

William H. Simons Collection
Papers, 1906-1995
(Predominantly, 1950s-1980s)

13 linear feet

Accession #1761
OCLC #

The papers of William H. Simons were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in June of 2001 and October of 2004 by Mr. Simons and were opened for research in August of 2007.

William Henry Simons was born in Washington, D. C. on June 1, 1924, one of eight children of Alfred Edgar Simons, Sr., a U.S. government messenger, and Mattie Garrett. He attended the public schools of the District of Columbia, graduating from Dunbar High School in 1940. He saw military service in Europe during World War II, reaching the rank of sergeant major in the 262nd Quartermaster Battalion and receiving the Bronze Star and the Croix de Guerre. After earning a B.S. degree from the historically black Miner Teachers College (later the District of Columbia Teachers College) in 1947, he began teaching social studies at Banneker Junior High School in Washington. In 1949 he acquired a master's degree from New York University and later held fellowships from Howard University and the City University of New York.

The early District of Columbia teacher unions, one of which was part of the founding group of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in 1916, were racially segregated. Simons joined the black teachers union, Local 27, AFT, in 1952. The following year Local 27 merged with the white teachers union, Local 8, and the attendance officers local, 867, to form the integrated Local 6, AFT, Teachers' Union of Washington, D. C. (later, the Washington Teachers' Union—WTU). He served Local 6 as building representative, parliamentarian and financial secretary until his election as president in May of 1964. In November of 1965 Simons left his teaching position at Banneker to serve as full-time WTU president and continued to serve in that capacity, with a two-year hiatus from 1985 to 1987, until his retirement in 1991.

As president, Simons orchestrated WTU's victory over the much larger District of Columbia Education Association in the April, 1967 election to determine who would represent employees in collective bargaining negotiations with the Board of Education. He presided over the 1968 march on the Capitol by District teachers — their first walkout — to demand a pay raise from Congress, which set teacher salaries prior to the advent of Home Rule in 1973. He conducted two successful strikes in 1972 and 1979 and defused another in 1975. During the 1972 strike the union was fined \$50,000 which, on Simons's suggestion, was used to set up a scholarship fund for D. C. graduating seniors that

continues to this day. Under his leadership the WTU played a major role in the defeat of the tuition tax credit initiative in 1981.

In August of 1965 Simons was elected Vice President and member of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Teachers, where he served until internal disputes within the Progressive Caucus caused his defeat in the 1972 election. He subsequently became chair of the AFT's United Action Caucus, but ran again in 1976 at the invitation of the Progressive Caucus, winning more votes than any other candidate, and served until 1986.

Simons was a member of the D. C. Unemployment Compensation Board and the Democratic Central Committee of the District of Columbia and served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. He also held office in the Washington Urban League, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, of which he was a founding member, the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO and the Woodridge Civic Association, among others. He has been a frequent speaker and consultant on school-community relations and collective bargaining in education.

The William H. Simons Collection consists of correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, studies, surveys, flyers, ballots, campaign literature, newspaper clippings and other material documenting Mr. Simons's career with the Washington Teachers' Union, the history of public education in the District of Columbia and the union's efforts through collective bargaining and legislative lobbying to improve salaries and working conditions for teachers in the District of Columbia.

Important subjects in the collection:

Afrocentric curriculum
AFT United Action Caucus
Barry, Marion, 1936-
Clark, Kenneth Bancroft, 1914-
Clark Plan
Collective bargaining -- Education -- Washington (D.C.)
Community and school -- Washington (D.C.)
Hobson, et al. v. Hansen, et al.
Home rule -- Washington (D.C.)
Local 6, American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
Local 8, AFT
Local 27, AFT
Merit pay
More Effective Schools Program
Morgan Community School Project
National Black Political Convention
National Education Association -- Washington (D.C.)
Public schools -- Washington (D.C.)
School integration -- Washington (D.C.)
School violence -- Washington (D.C.)
School-based management
Schools -- Decentralization -- Washington (D.C.)
Segregation in education -- Washington (D.C.)
Sizemore, Barbara
Teachers -- Salaries, etc.
Track system (Education) -- Washington (D.C.)
Tuition tax credits -- Washington (D.C.)
Washington Teachers' Union

Important correspondents:

Charles W. Cheng
Paul Cooke
Harold Fisher, Jr.
Carl F. Hansen
Julius W. Hobson
Marion V. Magruder
Carol V. McCamman
Carl J. Megel
Robert G. Porter
James D. Ricks
Herrick Roth
David Selden
John A. Sessions

Contents

11 storage boxes 2 small flats

Series I, Personal Files, 1937-1995, Box 1:

Correspondence, event programs, newspaper clippings, flyers, election campaign literature, ballots, D. C. public schools employment records, speeches and other material related to Mr. Simons's civic and professional affiliations and his numerous speaking engagements.

Series II, Washington Teachers' Union, 1906-1993, Boxes 2-10:

Correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, financial records, contracts, press releases, flyers, brochures, newspaper clippings and union publications relating to the business of the WTU and its predecessor unions. Particularly well-documented are the 1979 strike and contract negotiations; Mr. Simons's campaigns for the WTU presidency, including James Ricks's challenge of the 1981 election; and WTU's relationship with rival teacher union, NEA-DC.

Series III, Washington, D. C. Public Schools, 1912-1990,

Boxes 9, 11-13:

Correspondence, reports, legal briefs, press releases, studies and voluminous newspaper clippings documenting conditions in Washington's public schools and various programs intended to improve them. Important topics covered include *Hobson v. Hansen*, the first major attack on de facto pupil discrimination in a large American city; Kenneth Clark's controversial plan to improve D. C. students' reading performance; and WTU's successful campaign to defeat the tuition tax credit initiative.

Non-manuscript material:

A few photographs and items of memorabilia received with the collection have been transferred to the Archives Audiovisual Department.

Series I
Personal Files, 1937-1995
Box 1

Box 1

1. American Federation of Teachers (AFT); Racism in Education Conference, 1966
2. AFT; United Action Caucus, 1972-80
3. AFT; Vice President, 1965-85
4. AFT; Vice President—conflict with Executive Council, 1970-72
5. AFT; Vice President—Shanker-Selden rivalry, 1973-74
6. Awards/recognition, 1945-91
7. Biographical profiles, 1960s-1980s
8. Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, 1972-79
- 9-14. Correspondence, 1964-79
15. Correspondence, 1981-97
- 16-17. District of Columbia Democratic Party; corres., campaign literature, clippings, 1968-92
- 18-19. District of Columbia Unemployment Compensation Board; corres., meeting minutes and attachments, 1983-90
20. Education, 1937, 1956
21. Employment, 1965-74
22. Labor for Peace, 1970-72
23. National Black Political Convention, 1972
24. Retirement, 1991
25. South African embassy protest; clippings, 1984
- 26-32. Speaking engagements; corres., programs, publicity, 1965-79
33. Speaking engagements, 1981-95
34. Speeches, 1965-89
35. Writings, 1967, 1970

Series II
Washington Teachers Union (WTU), 1906-1993
Boxes 2-10

Box 2

1. AFT Local 8 (Teachers' Union of Washington, D.C.), 1929-53
2. AFT Local 27, 1949
3. AFT Locals 8, 27 and 867 Joint Executive Committee; minutes, 1950-53
4. Bakke case; press releases, public statements, 1977-78
5. Budget, 1974-91
- 6-7. Calendars, 1968-91
8. Cassell, Charles, flyer incident, 1972-73
9. Cheng, Charles, death, 1979
10. Congressional testimony, 1950s-1990s
11. Constitution
- 12-13. Contract negotiations, 1967-68
14. Contract negotiations, 1969
15. Contract negotiations, 1971
- 16-17. Contract negotiations, 1974-76
18. Contract negotiations (1974-76); United Teachers for a Responsive Union (U.T.R.U.), 1973-74
- 19-22. Contract negotiations, 1979
23. Contract negotiations, 1982
24. Contract negotiations, 1985
25. Contract negotiations, 1988
26. Contract negotiations, 1991

Box 3

- 1-2. Correspondence, reports, flyers, brochures, clippings, 1954-59
- 3-18. Correspondence, reports, flyers, brochures, media coverage, 1962-92
- 19-22. Correspondence; D.C. Board of Education, 1950s-1990s
- 23-25. Correspondence; D.C. schools administration, 1950s-1990s
26. "Do Teachers' Unions Have a Role in Promoting Parental Involvement in Schools?" (academic paper), 1991
- 27-28. Elections; collective bargaining representation, 1961-67
- 29-30. Elections; collective bargaining representation—thesis on, 1969"
31. Elections; presidency, 1969
32. Elections; presidency, 1971, 1973
33. Elections; presidency, 1975
34. Elections; presidency, 1977, 1979

Box 4 Scrapbooks

- Volumes 1-3. Elections; presidency—corres., flyers, legal briefs in U.S. Dept. of Labor/James Ricks v. WTU, clippings, newsletters, 1981, 1983

Box 5

1. Elections; presidency, 1981
2. Elections; presidency, 1983
3. Elections; presidency, 1985
- 4-5. Elections; presidency, 1987
6. Elections; presidency—victory congratulations, 1987
- 7-8. Elections; presidency, 1989
9. Elections; presidency, 1991
10. Elections; presidency, 1993
11. Executive Board meetings; minutes, 1954-57, 1965
- 12-29. Executive Board meetings; minutes, 1969-91
- 30-31. Financial statements, 1968-91
32. Formation of Local 6, AFT (WTU), 1953
33. Hendley School case, 1971-72
34. Hospital for Sick Children, agreement with, 1987
35. Joint Legislative Council of Educational Organizations, 1938-50

Box 6

1. Membership meetings; minutes, 1953-56, 1965
- 2-16. Membership meetings; minutes, 1971-91
- 17-18. Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO; corres., meeting minutes, ballots, newsletters, clippings, 1956-95
19. National Education Association (NEA) conventions; AFT report on, 1967-68, 1970, 1977-79, 1982
20. NEA-DC (DCEA/DCACT); corres., flyers, newsletters, clippings, Aug 1967-1984
- 21-22. NEA-DC; representation challenge, 1984-85
- 23-24. NEA-DC; representation challenge—"A Survey of Teacher Attitudes in the District of Columbia," 1985
- 25-26. Newman, Naomi E., v. WTU (J. F. Cook School), 1983-85
- 27-29. Publications; *Feedback*, 1974-91
30. Publications; *Read On*, 1971-73

Box 7

- Publications; *The Washington Teacher*, 1953-59, 1964-79

Box 8

Publications; *The Washington Teacher*, 1980-90

Box 9

1. Salary crisis; corres., clippings, flyers, Mar 1968
2. Salary crisis; corres., clippings, flyers, Mar 1970
3. Scholarship Fund, 1973-91
4. Strike; corres., flyers, legal briefs, 1972
5. Strike; clippings, 1972
- 6-7. Strike; corres., flyers, press releases, 1979
8. Strike; clippings, 1979 [See also: Box 10]
9. Strike, threatened, over imposition of longer school day, 1975
10. Study of collective bargaining rights and limitations of public school teachers, especially in Washington, D. C., c. 1970
11. "A Study of the History of Teacher Unionism in Washington, D. C." (thesis), 1969
12. Teacher salary classifications, 1906-46
13. Teacher salary classifications, 1955-57
- 14-15. Wood, Alice, case (suspension for "unpatriotic" statements), 1919

Box 10 Scrapbooks

Volumes 1-2. Strike; clippings, 1979

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Box 9

- 16-20. Clark Plan; clippings, Jul 1970-Apr 1971
- 21. Clark Plan; WTU opposition to—corres., flyers, 1970
- 22. "Crisis of Confidence: The Reputation of Washington's Public Schools in the Twentieth Century," 1982
- 23. Federal legislation regarding D. C. schools, 1906-58
- 24. Henley, Benjamin J., retirement, 1972
- 25. High school fraternities, 1912, 1921, 1955
- 26. More Effective Schools Program; corres., reports, 1967-68
- 27. More Effective Schools Program; clippings, 1967-68, 1970
- 28-29. Morgan Community School Project, 1968-71

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- 1-15. Newspaper clippings, 1964-71
- 16. Newspaper clippings; Supt. Hugh Scott, 1970-71
- 17-21. Newspaper clippings, 1972-75
- 22-24. Newspaper clippings; Supt. Barbara Sizemore, 1975
- 25-27. Newspaper clippings, 1976

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- 1-2. Newspaper clippings, 1977
- 3-13. Newspaper clippings, 1979-85 [See also: Box 13]
- 14. Newspaper clippings, 1987
- 15-16. Newspaper clippings, 1994
- 17. Parents, Administrators, Community Teachers and Students 1974
- 18-19. School-based management model; corres., reports, articles about, 1987-90
- 20. Status report of professional personnel by race, 1967
- 21. Strayer survey of D. C. school system, 1948
- 22. Teacher appraisal program, 1973-78
- 23-25. Track System (Hobson v. Hansen); corres., reports, press releases, flyers, legal briefs, clippings, 1963-77
- 26. Tuition tax credit initiative; clippings, 1981 [See also: Box 13]
- 27. U.S. House District Committee report on D. C. schools, 1970-71
- 28. U.S. House Task Force on Antipoverty in the District of Columbia study of the D. C. public school system, 1966
- 29. Washington Urban League report on the integration of D. C. public schools, 1964

Box 13 Scrapbooks

- Volume 1. Newspaper clippings, Jan-May 1982
- Volume 2. Tuition tax credit initiative; corres., flyers, press releases, clippings, 1981