

David S. Burgess Collection

Papers, 1936-1994

3 linear feet

Accession #1610
OCLC #

The papers of David S. Burgess were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs between 1994 and 2001 by Mr. Burgess and opened for research in 2002.

David S. Burgess was born June 15, 1917 in New York City, but spent his childhood in China with his missionary parents, John Stewart Burgess and Stella Cornelia Fisher Burgess. He received a B.A. from Oberlin College in 1939 and a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in 1944, where he studied with Reinhold Niebuhr.

While at Union in 1941, he met and married Berea College student and National Intercollegiate Christian Council co-chair Alice Stevens. Together they spent a year ministering to migrant workers in New Jersey and south Florida and after Burgess's ordination into the Congregational and Christian Churches (later the United Church of Christ) in 1944 and his posting as chaplain to the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, to poor farmers and agricultural workers in Arkansas and southeast Missouri. In 1947 Burgess resigned from the CCC Board of Missions to go directly into labor organizing for the CIO in the South.

In 1955, on Walter Reuther's recommendation, Burgess was appointed labor attache at the American Embassy in India, where he remained until 1960. Over the next seventeen years he held senior positions with the Indonesia-Burma Division of USAID, the Peace Corps program in Indonesia and with UNICEF in Thailand.

Returning to the United States in 1977, Burgess was hired two years later as joint pastor of two struggling Newark, New Jersey UCC churches, Zion and St. Stephan's. Until his retirement in 1990, he also headed up the Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministry, a multi-denominational organization advocating for community improvement in Newark. His autobiography, *Fighting for Social Justice*, was published by Wayne State University Press in 2000.

The David S. Burgess Collection consists of correspondence, reports, speeches, published and unpublished articles and other material related to Mr. Burgess's careers in the ministry, the labor movement and the U.S. Foreign Service and UNICEF in Asia.

Important subjects in the collection:

Church and labor--United States
City churches--New Jersey--Newark
Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches
Congress of Industrial Organizations (U.S.--Southern States
Delmo Labor Homes Project
Fellowship of Southern Churchmen
India--Economic conditions, 1947-
India--Foreign relations--United States
India-Pakistan Conflict, 1971
Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministry
Migrant agricultural laborers--United States
Newark (N.J.)--Social conditions
Peace Corps (U.S.)--Indonesia
Sociology, Christian
Southern Tenant Farmers Union
UNICEF--Thailand
United Church of Christ

Important correspondents in the collection:

Chester Bowles
Reinhold Niebuhr
Victor Reuther
Walter Reuther

Non-manuscript material:

Some photographs received with the collection have been transferred to the Archives Audiovisual Department and a copy of David Burgess's autobiography, *Fighting for Social Justice*, has been placed in the Archives Library.

Related Collections

CIO Political Action Committee	George L-P. Weaver
CIO Washington Office	Morris Weisz
Franz Daniel	Claude Williams
Charles Orr [Part 2]	
Victor Reuther	
UAW International Affairs Department: Victor Reuther and Lewis Carliner	

Contents

6 manuscript boxes

Series I, Personal Files, 1937-1994, Boxes 1-3:

Family and other personal correspondence, biographical information and published and unpublished articles authored by Mr. Burgess. Much of the record of his life is contained in his correspondence with his mother, especially during his years of U.S. government service in Asia.

Series II, Career Files, 1936-1992, Boxes 3-6:

Correspondence, reports, daily journals, flyers, pamphlets and other publications documenting Mr. Burgess's education and career in the ministry, labor movement, U.S. foreign service, UNICEF and related organizational affiliations.

Series I
Personal Files, 1937-1994
Boxes 1-3

Box 1

1. Articles; foreign aid and the U.N., n.d., 1970's
2. ; labor movement, n.d., 1947, 1953
3. ; *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, 1963, 1968
4. ; pacifism, n.d., 1939-40
5. ; politics, n.d., 1952-55
6. ; racial prejudice, n.d.
7. ; religion and labor, 1940's-1950's
8. ; religion and labor—"Trade Unions and Preachers,"
1945
9. ; social gospel, n.d., 1942-46
10. Autobiography, 1994
11. ; draft

Box 2

- 1-4. Autobiography; draft
5. Biographical sketches, statements of faith
6. Book reviews, 1940's-1990's
7. Correspondence; family, 1937-40
8. ; family, 1944-51
- 9-11. ; family, 1955-61

Box 3

- 1-7. Correspondence; family, 1962-71
- 8-9. Correspondence; personal, misc., 1946-65
10. Interview for Southern Oral History Program, 1974
11. Newspaper columns, 1940's
12. Senior thesis; "Holiness Sects of the Contemporary South,"
1944

Series II
Career Files, 1936-1992
Boxes 3-6

Box 3

13. Americans Concerned about Corporate Power, 1980
14. CIO; organizing and political action in the South, 1949-55

Box 4

- 1-3. Delmo Labor Homes Project, 1945, 1951-65, 1974-82
4. Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, 1945, 1951-57
5. International Church of Bangkok, 1969, 1971
6. Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities (LASPAU), 1978
- 7-10. Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministry (MEM), 1982-92

Box 5

1. Migrant ministry; Camp Pahokee, Florida, 1942-44
2. ; New Jersey, 1942-44
3. ; Southern Tenant Farmers Union, 1936, 1942-45, 1968, 1984
4. Peace Corps—Indonesia, 1963-66
5. St. Stephan's United Church of Christ, 1980-89
6. Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA), 1948-50
- 7-8. UNICEF; Bangladesh, 1970-71
9. ; Burgess media coverage, 1972-74
- 10-12. ; corres., reports, 1966-74

Box 6

1. UNICEF; corres., reports, 1975-77
2. ; speeches, articles, 1967-79
3. ; speeches, articles—world hunger, 1974-77
4. Union Theological Seminary; draft resisters, 1940
5. U.S. Foreign Service Board of Examiners, 1966
6. U.S. Labor Attache to India; corres., 1955-59
7. ; corres.—Chester Bowles, 1955-59
- 8-9. ; corres.—Reuther brothers, 1956-60
10. ; speeches, articles, n.d., 1960-61
11. Williams, Claude, and the People's Institute of Applied Religion, 1940's

Box 6 (cont'd)

12. World Conference of Christian Youth, 1939
13. Zion United Church of Christ; articles re, 1986
14. ; proposals for NICD funding, 1982, 1984