

Dorothy Kraus Papers
1 linear foot (2 manuscript boxes)
1920s-1990s (bulk, 1930s-1960s)

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
Part II of the finding aid written by Aimee Ergas on May 19, 2010.

Accession Number: 1221

Creator: Dorothy Kraus

Acquisition: The papers of Dorothy Rogin Kraus were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in March of 1984 and opened for research in March of 1985. Part II was received as part of the Henry Kraus Papers given to the Reuther Library on February 20, 1996.

Language: Material entirely in English.

Access: Papers are open for research.

Use: Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library *Rules for Use of Archival Materials*.

Notes: Citation style: "Dorothy Kraus Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

Related Material: Reuther Library Collections: Henry Kraus Papers, UAW Women's Auxiliaries Records

History

Dorothy Rogin was born in Poland about 1908. Her father, a house painter, emigrated to the United States before World War I, and she, her mother and her sisters joined him in Cleveland, Ohio in 1920. Her background was Jewish working-class socialist. While still in high school she met Henry Kraus, who was active in the Young People's Socialist League.

She attended Western Reserve University for a time, but had to go to work to help support her family. She became involved in theatre and was an active member of the Cleveland Playhouse. She and Henry managed to save enough money to go to Europe in 1927, where he hoped to become a writer. However, they had to return to Cleveland in 1930.

She obtained a position with the Cleveland YWCA and participated in a program of plays performed by working women dealing with their experiences and problems. In 1935 she helped organize the People's Theatre and also was involved with the Workers' Lab Theatre in New York City.

Henry participated in efforts to unionize auto workers in Cleveland and created their newspaper, which he edited. With the formation of the UAW, they moved to Detroit in 1936, where he edited the UAW's *United Automobile Worker*. During the successful Midland Steel sit-down strike, Dorothy organized a strike kitchen, both to feed the strikers and to give the women workers and workers' wives a sense of participation in the strike. She performed a similar function during the later Kelsey-Hayes sit-down strike.

Later that year they went to Flint to help in the drive to organize GM workers. When the sit-down strike began, Dorothy again organized the strike kitchen and was a leader of the Emergency Brigade. The UAW Women's Auxiliary grew out of these early women's organizations. She also acted in "The Strike Marches On," which was performed before a mass meeting of workers at the end of the strike.

The Krauses went to the West Coast in 1939, and Henry helped Wyndham Mortimer to organize aircraft workers while Dorothy worked in the union office. After the controversial North American Aviation strike, the Krauses severed their connection with the UAW. He worked during the war for the Consolidated Steel Corporation and she became involved in organizing the tenants of the interracial housing project in which they lived in San Pedro. He wrote of this experience in his book, *In the City Was a Garden*.

After the war, they were accused of Communist sympathies and they eventually moved to New York City, where she worked for unions and in the B. Altman department store. Because Henry believed he had been blacklisted, they ultimately moved to France, where he opened the Paris bureau of the Physicians News Service. In Europe they revived their long-standing interest in the study of medieval art. Henry has published several volumes on the subject and Dorothy co-authored *The Hidden World of Misericords* with him. Dorothy Kraus died on May 25, 2001.

Scope and Content:

Material in Part I of the Dorothy Kraus Collection relates mainly to the early activities of the UAW Women's Auxiliary, attempts to control the cost of living during the Depression, and to anti-Semitism. Papers in Part II detail Dorothy's early life in Poland, and contain personal notebooks, correspondence and manuscripts of her later writings.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two parts: Part I (Box 1) and Part II (Boxes 1 & 2). Folders are listed alphabetically by subject.

Part I

Box 1

- 1-2. Anti-Semitism Survey, 1944
- 3-4. Central Action Committee Against the High Cost of Living, 1935
5. Detroit Committee to Keep America Out of War, 1937
6. Labor, 1937-39
- 7-10. UAW Women's Auxiliary, 1937-39
11. UAW Women's Auxiliary and Emergency Brigade, publications regarding, 1937

Part II

12. Early documents and correspondence, 1930s
13. Early notebooks and personal notes, 1920s-1930s

Box 2

1. Experiences in South and Central France, 1950s-1960s
2. Learning to Live in France, work in progress, 1950s
3. Memories of a Childhood in Poland, 1994
4. Miscellaneous notes and writings, 1990s
5. My Mother was the Most Beautiful, manuscript, 1990s
6. Paris writings, 1950s-1980s
7. Paris sketches, undated
8. Troyes and Strasbourg stories, 1950s-1960s
- 9-11. Women's Union Activities, Flint & Detroit: writings, letters, interviews, 1930s
12. Wyssocka-Litovsk, undated manuscript