

THE CATHERINE GELLES COLLECTION

Papers, 1937-1981  
(Predominantly, 1937-1971)

4.5 linear feet

Accession Number 1253  
L. C. Number MS

The papers of Catherine "Babe" Gelles were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in December of 1985 by Mr. Gelles and were opened for research in November of 1988.

Catherine Gelles was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, on December 25, 1907. Her family moved to Denver, Colorado, in 1913, where she attended high school and business college. She came to Detroit in 1926 where she went to work at Bohn Aluminum. After her marriage to co-worker Albert Gelles she left Bohn and became a charter member of Women's Auxiliary 15, serving as president for 3 years. She left Auxiliary 15 to go to her husband's local, forming an auxiliary and serving as its first president. She was secretary treasurer of the UAW Auxiliaries (1939-47), vice president of the CIO National Auxiliaries (1939-1949), and, in 1949 became a full-time international representative with the UAW Women's Auxiliaries Department under the direction of Emil Mazey. Upon her retirement in 1971 the UAW Women's Auxiliaries were transferred to the Women's Department of the UAW. Mrs. Gelles died on October 6, 1985.

The papers of Mrs. Gelles reflect her work with the UAW Women's Auxiliaries and, to a lesser degree, her involvement in community activities and some aspects of her personal life.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Battle of the Overpass

War Effort

Ford Rouge Plant Organizing

Women on Civil Rights

Among the important correspondents are:

George F. Addes

John L. Lewis

James E. Frazer

Eleanor Roosevelt

Hubert Humphrey

G. Mennen Williams

An index to subjects and correspondents will be found on page 6.

Contents

4 manuscript boxes  
4 oversized boxes

Series I, General Files, 1937-1981, Boxes 1-2:

Correspondence, minutes, reports, speeches and other materials relating to the activities of the UAW Women's Auxiliaries. Some files relate to the organizing of the Ford Rouge Plant.

Series II, Conference Material, 1937-1967, Boxes 3-4:

Minutes, proceedings and programs covering district and local conventions International Conventions and National Conferences.

Series III, Oversize Material, 1937-1970, Boxes 5-8:

Clippings, scrapbooks and other material recording important events in the history of the UAW Women's Auxiliaries.

Non-manuscript Material:

Numerous photographs relating to strike activity and UAW Women's Auxiliaries and some 3D items have been placed in the Archives Audio Visual Collection. Several volumes of UAW Women's Auxiliary newsletters and other publications received with this collection are available in the Archives Library.

Series I  
General Files, 1937-1981  
Boxes 1-2

Correspondence, minutes, reports, speeches and other items relating to the activities and concerns of the UAW Women's Auxiliaries. Several files contain materials generated by the AFL-CIO National Auxiliary Executive Council. Some files relate to the organizing of the Ford Rouge Plant. There are also radio broadcast materials, including speeches and scripts. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.

Box 1

1. Announcements, 1945-70
2. Auxiliary Organizing; guidelines, merger, n.d.
3. Auxiliary #314; reports and records, 1954-62
4. Canadian Auxiliaries; histories, reports, correspondence, programs, 1945-75
5. Certificates and Citations, 1942-79
- 6-10. Correspondence, 1939-78
- 11-16. Executive Council; minutes, 1959-65
- 17-18. Executive Council; reports, 1961-63
19. Ford Organizing; correspondence and printed material, 1940-41
20. Ford Organizing; history and reports, 1941-66
21. Printed Material; booklets, 1943-81
22. Printed Material; leaflets, flyers, programs, 1937-70

Box 2

- 1-3. Printed Material; Michigan State Auxiliary News, 1962-67
4. Printed Material; newsletters, 1937-55
5. Printed Material; Women in Auto Newsletters, 1937-39
- 6-7. Printed Material; Women's Auxiliary News, 1941-55
- 8-9. Radio Broadcast Material, 1941-55
- 10-13. Reports, 1944-71
14. Speeches, 1941-59
15. Women on Civil Rights Conference, 9 Jul 1963

Series II  
Conference Material, 1937-1967  
Boxes 3-4

Minutes of the 4th, 6th, 7th and 8th conferences of the International UAW-CIO Women's Auxiliary, minutes of the 1st and 3rd National Conferences, and a few minutes of district and local conferences. There are some proceedings and programs for conferences and conventions. Files are arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Box 3

- 1. Minutes; district and local conferences, 1937-40
- 2-6. Minutes; 4th International Conference, 1942
- 7-15. Minutes; 6th International Conference, 1944
- 16-22. Minutes; 7th International Conference, 1946

Box 4

- 1-4. Minutes; 7th International Conference, 1946
- 5-16. Minutes; 8th International Conference, 1947
- 17. Minutes; 1st National Conference, 1939
- 18-19. Minutes; 3rd National Conference, 1941
- 20. Proceedings, 1937 and 1941
- 21. Proceedings, 14th National CIO Auxiliary Convention, 1955
- 22. Programs; 1940-67

Series III  
Oversize Material  
Boxes 5-8

Clippings and scrapbooks recording important events in the history of women's auxiliaries. Also included are a published volume entitled Year documenting important events of 1949 and a book of autographs collected in 1937 by Mrs. Gelles. Material is primarily arranged alphabetically by title and type, and secondarily by size of item.

Box 5

1. News clippings, 1937-40

Box 6

1. Autograph Book, 1937
2. Scrapbook, 1941-42
3. Scrapbook, 1945-49
4. Year, 1949

Box 7

1. Certificates and Citations, 1945-64
2. Scrapbook, 1953-55
3. Scrapbook, 1960-67

Box 8

1. Scrapbook, 1943-44
2. Scrapbook, 1961

Index to Subjects and Correspondents  
(correspondence is indicated by an asterisk)

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