] Nashville, American Association for State and Local History, by Special Arrangement with the Conference of California Historical Societies, 1971. 62 p.

A very abbreviated set of directions for conducting an oral history interview by Alice Hoffman was cited earlier on page 4.

At Berkeley, the Regional Oral History Office, a department of the University of California Bancroft Library, has completed interviews with several labor personages, and the Institute of Industrial Relations has also conducted a few. A combined list of these was prepared and is listed below, together with references to descriptions of two other oral history programs. No effort has been made to

compile for this paper a list of descriptions of oral history programs.

Interviews on Labor History. Berkeley, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, January 1974. [8] p.

Shaughnessy, D.F. "Labor in the Oral History Collection of Columbia University," ~~Labour~~ History, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 177-195, Spring 1960.  
*Labor*

Skeels, Jack W. "Oral History Project on the Development of Unionism in the Automobile Industry," Labor History, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 209-212, Spring 1964.