

Collection Policy

Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

INTRODUCTION

Mission

The Walter P. Reuther Library collects and facilitates access to historical documentary evidence in order to inspire academic research, serve the information needs of the community, and build knowledge at Wayne State University.

Vision

The Reuther Library will be an archival leader, connecting users with necessary resources to understand the history and evolving landscape of the American Labor Movement, metropolitan and urban Detroit, and Wayne State University.

Values

Diversity: We embrace a plurality of viewpoints, collections, and archival audiences.

Engagement: We encourage access and collaboration in learning amongst our peers, colleagues, and researchers.

Professionalism: We promote a respectful environment, advocating both individual and team accountability and transparency.

Service: We deliver exemplary assistance to all of our stakeholders.

Social Responsibility: We provide egalitarian access to collections of both the marginalized and the empowered.

Purpose

The collection policy is intended to document collection strengths and provide collecting strategies for the Reuther Library based upon its mission, vision, and values. This is a general use document; criteria specific to certain collections may also apply. The Reuther Library will regularly review this policy.

History

In 1958 the Wayne State University Board of Governors established the Wayne State University Archives in recognition of the importance and permanent value of the University's official files, records, and documents. The Labor History Archives was

established in 1960, with the goal of collecting and preserving original source materials relating to the development of the American labor movement. In 1970, in recognition of the broadening scope of the archives' collections, the Board of Governors changed the name of the Labor History Archives to the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs. Later in 1970 the Board of Governors established the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs and the University Archives as a separate division reporting to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

In 1975, the Walter P. Reuther Library was constructed with funds given to Wayne State University by the United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), and through a supplementary grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. A later gift from the UAW funded the construction of the library's Leonard Woodcock Wing, completed in 1991.

SCOPE

Collecting Priorities

Acquisitions are primarily based on their ability to strengthen existing main subject areas of the Reuther's collections. Current collecting focuses drive development of these subject areas, although new related areas can at any time result from support of university teaching and research or in response to anticipated future scholarship needs. Careful consideration of space, staffing, and resources plays a crucial role in the selection process. Priorities are regularly reevaluated and modified as necessary.

Levels of Collecting

The Reuther Library seeks to assemble as complete a record as possible within its main subject areas. Preference is given to identified target institutions and associated individuals. Related organizations and/or individuals may be collected on a broader scale in an effort to create a comprehensive historical record. In such cases, material collected may be restricted to essential documentation such as reports, minutes, or publications.

Formats

The Reuther Library acquires primary source material of enduring historical or cultural value in all formats, including, but not limited to: digital files, photographs, audiovisual recordings, and paper documents. Publications are limited to those produced by the records creator or designated rare items.

Oral Histories

To enhance the historical record, the Reuther Library collects first-person narratives that supplement its document collections. Where none exist, the Reuther Library may conduct interviews with key individuals whose knowledge can significantly contribute to the history of an institution, event, or prominent individual documented in the Reuther Library's holdings.

SUBJECT AREAS

I. Labor

The largest labor archives in North America, the Reuther Library has holdings that document the labor movement throughout the United States with a focus on the 20th and 21st centuries. Collections include official records from labor unions and related organizations, the records of prominent union locals, particularly those in metropolitan and urban Detroit, and the personal papers of union leaders and rank and file members. The Reuther Library is the official repository for: American Federation of Teachers (AFT), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Society of Women Engineers (SWE), United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), and the United Farm Workers (UFW). Additionally, the Reuther Library collects labor broadly defined, as outlined below.

Primary Subject Focuses:

Labor Unions and Politics

- Labor laws and legislation
- Government Relations
- Political campaigns and contributions
- Healthcare

History of Labor Unions

- Organizational records
 - Building Employees
 - Industrial unions
 - Agricultural workers/Migrant labor
 - Public Employees
 - Trade Unions
 - Professional Unions
 - Service Employees
- Membership / Member experience
 - Dissidents
 - Rank and File
- Organizing
- Strikes
- Workers Rights
- International trade/affiliations
- Fine & Performing Arts
 - Songs
 - Theatre

Related Organizations and Social Movements

- African Americans and organized labor
- Women and organized labor

- Reform Movements
 - Affirmative Action
 - Civil Rights
 - Women's rights
 - Welfare
- Radical Social Movements
 - Communism
 - Socialism
 - Social Democrats
- Community Activism and Relations
 - Church/Religious
- Worker Education and Rights

II. Urban Affairs

The Reuther Library holds the records and papers of organizations and people, including prominent and working class members of the community, who have contributed to the historical development of metropolitan Detroit. Focusing on the 20th and 21st centuries, the records and papers of these organizations and people document individual and collective efforts focusing on the urbanization and empowerment of people adjusting to a rapidly changing urban landscape marked by population and demographic shifts, wars, social transformations, and economic/industrial fluctuations.

Primary Collecting Focuses:

Social Welfare

- Deindustrialization
- Poverty

Urban Development Issues

- Urban renewal and neighborhood dislocation
- Urban planning
- Housing
- Migration to and within metropolitan Detroit
- Urban farming/agriculture
- Food deserts
- Local transportation

Education

- Public education
- Educational activism and equity
- Alternative schools
- Charter school movement

Civil Rights and Social Activism

- Rights of African Americans
- Rights of Women

- Rights of LGBT community
- Social justice
- Human rights
- Affirmative action
- Anti war/pacifism
- Environmental justice

Politics

- Political activism
- Civic engagement

Healthcare

- Health and well-being efforts
- Communicable diseases
- Health advocacy
- Reproductive rights

Community life

- Neighborhood associations
- Changing nature and demographics of metropolitan Detroit neighborhoods
- Community centers
- Working class culture
- Fine and Performing Arts

III. University Archives

The Board of Governors of Wayne State University established the Wayne State University Archives in 1958 in recognition of the importance and permanent value of the University's official files, records, and documents. The University Archives functions as the repository for official University files and the historically significant professional and personal papers of faculty, staff members, and alumni. The Archives also collects Wayne State University publications and promotional materials, histories of colleges, schools, and departments of Wayne State University, student organization records, and the proceedings of the Board of Governors. With the cooperation of University faculty, staff, alumni, and interested individuals, the University Archives collects material documenting the growth and development of Wayne State University (organized as a Michigan state university in 1956) and its predecessor institutions, which include the Detroit College of Medicine (founded 1868), the Detroit Normal School (founded 1881), the Detroit Junior College (founded 1917), and Wayne University (organized 1933).

RATIONALE

Acquisition by Donation

The Reuther Library accepts archival materials both through transfer (from organizations for which the Reuther Library is the official repository) and donation. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to contact the Reuther Library regarding potential donation of material; materials falling within the scope presented in this document will be considered, with the final acquisition decision made by the Director or her designee. Collections transferred from other libraries and archival institutions will be subject to the same conditions and criteria as donations from other sources.

Gifts and Gifts In-Kind

In addition to materials, the Reuther Library will consider the provision of monetary support to administer and preserve offered collections. The donation of certain types of equipment, especially functioning audiovisual playback devices for obsolete media, is welcome. Gifts to the Reuther Library must be accompanied by a signed deed of gift acknowledging the full transfer of ownership to the Reuther Library.

Relationship with Other Institutions

The Reuther Library strives to maintain positive, cooperative and non-competitive relationships with other archival organizations and institutions. We recognize the established collecting policies of other repositories, especially where those policies are dictated by local, state, or federal statute. If presented with a potential donation outside of the Reuther Library's collecting scope, every reasonable effort will be made to refer the donor to other, more suitable, archives.

Collecting Responsibilities

The Reuther Library serves a diverse array of stakeholders. Its primary responsibilities are to aid research and scholarship of the Wayne State University (WSU) students, faculty, and staff as well as support the administration of WSU Departments, WSU Board of Governors, and the its donor institutions. In addition, the Reuther Library addresses the needs of the broader research community, including national and international scholars and the general public.

CRITERIA

Deed of Gift

The Reuther Library accepts donations accompanied by a legal document, preferably a deed of gift. The deed of gift governs copyright, access restrictions, and a clear title. The donor or his/her legal representative must represent that s/he is the holder of title of the materials to be donated. The donor acknowledges there is no conflict with or impediment to the transfer of ownership to the Reuther Library. Additionally, it is preferred that the donor transfer, convey, and assign all intellectual property rights, including copyright that

the donor controls over the materials to the Reuther Library. The Reuther Library prefers donations without access restrictions, but in the case of restrictions, the term limit shall not exceed 25 years. Donors must hold and transfer the full and complete title to the Reuther Library.

Stability

Incoming materials must be physically stable and free of any harmful items.

Expense

Expenses incurred during material acquisition are preferably paid in full or offset by the donor.

Space

The Reuther Library takes into consideration the total available digital and physical space when evaluating potential collections.

Deaccessioning

Collections are evaluated or reevaluated to maintain relevancy for the Reuther Library's stakeholders. The Reuther Library's responsibilities may necessitate the removal of parts of or entire collections, adhering to professional best practices and the Society of American Archivists' *Code of Ethics*. Materials that duplicate holdings, fall outside established collecting scopes, are non-historical, or otherwise do not fit the mission of the Reuther Library will be deaccessioned, subject to donor agreements and legal restrictions. Deaccessioning can mean: destruction, return to donor, or transfer to another repository.

In some cases, deaccessioned items may have monetary value without adding research value to the collection. The Reuther's staff will make every reasonable effort to return deaccessioned non-historical items to donors or their descendants.

If no appropriate owner can be identified, archivists will assess each item on a case-by-case basis using professional judgment to determine the best course of action. Items that post a potential threat to staff and researchers will be transferred to Wayne State University's Department of Public Safety or the Office of Risk Management, as appropriate. Other possibilities include:

- Transfer of materials that may enhance collections at other institutions
- Donation of materials with significant monetary value
- Destruction of items without research or monetary value