

## The Industrial Workers of the World Collection

In 1965, the members of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) seeking to preserve the record of their efforts to establish One Big Union of all workers, placed the organization's extant papers and records in the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs. The I.W.W. Collection has been, and remains, one of our most popular and interesting research sources.

The I.W.W. had its origins in a meeting held in January 1905, by labor reform advocates and Socialists who were distrustful of the American Federation of Labor, worried over recent failures of the Western Federation of Miners, and disheartened by a series of unsuccessful strikes. These men hoped to weld the victimized and alienated working class into One Big Union. During a meeting called in June 1905, to discuss the idea of industrial unionism and promote working class solidarity, the I.W.W. was formed. Among the leaders and heroes of the organization were William D. Haywood, William E. Trautmann, Vincent St. John, Clarence Sherman, Thomas J. Hagerty, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Joe Hill, Frank Little, Wesley Everest, and others.

The I.W.W. Collection consists principally of General Office Bulletins, 1913-1970; Proceedings of Annual Conventions, 1905-1955; Financial Statements, 1919-1969; transcripts of the United States v William D. Haywood et al. conspiracy trial, 1917-1918; other United States Supreme Court trial proceedings; publications; and photographs.

Correspondence from Fred Thompson, W. H. Westman, Ralph Chaplin, Claire Whitaker, Mary Gallagher, Meyer Friedkin, Richard Brazier, and others relating to the personalities and events of I.W.W. history can be found in the collection. In addition to the Haywood trial, the important subjects discussed in the collection are the Centralia Conspiracy, the Colorado Coal Strike of 1928, and the Everett Massacre.

One of the less explored portions of the I.W.W. Collection is the defendants' transcript of the trial of William D. Haywood. The transcripts, comprising eighteen manuscript boxes, contain many detailed accounts of working people and conditions in the first years of the twentieth century. Descriptions of conditions in lumber and mining camps and sawmills; accounts of free speech fights; eyewitness stories of lynchings, killings, and police brutality; discussion of the problems of migratory workers; and conceptions of sabotage, pacifism, anarchy, and union organizing appear throughout the transcripts.

Correspondence between A. B. Prashner and Haywood, 1916-1917, and J. A. Law, Vincent St. John, and Haywood, 1913-1915, and 162 blue-pencilled original General Headquarters Bulletins, 1913-1917, are also included with the transcripts. The correspondence and bulletins, both originals and copies, contain the marginal notes of the defendants and their attorneys.

The Archives has acquired either original or microfilm copies of the I.W.W. newspapers published in Chicago, Joliet, Spokane,

Cleveland, New York, and other cities. We have supplemented our collections of Wobbly magazines, such as the *Industrial Pioneer*, *One Big Union Monthly*, and *One Big Union Advocate*, with microfilm copies from other libraries. Foreign language papers, such as *Bermunkas* and *Il Proletario*; are also available in the collection.

Ben Williams' manuscript, *The Saga of the One Big Union*; various editions of the *Little Red Song Book*; manuscripts of poems and songs related to I.W.W. activities; applications for union charters; posters and stickers; dues books; and cartoons are also found in the collection.

The existing guide to the I.W.W. Collection is currently being revised and updated to facilitate better use of the material. The new guide will include numerous pamphlets and related material added to the I.W.W. Collection since 1965.



*The funeral of Joe Hill, the martyred I.W.W. organizer and songwriter, in Chicago in 1915.*

## Out of the Past: The I.W.W. Minute Book, 1906-1910

On July 13, 1925, two federal marshals reported to the Northern District Court of Illinois, Eastern Division, that on July 10 and 11, they "took all of the I.W.W. paraphernalia, consisting same as samples, to the City Dump located at 35th and Kedzie, destroyed and burned, using gasoline, etc., as said court order for same." In such manner were the I.W.W. records, principally "all correspondence, literature, and other books," destroyed. The records of the I.W.W. were seized in September 1917, stored in Chicago, and presented in evidence during the trial of William D. Haywood and others. Few of the original records, such as correspondence and minutes, of the I.W.W. survived the raid of 1917.

Over half a century later, an original volume, Minutes of the General Executive Board of the Industrial Workers of the World, October 4, 1906 to September 15, 1911, has been found and added to the I.W.W. Collection here at Wayne State University.

This acquisition, which documents the growth of the organization between 1906 and 1911, offers new dimensions for the study of the I.W.W. In addition to the Minutes are other items of correspondence, financial accounts, plans for special drives, charts and bulletins. William E. Trautmann and Vincent St. John most frequently served as secretary and they figure prominently in the deliberations of the General Executive Board. The Minutes for the years 1906-1908 are most complete, but no entries were made for 1909.

Internal conflict plagued the union and is substantiated in the Minutes. The first meeting of the General Executive Board held on October 4, 1906, was of brief duration. The secretary, William E. Trautmann, simply noted:

"Upon entering the premises of General Headquarters the members of the Executive Board were prevented from entering by thugs, engaged by members of the old General Executive Board, and two members, Vincent St. John and Fred Hezlewood [sic], were attacked by these sluggers. Meeting of General Executive Board was immediately adjourned, by mutual agreement, so to prevent the adversaries from carrying out their nefarious designs."

Trouble with the Charles Sherman, Frank McCabe, and C. E. Mahoney faction of the I.W.W. is recounted in ensuing paragraphs. Copies of the leaflets, "Workers, Will You Stand for More Bloodshed" and "Shall Our Brothers Be Murdered," which were sent to the members in 1906 describing the rival faction's activities are also in the volume.

A handwritten account of the "Plan and Details of the Eight Hour Move, May 1, 1908" is included in the Minutes. The Plan, an early document of a fight that was not won until nearly ten years later, was to be distributed among metal and machinery workers. The Plan contained the following exhortation:

"This move can not fail if at most a majority of all workers employed within said industries (whether organized in any union or not) rise and call out, as if from one mouth: 'There's no need of us working more than eight hours per day! We shall not continue to do so.'"

Among the other matters discussed in the Minute Book are the Goldfield (Nevada) Affair, the Socialists, relations with the A.F. of L. "fakers," problems of supporting strikes by other unions, the appointing of organizers, organizing activities among musicians, telegraph and telephone workers, coal miners, railway workers, butcher workmen, members of the food stuff industries, and many other industries and crafts.

An index to the prominent persons and events discussed in the Minutes has been prepared and will be incorporated into the new guide to the I.W.W. Collection. The Minute Book, its pages faded and deteriorated, has been xeroxed on Permalife paper in order to permit immediate use by researchers. The original pages of the volume are now being restored by the latest deacidification and lamination techniques.

## Pictorial History of the I.W.W.

A major series of the I.W.W. Collection contains approximately 1,000 photographs and printed reproductions of events and persons prominent in the organization's history. The photographs have been arranged alphabetically by person, topic, and event and a cross index facilitates selection and retrieval.

Important groups containing a significant number of photographs by topic are the Centralia Conspiracy; Colorado Coal Strike of 1928; Durst Hop Ranch Strike; Everett Massacre; Harlan, Kentucky; Junior Wobblies; lumber and steel industries; deportation of Wobblies; and the Ludlow Massacre. Among the individual photographs are Eugene Debs, William D. Haywood, Joe Hill, Thomas Mooney, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and William E. Trautmann.

The I.W.W. photograph collection continues to be an excellent source of early portraits and informal poses of persons important in I.W.W. history. Considerable care was exercised by the I.W.W. in obtaining photographs or other printed reproductions of the physical layout and locations of mines and camps. Only a few action shots of strikes and confrontations are available in the collection.

The photographs have been cleaned and drymounted for preservation. Important photographs and those in great demand have been photocopied and duplicate prints made for day-to-day use. Photographs from the collection have had widespread use and publication. Most recently, Encyclopedia Britannica incorporated some of the I.W.W. photographs in a labor film-strip series.

## Personal Papers

In recent years the Archives has obtained several collections from Wobblies and their supporters that supplement the I.W.W. Collection. Among those are the papers of John and Phyllis Collier, Nicolaas Steelink, Matilda Robbins, E. W. Latchem, and John Panzner.

### THE JOHN AND PHYLLIS COLLIER COLLECTION

The papers of John Collier (William Armistead Nelson Collier Jr.) and Phyllis Fenington Collier were placed in the Archives by Mrs. Collier. John Collier (1874-1947), a writer and poet, was associated with a variety of labor, political, and cultural organizations throughout his career. He was a speaker for the Syndicalist Movement in England, the I.W.W. in Los Angeles, and a member of Upton Sinclair's Helicon Home Colony in Englewood, New Jersey; the Single Tax Colony at Fairhope, Alabama; and the Spirit Fruit Society near Chicago during the early decades of the twentieth century. Collier devoted most of his time to writing articles on literature, socialism, anarchism, and mysticism and poetry that appeared under various pseudonyms: Nelson Collier, Armistead Nelson Collier, and John Collier.

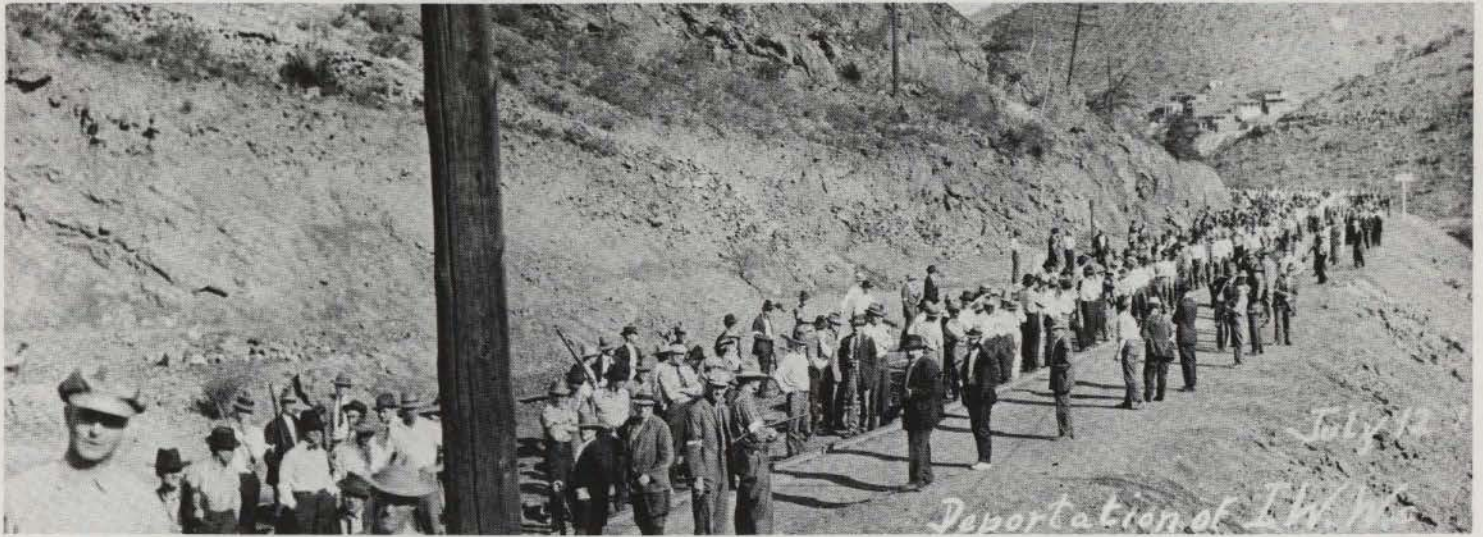
In 1921, he married Phyllis Fenington an organizer of the Cooper Union Institute and New York Training School for Community Center Workers. Mrs. Collier later served as secretary of the American Labor Party of New York State, 1919-1920, and ran for the state legislature on the Farmer-Labor ticket. From 1932 to 1958, Mrs. Collier was a social worker in California.

John Collier's papers contain correspondence, poems, articles, unpublished clippings, narratives from his diaries and journals, and a copy of his four volume, unpublished autobiography, *The Search*. Among the subjects discussed in the papers are anarchist, Socialist, I.W.W., Trotskyite, and Communist activities; the Etoro-Giovannitti trial stemming from the I.W.W. strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts; the Sacco-Vanzetti case; the Garland Farm and Garland Fund, 1920-1926; the split among radicals over pacifist attitudes toward World War I; and the several single tax and cooperative communities Collier joined.

Phyllis Collier's papers also include correspondence, clippings, photographs, and her autobiography. An important segment of these papers includes correspondence, clippings, leaflets, pamphlets, and manuscripts by and about Upton Sinclair. The items pertain to Sinclair's E.P.I.C. (End Poverty in California) campaigns and Helicon Home Colony for the period 1906-1938. Other correspondents in the Collier's Collection are Floyd Dell, Victor E. Calverton, Roger Baldwin, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Charles Garland, Norman Thomas, Miriam Allen de Ford, and other political, labor and literary leaders.

### THE NICOLAAS STEELINK COLLECTION

The papers of Nicolaas Steelink, covering the period 1916-1953, consist primarily of correspondence between Steelink and his friends and confidants following his conviction and



imprisonment for criminal syndicalism in 1920. Correspondents include his wife, Fania; Fanny Bixby Spencer, a philanthropist and playwright who aided I.W.W. prisoners; William Thurston Brown, a former Unitarian minister retained by Miss Spencer; Fred Thompson and W. H. Westman, I.W.W. officials; and others. The letters are written in both English and Dutch, some of the latter having been translated.

An organizer for the I.W.W. for many years, Steelink also contributed articles to the *Industrial Pioneer*, using the pseudonym, Ennes Ellae. Mr. Steelink is currently engaged in writing his autobiography.

#### THE MATILDA ROBBINS COLLECTION

The papers of this I.W.W. organizer and publicist were placed in the Archives by Mrs. Robbins' daughter, Vita Henderson, in 1965. Mrs. Robbins (Rabinowitz) joined the I.W.W. in 1912 and became involved in the textile strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts.

The collection consists of manuscript stories and experiences relating to Mrs. Robbins' organizing efforts and the struggles of her fellow factory workers. Among the collection are: *A Sketch Book of Radicals*; *The Agitators*; *From the Life of A Wage Earning Mother*; *From the Notebook of a Labor Organizer*; *Magdalene of the Mills*; and *My Story*; plus several untitled manuscripts concerning her life.

#### THE E. W. LATCHEM COLLECTION

A member of the I.W.W. since 1912, Mr. Latchem worked as an organizer for the Agricultural Workers Organization after it was chartered in 1915.

The collection contains the minutes of the Harvest Workers Conference in Kansas City in 1915; leaflets; material on the I.W.W. General Administration controversy in 1924; and his manuscript, *The I.W.W. in the West—Its Significance*.

#### THE JOHN PANZNER COLLECTION

Mr. Panzner (Pancner), an organizer for the I.W.W. in Minnesota, Michigan, California, and Nevada, was sentenced to Leavenworth Federal Prison for his union activities. One of the defendants in the Haywood trial, Panzner's testimony in August 1918, recounts many of his experiences across the country. Later, Mr. Panzner became a member of the United Auto Workers.

Correspondence, articles by Panzner on labor relations at Ford Motor Company and Chrysler Corporation, pamphlets on European labor and social reform, and a description of the circumstances surrounding his imprisonment comprise this collection. Several I.W.W. pamphlets from this collection were transferred to the larger I.W.W. Collection. An oral history by Mr. Panzner about his union activities enhances the value of his collection.

*In the wake of a strike in the Arizona metal mines, over 1200 Wobblies were deported from Bisbee into the New Mexico desert on July 12, 1917.*

### Related I.W.W. Material

Fred Thompson, currently active in the I.W.W. in Chicago, secured bound volumes of the *Butte Daily Bulletin* for the Archives. These volumes, 1918-1921, are important sources of information on I.W.W. activities in the far West. The *Daily People*, a Socialist Party organ, for 1905-1906, has also been obtained by the Archives and contains many articles and editorials concerning the I.W.W.

The Archives is in possession of a tape recording entitled "Personal Recollections of the Industrial Workers of the World" by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. The tape was made when Miss Flynn spoke at Northern Illinois University in November 1962. Michael Johnson, a member of the History Department at the university, presented the tape to the Archives.

Nick DiGaetano, the contributor of many of the Archives' labor newspapers, has provided one of the best oral history interviews concerning the I.W.W., particularly Wobbly activities in Detroit and the Italian Branch of the organization.

The Archives has received newspaper clippings gathered by Tor Cedervall concerning I.W.W. activities in Cleveland, Ohio, in the 1930's. Also, additional pamphlets, clippings, and newspapers contained in material placed in the Archives by John Oneka, George Lutzai, and Joe Brown have been interfiled in the I.W.W. Collection.

Mrs. Joyce Kornbluh, the author of *Rebel Voices, An I.W.W. Anthology*, recently presented to the Archives notes and chapter drafts from her book; correspondence with various I.W.W. members, including Fred Thompson, Ben Williams, Sulo Peltola; thirty-nine I.W.W. pamphlets; drafts of unidentified articles and papers such as "A Brief History of the Briggs Strike By A Briggs Worker;" and miscellaneous I.W.W. clippings, poems, and songs.

### Research in the Archives

Evidence of the continuing interest in the history of the I.W.W. is seen in the number of scholars who have used the I.W.W. Collection in recent months. Among others, Terry Cole of the University of Oregon; John Townsend of the University of Minnesota; and Len DeCaux, the author of the recently published book, *Labor Radical, From The Wobblies to the CIO*, have examined the collection.

Wayne State University students from Economics 549, American Labor History, have used numerous collections during the spring quarter for their research papers.

## Recent Acquisitions

*The UAW Canadian Regional Office Collection.* The Archives has received sixty-eight transfer cases of records from the Canadian office of the UAW within the last year. The records, covering the period 1939-1969, have not yet been processed, but a preliminary inventory of the material is available. According to the UAW-Archives agreement, all records must be twenty years old before they can be used by students and researchers.

The Canadian UAW collection contains correspondence with locals, International Representatives, and the International Union; negotiation, arbitration, and agreement files with Canadian companies; subject files concerning education, social and community programs, relations with the Canadian Labour Congress and Ontario Federation of Labour, economic conferences, and a myriad of other subjects; and press releases, speeches, and newspaper clippings.

*The Ann and Heber Blankenhorn Collections.* In August 1969, Mrs. Ann Blankenhorn placed her husband's papers in the Archives. The collection, comprising thirteen manuscript boxes, covers the period 1906-1967.

A graduate of the College of Wooster and Columbia University, Mr. Blankenhorn worked for the New York *Evening Sun* where he became interested in working conditions and labor organizing; after World War I he served as co-director of the Bureau of Industrial Research and became involved in the Interchurch World Movement and its role in the Steel Strike of 1919. He became a member of the international staff of *Labor* in 1924 and later became assistant to Senator Robert F. Wagner on the passage of the National Labor Relations Act and to the LaFollette Committee investigating cases against the Ford Motor Company, 1935-1941. After World War II, he returned to the National Labor Relations Board for one year before undertaking investigations into the attempts made on the lives of Victor and Walter Reuther.

The Blankenhorn Collection contains correspondence, memoranda, articles, unpublished essays and reports, 1914-1958, and notes and chapter drafts of Mr. Blankenhorn's autobiography. Among the subjects discussed in the material are early NLRB activities, the LaFollette Committee investigations, steel and auto worker unionization, detective agencies and industry, social and economic conditions of miners, the Steel Strike of 1919, the Spanish Revolution, and psychological warfare projects during World War II.

Ann Craton Blankenhorn's papers, covering the period 1922-1968, contain correspondence, clippings, diaries, manuscript notes, articles and unpublished essays. Mrs. Blankenhorn was associated with the Bureau of Children's Guardians, 1916-1918; the New York Child Labor Committee; during the early 1920's she conducted research on the clothing and textile industries for Columbia University and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; and between 1926 and 1931 she was a caseworker for the American Red Cross.

The collection contains information on working conditions in the textile industries and the Works Progress Administration. A major portion of the material consists of notes and chapter drafts concerning Mrs. Blankenhorn's investigation of the influence of the church in industrial towns during the 1940's. Correspondence from and a personal interview with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn after her release from Alderson Federal Prison in 1957 are also included in the collection.

## Bits and Pieces

Archivist Warner Pflug's *The UAW in Pictures* is now available from the Wayne State University Press. This volume, containing over 300 photographs, documents the automobile industry and the UAW from 1900 to 1970. Among the many subjects depicted in this work are the early automobile industry, organizing efforts of the American Federation of Labor, the sit-down strikes, organizing Ford Motor Company, UAW leaders, and the many social, political and economic programs of the UAW.

Another Archives staff member, Roberta McBride, is compiling a bibliography on *The Afro-American in Detroit and Michigan*. This work, to be completed early in 1972, at present contains more than 1200 entries that have been examined, abstracted, and indexed by subject, geographical area, and personal name. The annotated bibliography will contain all available printed materials concerning Afro-Americans in Michigan, with emphasis on the Detroit area and urban problems, employment, housing, education, and related subjects.

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