The papers of the UAW Women's Auxiliaries were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in February of 1979 by the UAW Women's Department and were opened for research in January of 1984.

Women became interested in creating UAW auxiliaries during an organization drive in November of 1936. In subsequent strikes, the wives of union workers were active in setting up strike kitchens, feeding strikers, arranging benefit dances and holding mass meetings to gain sympathy. A women's auxiliary was formed to take part in the Flint sit-down strike in January, 1937, and an "emergency brigade" was mobilized as a unit of the auxiliary to help picket when needed. Women's Auxiliary members also participated in the Ford "Battle of the Overpass" on May 27, 1937. During this period thirty-three UAW Women's Auxiliaries were established.

At the 1940 Convention the auxiliaries were organized on a more permanent basis. A coordinating committee was created in order to utilize auxiliary activities to further union organizing efforts and UAW programs.

During World War II, the UAW Women's Auxiliaries participated in civil defense, war bond drives, became Red Cross volunteers, worked at U.S.O. centers and helped set up nurseries for working mothers. UAW Auxiliaries throughout the United States raised funds to purchase jeeps and ambulances for the war effort.

Over the years the programs of the Women's Auxiliaries have included fund raising for cancer research, the March of Dimes, crippled and retarded children and the Community Fund. Members have been encouraged to help elect labor-supportive candidates and to campaign for legislation favorable to labor. They have also shown an active interest in consumerism and civil rights. The auxiliaries have participated in the Union Label program by sponsoring a contest each year to encourage buying union-made goods. Education programs give members an understanding of the UAW and its purposes.

Catherine Gelles has been prominent in directing the affairs of the UAW Women's Auxiliary and the bulk of the correspondence in this collection reflects her 35-year association with this organization. Mrs. Gelles first became associated with the UAW in 1936 when she actively participated in the strikes of that time. In 1937 she organized Auxiliary 15 of Local 174 and served as President for many years. She served two terms on the
International Coordinating Committee and was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the International Women's Auxiliaries at the Chicago Conference in 1942.

The UAW Auxiliaries Department was established in 1947 and Mrs. Gelles became a full-time international representative under the direction of Emil Mazey. Her main responsibility was to organize, service, and direct the UAW Auxiliaries in the United States and Canada. After the 1955 merger of the AFL-CIO Mrs. Gelles also served on the executive board of the AFL-CIO National Auxiliaries as vice-president, but withdrew in 1968 when the UAW disaffiliated.

Upon the retirement of Catherine Gelles in December of 1971, the UAW Women's Auxiliaries were transferred to the Women's Department of the UAW under the direction of Caroline Davis and coordinated by Lillian Hatcher as international representative. Since this time, the primary objective of the Auxiliaries has been somewhat modified in an effort to enlist the participation of the worker's entire family in UAW programs.

This collection documents the programs and activities of the women's auxiliaries at all levels. The bulk of the correspondence reflects the work of Catherine Gelles in organizing the auxiliaries and subsequently affiliating them into national and regional organizations.

Important subjects covered in this collection are:

- Civil rights
- Community Activities
- Consumerism
- Education
- Political Action
- Union Label

Among the important correspondents are:

- Marcella Beatty
- George Burt
- William Dodge
- Douglas Fraser
- Catherine Gelles
- Phillip Hart
- Lillian Hatcher
- Elda Luebbert
- Olga Madar
- William Mac Donald
- Emil Mazey
- R. J. Thomas

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Series I, UAW-CIO Women's Auxiliaries - Conferences and Meetings, 1942-1955, Boxes 1-3:
Minutes and reports from the years the UAW Auxiliaries were affiliated with the CIO. They cover meetings of the International Coordinating Committee, International Conferences and National conventions.

Series II, UAW Women's Auxiliaries - Office Files, 1942-1973, Boxes 3-6:
Correspondence and records from the UAW International Office covering the years when the women's auxiliaries were affiliated consecutively with the CIO, the AFL-CIO, then the time of disaffiliation from the AFL-CIO and the transfer to the Women's Department. The files mainly are related to organizing.

Series III, UAW Local Women's Auxiliaries, 1948-1976, Boxes 6-10:
Correspondence, clippings, reports and financial records of local auxiliaries. These files reflect the interaction between these organizations and the UAW International Office.

Series IV, UAW Regional Women's Auxiliaries, 1945-1976, Boxes 10-12:
Correspondence and reports at the regional level for the UAW auxiliaries. These are mainly the Canadian regional files but there is also information from regions in the United States.

Series V, AFL-CIO Regional and National Auxiliaries, 1955-1971, Boxes 12-15:
Correspondence and reports generated by Catherine Gelles as vice-president on the executive board of the AFL-CIO National Auxiliaries.

Series VI, General Information, c. 1940-1973, Boxes 15-16:
Pamphlets, newscuttings, booklets, plays, and educational materials from the various auxiliaries in this collection.

Non-manuscript Material:
Copies of the Women's Auxiliary News received with this collection have been placed in the Archives Library. An oral history by Catherine Gelles is available.
Minutes and reports from meetings and conferences for the years the organization was referred to as the International UAW-CIO Women's Auxiliary and was affiliated with National CIO women's auxiliaries. These records are for meetings of the International Coordinating Committee, International conferences, and National conventions. Information relating to regional and local activities is also contained within these reports. The material reflects the early days of the organization, the attempts to define by-laws, activities during the war years, and concern over such issues as housing, world peace, price controls, status of minorities and the Taft-Hartley Act. Files are arranged alphabetically and then chronologically.

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1-9. International Coordinating Committee Minutes, 1942-49
10. 3rd International Conference Minutes, 5-9 Aug 1941
11-12. 4th International Conference Minutes, 3 Aug 1942
13-15. 5th International Conference Minutes, 4-8 Oct 1943

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1. 5th International Conference Minutes, 4-8 Oct 1943 (cont'd from Box 1)
2. 5th International Conference, Officers Report, 1943
3-7. 6th International Conference Minutes, 11-15 Sep 1944
8-13. 7th International Conference Minutes, 23 Mar 1946

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1-6. 8th International Conference Minutes, 9-12 Sep 1947
7. 8th International Conference, Officers Report, Nov 1947
8. Int'l. Women's Auxiliaries, Price Control Lobby Report, 19 Jun 1945
9. Int'l. Women's Auxiliaries, Sec'y-Treasurer Report, 18 Jun 1945
10. Int'l. Women's Auxiliaries, Sec'y-Treasurer Report, 12 Aug 1946
11. 12th Nat'l CIO Auxiliaries Convention Minutes, 16 Nov 1953
12. 14th Nat'l CIO Auxiliaries Convention Minutes, 1-3 Dec 1955
Correspondence, reports, financial records and other materials relating mainly to Catherine Gelles' work organizing women's auxiliaries. There is also correspondence from Emil Mazey as Director of the UAW Women's Auxiliaries. Other materials reflect the programs and activities of the auxiliaries. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

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3. Reports, Miscellaneous Activities, E. Mazey, 1970-71
5. Reports, U. S. Dept. of Labor, 1970-71
7. Survey, Membership Lists, 1973
8. Testimony, C. Gelles before Senate Banking Committee, 7 Jun 1945
9-10. Union Labels, 1964-69
11. 23rd UAW Convention, 1972
12. Women's Department, 1970-72
Correspondence, clippings, financial reports and other records of individual local auxiliaries. Mainly they are directed to the UAW International office and are concerned with organization, issuance of charters, and clarification of by-laws. There are annual reports of auxiliary activities and financial reports documenting fund-raising efforts. Files are arranged by auxiliary number.

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17. Auxiliary 29, Toledo, Ohio, 1962-73
18. Auxiliary 41, South Bend, Indiana, 1956
19. Auxiliary 45, South Bend, Indiana, n.d.
20. Auxiliary 48, Muncie, Indiana, 1948-71
21-22. Auxiliary 50, St. Catherines, Ont., 1961-74
23. Auxiliary 57, Ft. Wayne, Ind., 1967-72

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2. Auxiliary 69, Battle Creek, Mich., 1958-70
4. Auxiliary 92, Retired Workers Chapter, Philadelphia, Pa.,1973
5. Auxiliary 169, Kent, Ohio, 1974
6. Auxiliary 203, Anderson, Ind., 1956-70
7. Auxiliary 215, South Gate, Calif., 1947-71
8. Auxiliary 232, Adrian, Mich., 1966-68
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