

Edward A. Wieck Collection

Papers, 1886-1953

**9.25 linear feet
1 oversize folder**

Accession #89
OCLC #

The papers of Edward A. Wieck were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in February of 1964 by his widow, Agnes Burns Wieck, and opened for research in June of 1965. In November of 1992 David Thoreau Wieck placed correspondence he received from his father while imprisoned as a conscientious objector during World War II in the Archives, which was opened for research in October of 2004.

Edward Wieck was born in Staunton, Illinois on October 15, 1884. After receiving his education in the public schools of Staunton, Wieck went to work in the coal mines of Illinois at the age of 19. He was employed as a miner in Illinois and the western United States until 1928, except for two short periods: from 1905 to 1906 Wieck served as a mine payroll and billing clerk and he spent 1915 to 1916 as assistant secretary-treasurer of District 12 (Illinois) of the United Mine Workers of America. Wieck held the position of secretary-manager of the Illinois Coal Sales Association, a statewide organization promoting the sale of Illinois coal, from 1928 to 1930.

From the time he became a miner, Wieck was active in miners' unions. He served as pit committeeman and held offices in locals of the United Mine Workers of America. Wieck attended several district and international conventions of the United Mine Workers as a delegate. In 1925 John L. Lewis named Wieck as an official guide and interpreter for a party of German mine union officials visiting the United States.

In January of 1934 Wieck was appointed Research Associate in the Department of Industrial Studies of the Russell Sage Foundation. While with the Sage Foundation, Wieck compiled many reports on labor and industry, particularly in the field of coal mining. In 1948 the Department of Industrial Studies was disbanded and Wieck retired.

The Wieck Collection contains many original documents relating to the early attempts to unionize the coal mining industry. Among these papers are circulars, membership lists and letters of the Knights of Labor and the Progressive Miners of America. The bulk of the collection, including clippings, interviews, correspondence and proceedings, is concerned with the coal mining industry and the history of the miners' unions. Items relating to T. L. Lewis, John Mitchell and John L. Lewis make up part of this mining material.

In addition to the coal mining material, there are items on union activity in the automobile, steel and other industries. There is also extensive material on government agencies in the labor field.

Important correspondents in the collection:

Louis Brandeis
James B. Carey
Samuel Gompers
Max Lerner
John L. Lewis
T. L. Lewis
Robert M. Lovett
H. L. Mencken
Theodore Roosevelt
Oswald Garrison Villard

Important subjects in the collection:

Automobile industry workers--Michigan
Coal mines and mining--Safety measures
Coal mines and mining--United States
Knights of Labor
Progressive Miners of America
Russell Sage Foundation
Steel Workers Organizing Committee
United Mine Workers of America

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18 manuscript boxes
1 oversize folder

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Series I, Original Union Documents, Boxes 1-3:

Handbills, correspondence, proceedings, etc. relating to the early history of miners' unions and the Knights of Labor collected and cataloged by Mr. Wieck. Also included are minutes of the UMWA executive board and Dodge Main plant Work Council.

Series II, Reports and Articles by Edward Wieck, Boxes 4-6

Published works by Wieck and reports prepared for the Russell Sage Foundation. Files are arranged alphabetically by title.

Series III, Office File, Boxes 7-9

A wide variety of material, including correspondence, AFL and CIO convention reports and reports covering labor conditions in various industries and governmental activities in the labor field. Files are arranged alphabetically.

Series IV, Auto Industry/UAW and Steel Industry/Steel Workers Union, Box 10:

Correspondence, interviews, minutes, reports, etc., including extensive material on the sit-down strikes of 1937 as well as notes on the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and steel production. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or correspondent.

Series V, Mining, Boxes 11-18:

Correspondence, clippings, reports, notes, interviews, etc. on coal mining and coal miners' unions, including UMWA convention material and histories of the miners' unions. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or correspondent.

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Correspondence from Edward Wieck to his son, David Thoreau Wieck, 1943-46

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Original Union Documents, 1886-1928
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3. "The Miners' Case and the Public Interest"
4. "Miners' Collective Action for National Stability"
5. "The Miners' Union in the Steel Industry" (first draft—2 cc.)

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