

**UAW Office of the President: R. J. Thomas  
Collection**

**Papers, 1938-1964  
(Predominantly, 1940-1947)**

**17 linear feet  
8 scrapbooks**

Accession Number 115  
LC Number MS 66-1526

The papers of R. J. (Rolland Jay) Thomas were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in August of 1964, November of 1967 and December of 1972. Each part of this collection was opened for research one year after it was deposited. The finding aid was rewritten in June, 1980.

Roland J. Thomas was born in East Palestine, Ohio on June 9, 1900. He grew up in eastern Ohio and attended Wooster College for two years. The need to help support his family caused him to leave college and go to work. In 1923 he moved to Detroit, where he worked in a number of automobile plants.

He became active in efforts to organize the automobile industry and was the president of Chrysler Local 7 when it affiliated with the UAW in 1936. He was a leader of the 1937 Chrysler sit-down strike and that same year was elected a vice president of the UAW. He assumed the presidency in 1938 after the president, Homer Martin, was ousted.

He was president until 1946 and during this period, the UAW developed into a dynamic, stable union. He lost the presidency to Walter Reuther in 1946, but was elected first vice president. However, he lost **that office** in the election the following year. In 1947 he was named assistant to CIO president, Philip Murray, and with the merger of the AFL and CIO in 1955, he served under George Meany until his retirement in 1964 due to ill health.

He was married to Mildred Wettergren on August 7, 1937 and they had one child, Frank. R. J. Thomas died in Muskegon, Michigan on **April 18, 1967**.

These papers mainly concern his work as president and vice president of the UAW and his activities as part of the war effort.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Anti-Communism  
Fair employment practices  
Housing  
Labor legislation  
Organizing  
Postwar reconversion  
Strikes: Allis-Chalmers (1947)  
Chrysler sit-down (1937)  
General Motors (1945)  
UAW factionalism - 1938 and 1946  
World trade union movement

World War II - UAW policies

An index to specific subjects may be found on page 15

**Among the important correspondents are:**

Addes, George	LaGuardia, Fiorello H.
Baldwin, Roger	Lamotte, Leo
Barkley, Alben W.	Leonard, Richard T.
Berenson, Anna	Livingston, John
Bevan, Edgar Cyril	Llewellyn, Percy
Burt, George	Martin, Homer
Carey, James B.	Mattson, Joseph
Conder, Robert W.	Mazey, Emil
Crockett, George W.	McAulay, William
Cushman, Edward L.	Mead, James M.
Doll, Tracy	Miley, Paul E.
Frankenstein, Richard	Mortimer, Wyndham
Germer, Adolph	Murphy, Frank
Haywood, Allan S.	Murray, Philip
Hopkins, Barney	Perkins, Francis
Jeffrey, Mildred	Reuther, Victor
King, H. O.	Reuther, Walter
	Scholle, August
	Schwellenbach, L. B.
	Sugar, Maurice

An index to correspondents in Part 3 of this collection (Boxes 28-34) **may be found on page 14.**

## Contents

34 manuscript boxes  
8 scrapbooks

### Part I

**Series I, UAW Executive Board Minutes and Reports**, 1940-1947, Boxes 1-7:

Executive Board Minutes and Reports to the Board. Each set of minutes contains a detailed list of contents. Subject indexes are available for some years (See folders 1:19, 2:9, and 3:4)

**Series II, R.J. Thomas Office Files**, 1938-1964, Boxes 8-14, 8

Scrapbooks:

Correspondence, reports, clippings, and other papers relating to his work as president and vice president of the UAW. For other similar material, see Series III and IV. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings on the UAW and Thomas.

### Part II

**Series III, R.J. Thomas Office Files**, 1942-1946; Boxes 15-27:

Correspondence, reports, clippings and other papers dealing with his work as president of the UAW.

### Part III

**Series IV, R. J. Thomas Office Files**, 1944-1947; Boxes 28-34:

Correspondence, reports, clippings, and other papers relating to his work as president and vice president of the UAW and as chairman of the CIO Committee on Housing and Community Development.

### **Non-manuscript material:**

Photographs, awards, badges, gavels, flag, plaque, original sketch of R. J. Thomas, cartoons and other items **have been** transferred to the Archives Audiovisual Collections.

## Part 1

### Series I UAW Executive Board Minutes and Reports, 1940-1947 Boxes 1-7

Consists of the minutes of the UAW International Executive Board and reports to the board from March, 1940 through September, 1947. They are arranged chronologically. There are also bound proceedings for September, 1947. Each set of minutes contains a detailed list of contents. Subject **indexes are** available for some years (see folders 1:19, 2:9, and 3:4).

#### **Box I**

1. Reports to March, 1940 meeting
2. Executive Board Minutes, April, 1940
3. June, 1940
4. July, 1940
5. August, 1940
6. September 13-19, 1940
7. October 7-8, 1940
8. December 16-20, .1-940
9. Reports to December 16-20, 1940 meeting
10. Executive Board Minutes, February 7, 1941
11. March 17-21, 1941
12. Reports to March 17-21, 1941 meeting
13. Executive Board Minutes, April 27, 1941
14. May 17-21, 1941
15. Reports to July 1941 meeting
16. Executive Board Minutes, September 15-23, 1941
17. December 8-14, 1941
18. Reports to December 8-14, 1941 meeting
19. General Index - August 16, 1941 to July 30, 1942
20. Executive Board Minutes, January 22-23, 1942
21. March 15-22, 1942
22. March 28, 1942

#### **Box 2**

1. Executive Board Minutes, May 11, 1942
2. June 7-9, 1942
3. July 30, 1942
4. August 9, 1942
5. August 24-31, 1942
6. November 7, 1942
7. November 13, 1942
8. Reports to December 7, 1942 meeting
9. General Index, August 9, 1942 to October 2, 1943
10. Executive Board Minutes, January 21, 1943
11. March 1-10, 1943
12. April 19-21, 1943
13. June 7-11, 1943
14. September 8-13, 1943

#### **Box 3**

1. Executive Board Minutes, September 30 to October 2, 1943
2. October 12, 1943
3. October 22-30, 1943
4. General Index - October 12, 1943 to September 8, 1944
5. Executive Board Minutes, January 7, 1944
6. February 7-16, 1944
7. February 27, 1944
8. March 30-31, 1944
9. May 1-12, 1944
10. Reports to May 1-12, 1944 meeting
11. Executive Board Minutes, July 31-August 5, 1944
12. September 7-8, 1944
13. September 18, 1944

**Box 4**

1. Executive Board Minutes, October 1-6, 1944
2. November 9-10, 1944
3. November 28-30, 1944
4. January 22-29, 1945
5. February 8-10, 1945
6. March 5-8, 1945
7. March 19, 1945
8. April 16-22, 1945
9. May 10, 1945
10. May 23-24, 1945
11. Reports to May 23-24, 1945 meeting
12. Executive Board Minutes, June 4-9, 1945
13. July 16-23, 1945
14. Reports to July 16-23, 1945 meeting
15. Executive Board Minutes, August 1, 1945

**Box 5**

1. Executive Board Minutes, September 10-18, 1945
2. November 7-12, 1945
3. November 26-28, 1945
4. January 12-22, 1946
5. February 22-24, 1946
6. March 20-22, 1946
7. March 30, 1946
8. April 16-26, 1946
9. Reports to April 16-26, 1946 meeting
10. Executive Board Minutes, June 4-5, 1946

**Box 6**

1. Executive Board Minutes, August 5-18, 1946
2. Reports to August 5-18, 1946 meeting
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4. December 9-18, 1946
5. Reports to December 9-18, 1946 meeting
6. Executive Board Minutes, March 8, 1947
7. March 17-26, 1947

**Box 7**

1. Reports to March 17-26, 1947 meeting

2. Executive Board Minutes, April 15, 1947
3. April 22-28, 1947
4. September 8-12, 1947
5. Reports to the Executive Board, n.d.  
Proceedings September 8-12, 1947 (Bound Volume)

**Series II**  
**R.J. Thomas Office Files, 1938-1964**  
**Boxes 8-14**  
**8 Scrapbooks**

Correspondence, radio scripts, legal papers, reports, clippings, and a variety of other items. Files are arranged chronologically. These files mainly concern his work as president and vice president of the UAW. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings regarding the UAW and R. J. Thomas.

**Box 8**

1. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1938
2. 1939
3. 1939 - Radio Reports
4. Homer Martin Controversy, 1939
5. Maurice Sugar - Legal Matters, January - August, 1939
6. August - December, 1939
7. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1940
8. 1940 - Radio Reports

**Box 9**

1. Maurice Sugar - Legal Matters, January June, 1940
2. July - December, 1940
3. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1941
4. Contact with Ford Motor Company, 1941
5. 1941 - Radio Reports & Speeches
6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1942
7. 1943
8. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1944
9. West Coast Investigation, 1944
10. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1945
11. General Motors Dispute, 1-1945-1946

**Box 10**

1. 1945 - GM Strike - Correspondence from Individuals
2. Correspondence from Organizations and Unions
3. Telegrams
4. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946
5. Noble Combs, 1946
6. Walter Reuther - Victory Ball, 1946
7. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1947
- 8-9. 1947 Allis-Chalmers Strike
10. UAW -CIO FE-CIO Merger Agreement, 1947

**Box 11**

1. 1947 Department Staff
2. Airline Mechanics Department, 1947
3. Competitive Shop Department, 1946-1947
4. Education Department, 1946-1947
5. Taft-Hartley Act, 1947
6. 1947 - Wage Report
7. Republic Brass Workers, 1947
8. 1947 - Radio Report - Reuther

9. NAM Ditty - Undated
10. Mailing List on Reuther Letters, n.d.
11. Radio Reports, n.d.
12. R.J. Thomas - Notes on Reuther's views during Thomas' **battle against Reuther**, 1946
13. R.J. Thomas - Biographical Clippings
14. Personal Correspondence, 1-957-1964
15. Labor Programs and Testimonials
16. Political Convention Mementos and Government I.D.fs
17. Travel Mementos
18. Union Certificates - Membership Cards

**Box 12** President's National Labor-Management Conference, 1945

- 1-3. General Reports
4. Committee I Reports
5.           II
6.           III
7.           IV
8.           V
9.           VI
10. Executive Committee Reports
11. Rules Committee Reports
12. Orders of the Day
13. Press Conference Reports
14. Miscellaneous Correspondence
15.           Reports

**Box 13** World Federation of Trade Unions

1. WFTU - Miscellaneous Correspondence and Documents
- 2-3.       Miscellaneous Reports
4.        Published Materials

**Box 14**

- 1-4. Miscellaneous Clippings
5. Press Releases

**Scrapbooks of Clippings**

- Vol.1. 1939-1940
2. 1941
3. 1943 (some 1947)
4. 1943-1944
5. 1944
6. 1945
7. 1946
8. 1938-1939

## Part 2

### Series III R.J. Thomas Office Files, 1942-1946 Boxes 15-27

Correspondence, reports, clippings, and other papers. Files are arranged alphabetically by correspondent or subject for the letters A to Mc only. **The rest of the files are missing.** This series mainly deals with his work as president of the UAW.

#### **Box 15**

1-12. "A" Miscellaneous Correspondence 3/4/46 thru 9/19/44  
13-22. Addes, George, International Secretary-Treasurer 3/11/46 thru 1/8/44

#### **Box 16**

1-32. Addes, George, Payroll Correspondence 3/26/46 thru 9/5/44

#### **Box 17**

1-4. Agenda, Board and Misc. Correspondence 1/5/46 thru 3/1/43  
5-6. Airframe Panel II - 8/3/45 thru 11/17/43  
7. American Arbitration Association - 11/20/45 thru 9/26/44  
8-16. American Council on Race Relations - 3/11/46 thru 9/27/44  
17. AFL Teamsters Agreement - 8/3/45 thru 6/28/45  
18-20. American Soviet Friendship Society - 1/31/46 thru 9/27/44  
21-23. Americans United for World Organization - 11/18/45 thru 9/16/44  
24. Apprenticeship Committee - 10/17/45 thru 12/6/43  
25. Army Air Force Col. George E. Strong - 12/28/44 thru 9/28/44  
26-28. Atwood, Arnold, Director, Region 3 - 3/5/46 thru 9/27/44

#### **Box 18**

1-12. "B" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/27/46 thru 9/11/44  
13. Ball-Burton-Hatch Bill - 1.1/8/45 thru 11/5/45  
14. Bishop, Melvin, Regional Director, Region 1 - 3/11/46 thru 9/19/44  
15. Board Members, Regional Directors, etc. - 1946  
16. Bretton Woods  
17. Bridges, Harry, Victory Committee - 3/29/45 thru 9/4/44  
18. Broadcasting, FM License - 3//27/46 thru 2/19/44  
19. Burt, George, Director, Region 7 - 2/13/46 thru 10/5/44

#### **Box 19**

1-12. "C" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/30/46 thru 8/23/44  
13-15. Carbray, James, Int'l Rep. Region 6 - 8/13/45 thru 10/27/43  
16. Cascaden, Gordon - 10/16/45 thru 4/13/45  
17-18. Child Care 8/8/45 - 10/29/43  
19-20. Chrysler Corporation - 12/11/45 thru 9/23/44  
21. Clippings, Newspaper: St. Louis Star - Times - May 1943  
22. Congress of International Representatives - 1/23~45 thru 9/21/44

**Box 20**

- 1-5. Congressional Pressure - 1-2/17/45 thru 1/3/43
- 6-10. Connery, David, P.R. Director - 3/12/46 thru 4/17/43
11. Constitution, United Consumers of America
- 12-13. Convention, UAW: 1944
- 14-19. Crank Letters - 3/15/46 thru 4/12/42
20. Crank Letters - Undetermined Dates
- 21-25. Crank Post Cards - 1946 - 1942

**Box 21**

1. Credential Waiver Responsibility - 8/7/45 thru 2/25/45
- 2-10. Crockett, George Jr. - Fair Practice Committee - 3/15/46 thru **8/16/44**
- 11-19. "D" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/14/46 thru 9/23/44
20. Detroit, City of; Correspondence - 10/11/45 thru 2/5/45
- 21-26. Draft Deferments Correspondence - 10/30/45 thru 11/24/43

**Box 22**

- 1-5. "E" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/5/46 thru 9/28/44
6. Economic Club of Detroit - 5/21/45 thru 11/27/44
7. Elections, Public - 11/2/44 thru 10/30/44
- 8-9. European Trip, World Trade Union Conference - 8/18/45 thru **3/23/44**
- 10-16. "F" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 4/2/46 thru 9/11/44
- 17-18. Fair Employment Practice' Committee - 1/30/46 thru 9/6/44
19. Food for Freedom - 3/31/45 thru 2/20/45
- 20-21. Forbes, Kenneth, Director, Region 1D - 3/5/46 thru 9/21/44

**Box 23**

- 1-2. Ford Motor Company, Appeal Board - 6/6/45 thru 9/26/44
3. Ford National Council Meeting - 5/23/45 thru 5/21/45
4. Foreign Born, American Committee for the Protection of - 2/16/45
5. Foreman's Association - 11/1/45
6. Frankenstein, Richard T. - 2/12/46 thru 10/4/44
- 7-11. "G" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/18/46 thru 9/11/44
- 12-13. Gerber, Martin, Director Region 9 - 2/20/46 thru 10/11/44
14. German Associations - 3/13/45 thru 12/26/44
15. Goggi, Paul, International Rep. - 5/16/44 thru 5/2/44
- 16-17. Gosser, Richard - Director 2B - 3/14/46 thru 10/2/44

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- 1-8. "H" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/18/46 thru 6/7/44
- 9-14. Housing Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/4/46 thru 11/25/44

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- 1-3. Housing, Nicholas, William Dept. Director - 3/21/46 thru **10/18/44**
- 4-7. Housing, Outgoing Correspondence - 2/18/46 thru 9/29/44
8. Housing, UAW Publications - 6/29/45 thru 5/1/45
- 9-10. "I" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 12/24/45 thru 9/11/44
- 11-12. Incoming Mail, Miscellaneous - 1/24/46 thru 10/31/44

13-15. "J" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/22/46 thru 9/21/44

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1-4. Jewish Organizations - 3/30/46 thru 9/11/44

5. Job Applicants - 12/10/45 thru 2/21/45

6. Joint Anti-Fascist Committee - 8/13/45

13. Kaiser-Frazer Corporation - 3/8/46 thru 11/6/45

14-15. Kerrigan, Charles, Director Region 9A - 2/19/46 thru  
10/16/44

16. Kilgore, Harley, U.S. Senator - 1/31/46 thru 10/7/43

17. Kraus, Dr. - 4/2/45

**Box 27**

1-7. "L" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 3/15/46 thru 9/21/44

8-10. Labor Department, U.S. - 3/19/46 thru 1/29/44

11. Lamotte, Leo, Co-Director Region 1 - 9/6/44 thru 2/10/43

12. Land Maritime Service - 10/27/45 thru 10/25/45

13. Leonard, Richard, Director Nat'l Ford Dept. - 12/4/45 thru  
11/12/43

14. Llewellyn, Percy, Co-Director Region 1 - 3/7/46 thru 2/23/44

15-19. Livingston, John, Director Region 5 - 2/23/46 thru 10/20/43

20-25. "Mc" Miscellaneous Correspondence - 11/6/45 thru 4/26/43

26-27. McAulay, William Director Region 1B - 3/7/46 thru 10/19/44

### Part 3

Series IV  
R.J. Thomas Office Files, 1944-1947  
Boxes 28-34

Correspondence, reports, clippings, and other papers arranged alphabetically by correspondent or subject for the letter A to Mu only. This material is mainly related to his work as president and vice president of the UAW, but there is also some material concerning his work as chairman of the CIO Committee on Housing and Community Development.

#### **Box 28**

1. "A" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
- 2-4. Addes, George F. - Correspondence, 1946-1947
- 5-8. Addes, George F. - Mimeographs, April, 1946 - November 1947
9. Addes, George F. - Financial Report, August 5, 1946
10. Addes, George F. - Quarterly Financial Report, March 17, 1947
11. Aircraft Conference - Eastern Airframe Plants, May 16-17, 1947
12. American Arbitration Association, 1946-1947
13. American Council on Race Relations - Minutes, 1946-1947
- 1-4-15. American Council on Race Relations, 1946-1947
16. American Council on Race Relations - Program and Organization, 3/7/47
17. American Soviet Friendship, National Council of, 1946-1947
18. American Youth for Democracy, 1946-1947
19. Americans United for World Government, 1947
20. *Ammunition*, 1946
- 21-22. Appeal Cases, 1946-1947
23. Atwood, Arnold - Correspondence, 1946-1947

#### **Box 29**

- 1-4. "B" Miscellaneous Correspondence, May 1946 - June, 1947
5. Broadcasting, 1946-1947
6. Burt, George - Correspondence, 1946-1947
- 7-8. "C" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
9. Callahan Act, Committee to Repeal, 1947
10. Carey, James B. - Correspondence, 1946-1947
11. Chrysler Corporation - Agreement with UAW-CIO, April 26, 1947
12. Chrysler Department, National, 1946
- 13-16. C.I.O. Miscellaneous Correspondence, April 1946-1947
17. Circulation Department, 1946-1947
18. Civil Rights Congress, 1947
19. Civilian Production Administration, 1946
20. Committees, List of, April 29, 1946

#### **Box 30**

- 1-2. Competitive Shop Department - Correspondence, April, 1946 - August, 1947
3. Competitive Shop Department - Quarterly Reports, December, 1946 - March, 1947
4. Competitive Shop Department - Foundry Survey, 1946
5. Congress - Correspondence, 1946-1947
7. Conscripton, 1946-1947

8. Construction Industry - Report of Conference of General Committee on Apprenticeship, June, 1946
9. Consumer - Cooperative Committee, 1947
10. Cowan, Nathan E. - Correspondence, 1946
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1. Ford Appeals Board, April, 1946 - August, 1947
7. Ford Department, National, May, 1946 - December, 1947
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9. Furniture Workers-United Furniture Workers of America, 1946
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3. Germany, Office of Military Government for, 1946
4. Gosser, Richard - Correspondence, 1946-1947
6. "H" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
7. Haywood, Allan S. - Correspondence, 1946-1947
8. Health Institute, UAW-CIO, 1946-1947
9. Hillman, Sidney - Political Action Committee, 1946
0. Houdaille-Hershey Corporation, 1946-1947
4. Housing - Correspondence, March-November, 1946

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- 1-11. Housing - Correspondence, December, 1946-December, 1947
- 12-13. Housing Reports, 1946-1947**
14. "I" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
15. Industrial Union Councils, 1946-1947
16. Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, 1946-1947
17. Insurance - Correspondence, 1944-1945
18. Insurance - Reports on Group Insurance, 1945
19. Insurance - Report of UAW-CIO Social Security Committee, 1945

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2. International Harvester Drive, 1947
3. International Longshoreman's and Warehousemen's Union, 1947
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5. International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, 1947

6. "J" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
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- 11-14. "K" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
- 15-16. "L" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
17. Labor, U.S. Department of', 1946-1947
18. Legislative Department, UAW-CIO - Correspondence, Reports, 1947
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20. Legislative Department, UAW-CIO - Reports on National Labor Relations Board, 1946-1947
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- 1-3. "M" Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1946-1947
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- 5-7. Mattson, Joseph - Correspondence, 1946-1947
8. Mattson, Joseph - "Report: to the Region," May 4, 1947, February 9, 1947
9. Mazey, Emil - Correspondence, 1946-1947
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11. McAulay, William - Correspondence, 1947
12. Mead, Senator James M. - Senate War Investigating Committee, 1946
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