

## **Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee Collection**

**Papers , 1959-1966**

**15 linear feet**

Accession #221

OCLC #

The papers of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in 1967 by the United Farm Workers.

In April, 1959 Norman Smith was directed by AFL-CIO President George Meany to begin organizing farm workers in California and in June of the following year the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) was chartered by the AFL-CIO. Norman Smith served as AWOC's director through 1961. In 1962 C. Al Green took over as director and served until 1966.

During its seven-year existence, AWOC called many strikes against growers and farm labor contractors and achieved some success in raising the wages of farm laborers. Additionally, AWOC sought job security, union recognition and better working conditions for its members. AWOC also set up a Welfare Department to aid members in their dealings with growers and the government.

A major stumbling block in organizing farm workers was Public Law 78, which allowed contractors and growers to hire foreign nationals. These workers, mostly from Mexico and known as braceros, were used illegally as strikebreakers and, because they worked for less, were often hired before domestic workers, also an illegal practice. Whenever AWOC acquired evidence of such illegal activities on the part of growers and contractors, it protested to the appropriate state and federal agencies. Finally, Congress allowed Public Law 78—the so-called Bracero Program—to expire on December 31, 1964.

On September 8, 1965 the AWOC local in Delano, made up mainly of Filipinos, called for a strike against local grape growers. On September 16 AWOC was joined in the strike by the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). This marked the beginning of the California grape strike and the national boycott of grapes that was not settled until contracts were signed in 1970. In August, 1966 AWOC and NFWA merged into the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO. Cesar Chavez of NFWA was elected president and Larry Itliong of AWOC was elected one of the vice-presidents.

**Important subjects covered in the collection:**

Agricultural laborers--Laws and legislation--United States  
Alien labor--Government policy--United States  
Boycotts--United States  
Bracero Program (Public Law 78)  
Collective bargaining--Agricultural--California  
Filipino Americans  
Mexican Americans  
Migrant agricultural laborers--United States  
Strikes and lockouts--Agricultural laborers--California  
Strikes and lockouts--Vineyard laborers--California--Delano  
Trade unions--Organizing

**Important correspondents in the collection:**

Fay Bennett  
Edmund G. Brown  
Anne Draper  
Ernesto Galarza  
Msgr. George G. Higgins  
H. L. Mitchell  
James Patton  
Walter P. Reuther  
Eleanor Roosevelt

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Correspondence, reports, press releases, memoranda, clippings and newsletters. Subjects include the merger of the National Agricultural Workers Union with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen; the California Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Labor and Social Welfare (Cobey Committee); CBS program "Harvest of Shame"; Community Service Organization; Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor; and pesticides.

##### **Subseries B: Directors' Files, 1959-1966, Boxes 7-8:**

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Correspondence, reports, affidavits, depositions, memoranda, legal briefs, court orders, injunctions and agreements pertaining to relations between AWOC and various California growers and farm labor contractors. Included are materials relating to court cases arising out of infringements of contract provisions, employment of Mexican nationals and strikes against the growers and contractors.

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28. Muller Berry Farms, 1963-64
29. H. B. Murphy Produce Co., 1965
30. Mussi Brothers, 1963
31. Rodolfo Mussi, 1964

**Box 30**

1. Herbert Newman, 1964
2. Dante Nomellini, 1965
3. Ortega Brothers, 1962, '65
4. John Pagliarulo, Inc., 1965
5. Pandol & Sons, 1965
6. Joe Pasillas, 1963-65
7. Patti-Bono, 1965
8. Paul's Produce, Inc., 1963-64
9. Perez Brothers, 1963-64
10. Perry Farms (Lathrop Farm Labor Center) 1962-64
11. Alfred Pia, 1964
12. Nick A. Pricola, 1965
13. Gene Radovich & Sons, 1965
14. Jack Radovich, 1965-66
15. Joe Ramirez, 1965
16. Joseph Ratto, 1964
17. Reclaimed Islands Land Co., 1964
18. Riverview Farms, 1964-65
19. Helen Roche, 1963
20. Joe Rodgers, 1963
- 2h Rodriguez & Flores, 1963-65
22. Jimmy Romero, 1964
23. Pedro Romero, 1963
24. Rufus Produce, 1964
25. Evelio Ruiz, 1965
26. Jose Sanchez, 1963-65
27. Manuel J. Sanchez, 1965
28. Sandrini Brothers, 1965-66

**Box 30 (cont'd)**

29. San Joaquin Farm Production Assn., 1959-66
30. Eli Santos, 1964-65

**Box 31**

1. Nat Scatena, 1964
2. Schenley Industries, Inc., 1962
3. D. M. Steele & Son, Inc., 1965
4. Stockton Tomato Co., 1964-65
5. Richard Takashima, 1965
6. Frank Tenente, 1964
7. Anthony N. Thomas Co., 1963-65
8. M. C. Thorkelson & Son, 1964
9. Tudor & Son, 1965
10. Turlock Fruit Co., 1965-66
11. S. Turnbow Co., 1964
12. Uyeda Brothers, 1963
13. Candelario A. Valdez, 1964
14. Vener Farms, Inc., 1965
15. Ventura County Farmers Employment Agency, 1965
16. Jess Vielma, 1963-65
17. A. Volpi & Son, 1963-64
18. Jack B. Wagner, 1965
19. West and West, 1963
20. Western Farms, 1965
21. Joseph L. Wilson, 1963-64
22. William S. Wright, Inc., 1965
23. Roy H. Yarborough, 1963
24. A. & N. Zaninovich, 1965-66
25. George Zaninovich, 1965
26. John S. Zaninovich, 1965
27. Marion Zaninovich, 1965
28. Marko Zaninovich, 1965-66
29. Vincent Zaninovich and Sons, 1965-66
30. Vincent M. Zaninovich, 1965-66
31. Zuckerman-Mandeville, Inc., 1963-66
32. Zuckerman Farms, 1965

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