

Walter P.
Reuther
 L i b r a r y

Archives of Labor and
 Urban Affairs

University Archives

Fall 1998



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Huelga by Nora Mendoza

*From the permanent collection of the Walter P. Reuther Library
 Purchased in memory of Bill Myers Goode by his family and friends*

The United Farm Workers of America is the most influential farm-labor union in America. Founded in southern California, in the small San Joaquin Valley agricultural town of Delano in 1962, and led by Cesar Chavez, Arturo Rodriguez, Dolores Huerta and others, the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) has ceaselessly battled some of the most powerful forces in the agribusiness industry in an attempt to organize farm laborers, raise wages and improve working conditions.

To commemorate the struggles and triumphs of the UFW, the Walter P. Reuther Library and the Michigan Humanities Council are pleased to announce the opening of *La Causa: A History of the United Farm Workers Union* in the Library's exhibit gallery on September 24,

1998. Partially funded by the Michigan Humanities Council, *La Causa* focuses on the formation and rise of the UFW, the life of its leader, Cesar Estrada Chavez, and the people of the UFW.

The historical records of the UFW have been deposited at the Archives for over thirty years. Chavez believed that the preservation



TAMING THE AGRIBUSINESS GIANT

of union records was essential for historians, journalists and other researchers as well as

unionists of present and future. The UFW's historical legacy is still an active blueprint for organizing and collective bargaining in the 1990s.

Cesar Chavez, first president of the UFW and internationally respected spokesman for Chicano and Latino Americans, came from humble beginnings, born in 1927 into a poor



Wayne State University
 College of Urban, Labor and
 Metropolitan Affairs

Continued on page 4

New Collections

American Federation of Teachers Oral History Project

The Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs recently opened a collection of interviews with seventeen founders of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). These oral histories are an important addition to the current 670 linear feet of textual records.

Sponsored by the AFT, these interviews were conducted between 1985 and 1987 by oral historian Ruth Epstein. Topics discussed include the rise of the militant teacher, early collective bargaining, teacher strikes, AFT politics, and civil rights. The collection also contains four interviews with participants in the first organized teacher's strike in America done by the History of Minnesota Labor Project in 1974. Among the important interviewees are:

Charles Cogan
Carl Megel
Mary Ellen Riordan
David Selden
William Simmons
Rebecca Simonson

Dan Golodner

Boys Republic

Boys Republic started out in 1890 as a halfway house for prisoners discharged from Michigan correctional institutions. Over the next half-century, under the guidance of Homer Lane and his successors, Boys Republic developed one of the country's most innovative programs for treating neglected and delinquent boys. During the 1960s it changed from a self-governing family and work-training facility for wards of the court to a residential, clinically-oriented treatment center for boys with more serious emotional disturbances. The records of Boys Republic (6.25 linear feet) chronicle this story through the 1970s in administrative files, board and executive



committee meeting minutes, financial records and published and unpublished accounts of the growth and operation of the Republic.

Nature study, part of the Boys Republic education program

Margaret Raucher

UFW Presidential Papers: Part II

The United Farm Workers Union (UFW) Presidential Papers: Part II Collection was recently opened. Much like Part I, this 49 linear foot collection focuses upon Cesar Chavez's tenure as president of the UFW. The collection has material on such subjects as The Bracero Program, immigration, the role of women in the union, use of pesticides, The Great Delano Grape Strike, and pre-UFW farm labor organizing. It also includes transcripts from many of Cesar's speeches, 1966 to 1983.

Kathy Schmeling

Cesar Chavez organizing farm workers, 1970s



Olga Madar

"There was no union at the [Chrysler] plant then and the fact that they would hire me when other workers were being laid off — just because I could play softball — was incredible. It was my first indication that a union was badly needed."

Olga Madar was one of labor's woman pioneers. Active in UAW and national organizations until her death in 1996, Madar championed women's issues as well as social justice for all.

Madar was born in 1915, one of her immigrant parents' thirteen children. The family moved in 1930 to the Detroit area where she graduated from the city's Northeastern High School, and then earned a degree from Michigan State Normal College (later renamed Eastern Michigan University).

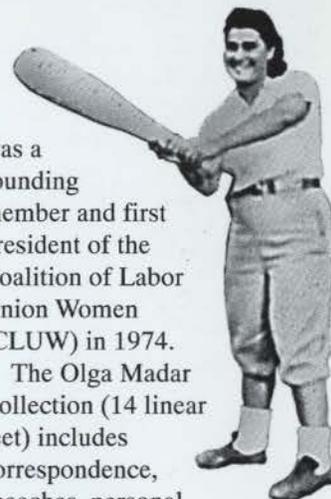
During World War II, Madar worked at Henry Ford's Willow Run Bomber Plant and joined UAW Local 50, where she began her career as a labor

unionist. She eventually reached levels of involvement in the UAW unprecedented for women. During her career, Madar was a director of UAW departments such as Recreation, Conservation and Resource Development, and Consumer Affairs, as well as the service section of the Technical, Office, and Professional Department. In 1966, she was elected to the UAW International Executive Board and became a UAW vice president in 1970. In both cases, Madar was the first woman elected to those offices.

Madar was also active in local and national organizations. She was a Detroit Parks and Recreation commissioner, 1958-1966. Most important, Madar

was a founding member and first president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) in 1974.

The Olga Madar Collection (14 linear feet) includes correspondence, speeches, personal papers, subject files on various issues, and some memorabilia. A collection of photos complements the manuscript holdings.



Curt Hansen

Wade H. McCree, Jr.

The papers of Wade H. McCree, Jr. (75 linear feet) span his career from his appointment to the Wayne County Circuit Court in 1954, the first African American to sit on a court of record in Michigan, until his death in 1987, while a member of the law faculty at the University of Michigan. The majority of the material documents his years on the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati (1966-1977) and as U.S. Solicitor General during the Carter administration. The collection contains personal and professional correspondence, reports, speeches, voluminous case files, meeting minutes, publications and other material relating to Judge McCree's service on the bench, as the federal government's chief lawyer and his involvement with numerous civic, professional and charitable organizations. Of particular interest are files on school desegregation cases in Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee and the Bakke reverse discrimination case, which he argued before the Supreme Court.

U.S. Solicitor General Wade McCree leaving the Supreme Court



Margaret Raucher



SEIU Executive Office Files: David Sullivan

David Sullivan, the sixth president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), was one of the most successful union leaders in America during the 1960s. Under his leadership (1960-1971), SEIU improved union benefits, organized 200,000 additional members, enhanced its relationship to the AFL-CIO and engaged in national politics.

A native of Ireland, Sullivan immigrated to New York City in 1925. There, he became an elevator operator and later a founding member of SEIU's Local 32B. Rapidly ascending the ranks of the local's leadership, Sullivan assumed its

presidency in 1941 before attaining the rank of international president.

Sullivan believed SEIU should be politically engaged at the highest levels. In this regard, his administration moved the union's international headquarters from Chicago to Washington, D.C. in 1963. Sullivan soon became involved in national politics. He developed a Civil Rights Department within SEIU, chaired the Labor Advisory Committee for the federal government's Office of Economic Opportunity, and successfully lobbied for legislation beneficial to SEIU members.

The SEIU Executive Office Files: David Sullivan Collection (93 linear feet) contains correspondence, activity reports, agreements, grievances, and union hearing transcripts that primarily document SEIU international and local union interactions, the activities of organizers, representatives and officers, and the union's relationship to government agencies, national politics, and labor organizations.

Louis Jones

family of Mexican Americans. The Great Depression of the



1930s forced the Chavez family into a life of migrant labor. As a child, Chavez

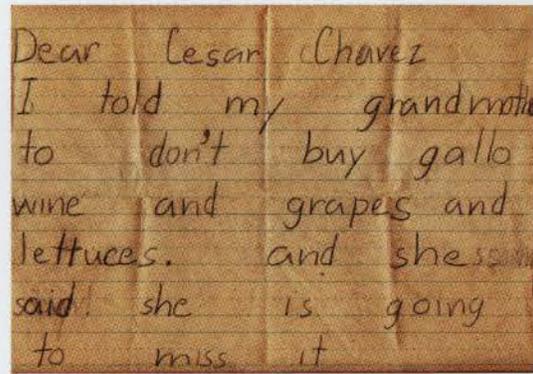
picked every conceivable crop in the sun-baked fields of Arizona and California. His education ended at the eighth grade.

Chavez first honed his organizing skills in 1952 with a Mexican American barrio-based organization called the Community Services Organization (CSO). Primarily working in the East San Jose barrio of Sal Si Puedes, — or, as translated, “get out if you can” — Chavez battled racial and economic discrimination against Chicano residents, coordinated voter registration drives and established new CSO chapters across California and Arizona.

Chavez was a dedicated community organizer, but he never forgot the migrant workers in the fields. After failing to convince the CSO to organize farm labor, Chavez resigned and moved his family to Delano, California where he founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) in

1962. For the first few years, Chavez and his family picked grapes and cotton during the week, and on weekends he traveled to farm communities in the Southwest, organizing members for the NFWA.

In September 1965, representing 1,200 NFWA members, Chavez reluctantly agreed to join the AFL-CIO’s Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) in a strike against major Delano table and wine grape growers. Unhappy with their low wages and poor working conditions, Mexican Americans and Filipino farm workers had walked off the



fields. Although he believed the time was not right for such an action, Chavez nevertheless devoted his full efforts to the strike and created a strong coalition of unions, church groups, student activists and minorities in support of what was soon internationally known

as “The Great Delano Grape Strike.” By 1967, the AFL-CIO officially sponsored NFWA when it merged with AWOC and became the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) with Chavez as its leader.

The grape growers were not interested in a Mexican American union leader telling them how to treat their laborers. Growers refused to bargain with UFWOC and many of them supported brutality against the strikers,

often with the aid of local law enforcement. UFWOC members and other farm workers were harassed, beaten, and shot at. As a result of the escalating violence, Chavez called off the strike, but not the battle.

Long an advocate of non-violence, Chavez developed a new strategy and brought a bold, new dimension to the struggle against the growers. In 1968, UFWOC launched an international boycott against table grapes that lasted two years and was supported by millions of Americans. It resulted in a history-making contract, the UFWOC first with

a major grape grower. In 1972, the union became the United Farm Workers of America AFL-CIO (UFW).

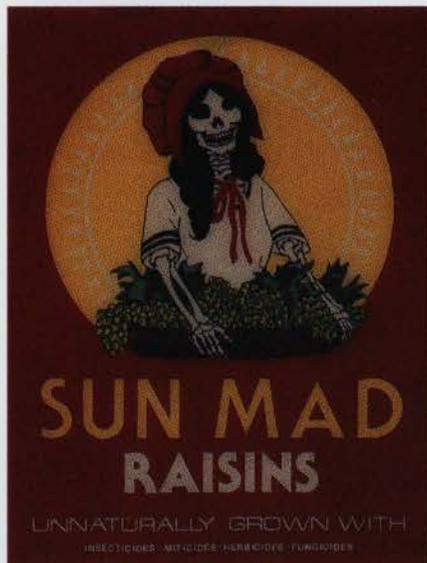
This was only the beginning. While he continued the boycott against grapes and

lettuce, Chavez and the UFW campaigned against the use of pesticides where farm workers labored, child labor, alien workers, substandard housing, and one of the most hated foes of all, the back-breaking short-handled hoe. He brought the concept of secret union elections for farm workers to the national consciousness, something most trade unionists took for granted. Chavez went on three lengthy fasts to personally and publicly sacrifice for non-violence and social justice for farm workers. In 1966, he walked 350 miles in a single march through California’s farm lands to promote “La Causa.” Just before his untimely death in 1993, Chavez was battling the powerful agri-giant Bruce Church Incorporated in



The Detroit Latino Humanities Project

The *La Causa* exhibit is part of the Detroit Latino Humanities Project, which is a collaboration between the Walter P. Reuther Library, LA SED, Casa de Unidad, the Detroit Public Library and the Center for Chicano-Boricua Studies at Wayne State University. The Detroit Humanities Project is partially funded by the Michigan Humanities Council. See the Calendar on page 8 for project events.



Spotlight on Research

My first experience at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs occurred in 1987 as a member of Bill Sewell's NEH Seminar for college teachers, which focused on the historical sociology of European and American labor. Bill confidently asserted that my plan to explore the impact of the Great Depression on Michigan workers and their families was feasible in view of the extensive source material at the Reuther Library — indeed, my seminar paper eventually became a published book. Little did I realize how complex and sweeping a research journey lay before me as I followed the trail of forgotten people and the organizations they built in response to economic despair.

One of the first lessons involved learning to look beyond the usual formal organizations, important as they were, for the people's story. I examined records of seemingly pedestrian groups, such as those active in welfare work and workers' education, found in the George Edwards, Dorothy Hubbard Bishop, Merlin Bishop, Joseph Pagano, and Ethel Polk collections. And I learned not to overlook the routine correspondence of union locals, which revealed fragments of life experience that afforded me a glimpse into the pathos and quiet desperation of everyday life in the face of economic hardship.

The relationship between personal crisis and organizational response is also evident in the Walter Reuther, Richard Frankenstein, George Addes, and Metro Detroit AFL-CIO collections. Rich detail on human experience was present in records pertaining to community service activities, UAW women's groups, wel-

fare work, community organizing, protest movements, and radical organizations. The records of organizations and individuals whose lives and work experience documented worker culture or labor activity are also important. Most significant to research on the unemployed, for example, was evidence found in the Gene Saari and August Scholle Collections that shed light on communities and work life in Michigan's distant Upper Peninsula. In particular, the Saari collection holds potential for understanding the ethnic character of the UP, as well the role of mine-mill workers, steelworkers and the Left in that region.

My current research project on the suppression of the powerful labor film, *Salt of the Earth* (1954) brought me back to Detroit, once I discovered that the UAW and other area unions played a role in the Salt story. In order to understand the struggle over the film's distribution, it became necessary to consult sources such as the labor press and the records of UAW Local 600, which worked to promote the picture's commercial exhibition and union use.

In short, research at the Archives never fails to open new doors. The limitless resources of the Reuther Library remind me that my education as a labor historian has only begun, even as another career as a political historian draws to a close. The opportunity to study the people's history lies ahead.

James J. Lorence

University of Wisconsin -
Marathon County.

Dr. Lorence is the author of *Organizing the Unemployed: Community and Union Activities in the Industrial Heartland*, 1996.



*UAW officials
Leonard Woodcock,
Brendan Sexton,
and Bill Goode,
1963*

Bill Myers Goode 1928-1998

The Reuther Library acknowledges the loss of trade unionist, dear friend, and scholar, Bill Myers Goode. Goode passed away on February 9, 1998, in Detroit, Michigan. Goode received A.B. and M.A. degrees from Wayne State University and a doctorate in education from Rutgers University. He served as director of education for the UAW and director of the UAW's Family Education Center at Black Lake, Michigan. Bill also authored *Infighting in the UAW: The 1946 Election and the Ascendancy of Walter Reuther*, 1994.

The Reuther Library wishes to thank the following individuals who made donations to the Archives in memory of Bill Myers Goode.

James Colligan and Tiffany Hendry
Babcock Edgewater Cooperative
Gary and Jodi Breitbart
Sidney and Yvette Breitbart
George and Harriet Brummer
Luverne and Cynthia Conway
Dr. and Mrs. Eliot Gesner
James W. Goode
Pamela Graham
Mary and Daniel Hughes
Marc and Vivian Hurwitz
International Union - UAW
Gerald Lazarowitz
Rita Kaplan and Art Mevis
Paula Marks
Alison E. R. Paskal
Oscar and Dolores Paskal
Susan F. Salmansohn
Margaret and Ray Schultz
Jerome and Shirley Sherman
Debra Seidel
Doris Siegner
Jack and Elizabeth Slater
Sue Z. Wilensky

The Margery S. Long Endowed Scholarship for Archival Administration



Margery S. Long, a longtime staff member of the Reuther Library, passed away on December 19, 1997. Family, friends and former students have established a scholarship in her memory.

Marge Long was an archivist, exhibit curator, author and photo preservationist. A graduate of Wayne State University, Marge began her career in 1972

as an archivist in what was then the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs. She ultimately became Archivist III at the Archives of Urban and Labor Affairs, Walter P. Reuther Library. Under her curatorship, the Library's photograph and film collection was greatly expanded and its exhibit program flourished. Marge became a nationally recognized authority on photographic conservation. Marge Long's association with this scholarship will serve as an inspiration to students enrolled in the Archives Administration Program at Wayne State University.

This endowed fund is established to recognize scholastic achievement, encourage continued academic progress and provide assistance to students enrolled in the Archives Administration Program. Donations to the scholarship fund may be sent to: Margery S. Long Scholarship Fund, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.

Fraser Exhibit Opening

University professor and former UAW President Doug Fraser was honored at the opening reception for the *Douglas Fraser: A Union Legend* exhibition in the Reuther Library's Exhibition Gallery on May 13, 1998. The exhibition focused upon Fraser's career in the UAW and his work as president of the union, 1977-1983. The exhibit, which closed on August 30, will travel to Henry Ford Community College's library where it will be displayed from September 1998 to May 1999.

Ed Scribner, AFL-CIO Metro Detroit President and WSU Board of Governors member; Doug Fraser; Irvin Reid, WSU President; and Murray Jackson, WSU Board of Governors member at the Fraser exhibition opening.



1998 Ruth and Nat Weinberg Award

Karen Nussbaum, the first director of the newly created Working Women's Department of the AFL-CIO, is the recipient of the 1998 Ruth and Nat Weinberg Award. Nussbaum has an impressive résumé which includes a stint as president of District 925 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), membership on SEIU's Executive Board and directorship of SEIU's 170,000 member Office Workers Division. Before she accepted her present position with the AFL-CIO, Nussbaum was director of the Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

The Nat Weinberg Award is given each year to a person who has made a significant contribution to the American labor movement. Established in 1987 by Ruth Weinberg, this award was originally created to honor Nat Weinberg, who was director of the UAW's Research Department until 1957, and then Special Projects and Economic Analysis until his retirement in 1974. After Ruth Weinberg's death, the family added her name to the award.

Nussbaum will receive the Ruth and Nat Weinberg Award on October 15, 1998, at a reception at the Reuther Library during the North American Labor History Conference.

The Jewish Community Archives

In cooperation with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, Wayne State University was pleased to host the dedication of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs on May 5, 1998.

The Jewish Community Archives was established in 1991 to document the rich legacy of the Detroit Jewish community. Its mission is to collect, preserve and make available for research the historical record of the Jewish Federation, United Jewish Foundation, the federation's member agencies and its local community organizations. The Archives was dedicated in memory of Leonard N. Simons, a noted Detroit community leader who was devoted to the preservation of Detroit Jewish history. A permanent endowment fund was established to ensure the ongoing program of the Archives.

The Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives is housed at two locations: The Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs and the Max M. Fisher Federation Building in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Manuscript collections are preserved and made available for researchers at the Reuther Library.

The Archives seeks communal and personal papers and artifacts of the Detroit Jewish community. For information, contact Sharon Alterman, director, at 248-642-4260, extension 271.

Calendar

1998

SEPTEMBER

- 9 Press Conference**
Jewish Federation and United Jewish
Foundation of Metropolitan
Detroit Centennial Celebration
- 16 "Global Strategies of U.S.
Multinational Companies:
Labor and Policy Issues"**
Fraser Center for Workplace Issues
Woodcock Conference Room
- 1-20 The Gallery of Presidents**
Celebrating the Inauguration of
Irvin Reid as the 9th President of
Wayne State University
Woodcock Gallery
- 24 La Causa: A History of the United
Farm Workers Union**
Exhibit opening
Exhibition Gallery
[through July 1999]
- Nora Mendoza Exhibition**
Woodcock Gallery
[through December 1998]

The Reuther Library Newsletter is published each fall to inform those interested in the Library's collections, exhibits, and special projects. It is written by members of the library staff and edited by Mike Smith, and designed by Sandy Kimberley with the assistance of Tom Featherstone and Mary Wallace.



Wayne State University

Walter P. Reuther Library
5401 Cass Avenue
Detroit MI 48202

OCTOBER

- 10 La Causa Open House**
Detroit Latino Humanities Project
- 15-17 North American Labor History
Conference**
Reuther Library and
McGregor Memorial
Conference Center,
Wayne State University
- 16 Ruth and Nat Weinberg Award
Reception**
Karen Nussbaum, AFL-CIO,
recipient
Exhibition Gallery

NOVEMBER

- 8 Nora Mendoza Exhibition and
Reception**
Woodcock Gallery

DECEMBER

- 7 "Negotiating the Future: The
Promise and the Problems"**
Irving Bluestone Lecture Series,
Fraser Center for Workplace Issues
McGregor Memorial
Conference Center,
Wayne State University

1999

JANUARY

- 17-18 Art from the Barrio**
Woodcock Gallery
[through March 1999]

MARCH

- 20 La Causa Open House**
Detroit Latino Humanities Project

APRIL

- 9-10 Michigan Conference on
Local History**
McGregor Memorial
Conference Center,
Wayne State University

JUNE

- 17-18 Michigan Archival Association
Annual Meeting**
Reuther Library

JULY

- 21 Russ Marshall Photo Exhibition**
Exhibition Gallery
[through December 1999]

GENERAL INFORMATION

Reading Room hours:

Monday-Tuesday — 11:00 a.m.-6:45 p.m.

Wednesday-Friday — 9:00 a.m.-4:45 p.m.

Business hours:

Monday-Friday — 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

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