The papers of Harold A. Cranefield were placed in the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs in December of 1972 by his nephew, Paul F. Cranefield, and were opened for research in March of 1973.

Harold Cranefield was born in Madison, Wisconsin, on August 12, 1903. He earned his Ph.B. from the University of Wisconsin in 1926, and his law degree in 1929 from the same university. He became Assistant District Attorney of Racine, Wisconsin, upon his graduation, and a year later opened his own law office in Racine. By 1935 his practice was devoted almost entirely to representing the newly-organized labor unions.

With the passage of the Wagner Act, he was appointed Regional Attorney of the National Labor Relations Board in Chicago. In May of 1937, he was transferred to the Detroit Regional Office in the same capacity. In the period 1936-37, he was concurrently commissioned an Investigator for the La Follette Subcommittee on industrial espionage of labor organizations.

In December of 1948, he resigned from the N.L.R.B. to become Associate General Counsel of the United Auto Workers, becoming General Counsel in 1951. He resigned in 1963 to enter private practice again in the labor field. Mr. Cranefield died in November, 1969.

The papers of Mr. Cranefield reflect his activities with the N.L.R.B., the La Follette Subcommittee, the Legal Department of the United Auto Workers, and also his attitudes and work as a lawyer of liberal views in connection with unionization, civil and political liberties, labor law, and legal action against Communists.

Subjects covered in the collection are:

Unionization of the J.I. Case Company, Racine, 1934-35
Activities of the National Labor Relations Board in connection with Ford and General Motors, 1937-48
Investigations of the La Follette Subcommittee dealing with industrial espionage in the automobile industry, 1936-37
The Victor and Walter Reuther shootings, 1948
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Correspondence, legal briefs, and clippings relating to Mr. Cranefield's private practice in Racine, Wisconsin, especially his representation of the strikers at the J.I. Case Company (employees here later forming U.A.W. Local 180).

Series II, Box 1. National Labor Relations Board.

Correspondence and files of Mr. Cranefield's office as Regional Attorney with the National Labor Relations Board in Chicago and Detroit. Included are files regarding unfair labor practice cases against Ford and General Motors, and some material on industrial espionage within Timkin Axle Company.

Series III, Boxes 1 and 2. La Follette Subcommittee.

Correspondence and office files detailing Mr. Cranefield's investigations of Pinkerton's Detroit Office, Chrysler Corporation, and General Motors for the La Follette Subcommittee.

Series IV, Box 2. Legal Department, United Auto Workers.

Office files and memoranda of Mr. Cranefield as General Counsel of the U.A.W. Documents here include police reports and union files relating to the shootings of Victor and Walter Reuther in 1948.

Series V, Box 2. Speeches, articles, speech notes.

This series contains articles, speeches, and notes for speeches on a variety of subjects, from the provisions and intent of the National Labor Relations Act, labor law, and foreign aid to Spain, to wartime price controls and union strike tactics.

Series VI, Boxes 3 and 4. Miscellanea.

Personal correspondence, briefs, clippings, and a number of miscellaneous items relating to Mr. Cranefield's interest in the field of civil and political liberties, the court-martial of a
First World War conscientious objector, clemency appeals of persons imprisoned under the Smith Act, the National Lawyers Guild, the Committee to Secure Justice for Morton Sobell, and the American Civil Liberties Union, among others.

Non-manuscript materials.

Some 59 photographs, the majority portraying early unionization attempts at Ford Motor Company, have been placed in the Archives' Audio-Visual Collections.

Series I Box 1
Law practice, Racine.

Correspondence, legal briefs, and clippings relative to Mr. Cranefield's private law practice in Racine, 1932-35. Some materials deal with strikes at the J.I. Case Company. Mr. Cranefield was legal counsel for the strikers. Mr. Cranefield's defense of Samuel Herman show his early interest in political liberty. Material is arranged chronologically within the files.

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1. General correspondence and legal briefs, 1932-35.
3. Clippings, 1934-35.

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Office files, telegrams, and correspondence of Mr. Cranefield's office as Regional Attorney of the National Labor Relations Board. This material includes separate files on Ford and General Motors cases before the Board in the 1940's and an investigation of espionage at Timkin Axle Company in 1941. Files on individual corporations follow the general file, and material is arranged chronologically within the files.

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Legal Department, U.A.W.

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Speeches, speech notes, and articles. The majority and most informative are those dealing with the National Labor Relations Act, although Mr. Cranefield's remarks on a number of subjects are included. Materials are arranged alphabetically by subject matter.

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