

S0504 Oil, Chemical, And Atomic Workers International Union , 1933-Addenda, 1925-1982

61 Folders

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Rose Feurer donated an addenda to the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (SEE: WHMC collection 479) on June 29, 1990. On October 28, 1991, she donated an additional addenda to the collection.

Merger talks between the Oil Workers International Union (OWIU) and the smaller United Gas, Coke, and Chemical Workers International Union (UGCCW) began during the spring of 1954. The Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) had chartered the UGCCW in 1942 after a group of local unions, opposing the decision of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) to leave the CIO, withdrew from UMWA District 50.

An undisciplined and loosely organized union, the UGCCW, which was composed predominantly of low-wage workers living in the eastern states, experienced constant financial stringencies and probably would not have survived without CIO assistance. Like other unions in the petroleum and chemical industries, leaders of the UGCCW encountered great resistance in the effort to organize workers within their jurisdiction. Organizing failures resulted primarily from the effective anti-union tactics of the huge corporation that dominated the industry, but the trade unions themselves further exacerbated the problem through expensive and distracting rivalries that disrupted organizing drives and weakened the union position during collective bargaining negotiations. Consequently most UGCCW leaders were pleased to hear OWIU president O.A. Knight tell the delegates to the 1950 OWIU national convention:

I think at this time...it behooves us to extend an invitation...to the Gas, Coke, and Chemical Union, which is so closely related to ours that you can't tell where theirs stops and ours starts,...to sit down with us and plan for a united movement in the oil and chemical industry in America.

The first step toward greater unity came in 1951 with the organization of the National Coalition of Oil Unions, a collective bargaining unit that included many independents as well as the OWIU and the UGCCW. Finally, in the late winter of 1955 the two organizations agreed to a merger, creating the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union. Clearly the OWIU was the senior partner in the merger, and its president, O.A. Knight headed the new union.

The UGCCW, which held annual conventions, maintained its international headquarters in Washington, D.C. Full time officers included a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer. The executive council was composed of the full-time officers and members elected from eleven geographical districts. At the time of the OCAW merger, the UGCCW paid per-

capita taxes to the CIO on 72,000 members.

During the remaining years of the 1950s, leaders of the OCAW devoted much of their attention to problems emanating from the merger. Both unions had long traditions of rank-and-file participation in decision making, and while the OWIU had gone further toward centralizing authority, advocates of local autonomy in both unions jealously guarded their prerogatives. While a healthy and desirable condition, this state of affairs complicated the resolution of the inevitable administrative problems following the merger. Disagreements erupted over dues payments, the degree of power to be exercised by the president, collective bargaining policies, procedures for authorizing strikes, representation at conventions, and the election of officers. Although compromises were arranged on most issues, in general terms the positions of the larger OWIU usually predominated.

The merger eliminated existing or potential jurisdictional problems between the OWIU and the UGCCW, but it did not provide the expected organizing gains or improve the collective bargaining positions anticipated by its sponsors. The OCAW steadily added new members but lost almost as many to technological changes, new production methods, craft reclassification, and rival unions. As a result, membership fluctuates but has remained fairly constant since 1957. Moreover, the merger movement initiated by the OWIU in 1950 stalled after the formation of the OCAW in 1955. Merger talks with the International Chemical Workers Union collapsed and although a few unaffiliated unions joined, most remained independent or merged with other unions.

The OCAW, which holds biennial conventions, maintains its international headquarters in Denver, Colorado. Principal officers include a president, two vice-presidents, and a secretary-treasurer. The executive board consists of sixteen rank-and-file members. In 1973 the OCAW reported a membership of 172,000 in 596 locals.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union Addenda expands the previous collection, number 479. Included in the addenda are issues of Laclede News, copies of labor agreements, programs from annual dances, and scrapbooks. The only things which are really new and adds to the original collection is the file on the War Labor Board and the information concerning the strike of 1935. All of this information, however, is less than complete and therefore of limited assistance to the researcher.

The addenda donated by Ms. Feurer on October 28, 1991 comprises the last series in this collection. It include a framed commemoration of the United Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers Local 6's contribution to the Payroll Savings Plan; a run of the Daily Strike Bulletin from the 1935 Gas Workers strike, some of which duplicates the issues found in series 8; newsclippings on the 1935 strike, including one from the St. Louis Union Labor Advocate; and issue of District 50 News from 1941; financial reports, 1945-1949; the 35th anniversary issue of Gas Workers Journal, 1968; and photographs 504.1-504.18. These photographs include union officials and the physical facilities of the Laclede Gas Light Company, 1925-1937. Three oversize photographs of Laclede workers appear at the end of the collection.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES 1, Conventions, 1943-1966: This series includes programs from conventions,

souvenir programs, and programs for annual dances from 1943 to 1953 and 1966. Folders 1-8.

SERIES 2, King-Thompson Law, 1958-1959: This series consists of briefs from the Supreme Court and the Appellate Court concerning the union's battle with this law. Dates range from 1958 to 1959. Folders 9-11.

SERIES 3, Laclede News, 1957-1968: This series contains copies of the Laclede Gas Company Bulletin for the years 1957 through 1968. Folders 12 through 19.

SERIES 4, Membership, 1941-42: The only thing in this series is the Membership Card Envelope of William Kimberling, of local no. 12006 in 1941-42. Folder 20.

SERIES 5, Negotiations, 1943-1946: This series consists of the War Labor Board file from the World War II era. It documents the negotiations and limitations which OCAW functioned during the war. Dates are from 1943 to 1946. Folder 21.

SERIES 6, Pamphlets, 1935-1982: This series includes miscellaneous pamphlets including By-Laws and Labor Agreements from 1935 to 1982. Folders 22 through 53.

SERIES 7, Strikes, 1935: This series contains newspaper clippings which detail the strike of 1935 which lasted from March until July. Folder 54.

SERIES 8, Scrapbooks, 1937-1942: This series (which is in a package) consists of three scrapbooks which contain newspaper clippings concerning OCAW and its activities.

SERIES 9, Addenda, 1930-1968: Donated by Rose Feurer on October 28, 1991. Includes a Payroll Savings Plan Commemoration; Newsclippings, Notes and Correspondence; Financial Reports; a copy of Gas House Workers Journal from 1968; a run of Gas House Workers Daily Strike Bulletin from 1935; an article on the Gas Workers from Union Labor Advocate, April 15, 1935; and photographs of Laclede Gas Light physical facilities and workers, including Gas Workers Labor officials, 1925-1947.

FOLDER LIST

SERIES 1 - Conventions, 1943-1966

BOX 1 (45664)

1. Program for Annual Dance, 1943
2. Program for Annual Dance, 1946
3. Program for Annual Dance, 1947
4. Program for Annual Dance, 1949
5. Program for Annual Dance, 1951
6. Program for Annual Dance, 1952
7. Program, 1953
8. Program for Annual Dance, 1966

SERIES 2 - King-Thompson Law, 1958-1959 9. Supreme Court Brief: Local #8-6 vs. State of Missouri 1958

10. Supreme Court Brief: Local #8-6 vs. State of Missouri, 1959

11. US Court of Appeals Brief: Local #148 vs. Region 14, nd

SERIES 3 - Laclede News, 1957-1968

12. Laclede News, 1957-58
13. Laclede News, 1960
14. Laclede News, 1961
15. Laclede News, 1962
16. Laclede News, 1963
17. Laclede News, 1964
18. Laclede News, 1965
19. Laclede News, 1967-68

SERIES 4 - Membership, 1941-1942

20. Membership Card Envelope of William Kimberling of local no. 12006, 1941-42

SERIES 5 - Negotiations, 1943-1946

21. War Labor Board, 1943-46

SERIES 6 - Pamphlets, 1935-1982

22. Labor Agreement, Local #18799, 1935
23. Bylaws & Agreement, Local #12006, 1939
24. Bylaws & Agreement, Local #12006, 1941
25. Agreement between UE & IUOE, #148, 1942
26. Agreement between UE & St. Louis County Gas Co. & IUOE, #148, 1942
27. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1943
28. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1944
29. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1945
30. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1946
31. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1947
32. Labor Agreement, Local #194, 1947
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34. Labor Agreement, Local #194, 1949
35. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1950
36. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1952
37. Labor Agreement, Local #6, 1953
38. Labor Agreement, Local #109, 1954
39. Labor Agreement, Local #8-6, 1955
40. Labor Agreement, Local #8-109, 1956
41. Labor Agreement, Local #8-109, 1957
42. Labor Agreement, Local #8-194, 1958
43. Labor Agreement, Local #8-109, 1958
44. Labor Agreement, Local #8-109, 1959
45. Labor Agreement, Local #8-6, 1960
46. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1962
47. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1964
48. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1965
49. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1968
50. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1971
51. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1975

- 52. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1979
- 53. Labor Agreement, Local #5-6, 1982

SERIES 7 - Strikes, 1935

- 54. Newsclippings from 1935 Strike, 3/28/35-7/18/35

SERIES 8 - Scrapbooks, 1937-1942

Package: Daily Strike Bulletin, and two volumes of Membership meeting minutes, 1937-42.

SERIES 9 - Addenda, 1930-1968

55. Official Payroll Savings Plan, Framed Commemoration, Local No. 6, United Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers of America, CIO, nd.

- 56. Gas House Workers, Daily Strike Bulletin, 1935
- 57. St. Louis Union Labor Advocate, April 15, 1935
- 58. Newsclippings, Notes and Correspondence, 1937-1945
- 59. The District 50 News, Vol. 4, No. 42, Oct. 20, 1941
- 59. Financial Reports, 1945-1949
- 60. Gas Workers Journal, 35th Anniversary, April 27, 1968
- 61. Photographs:
 - 504.1 unidentified framed photograph
 - 504.2 Jack Dunleavy; Tom Morley; Martin Wagner; John Hamilton
 - 504.3 Laclede Gas Light Company during war ("S" on building for "shelter")
 - 504.4 Rasmussen - unidentified
 - 504.5 Rasmussen - superintendent at Laclede Gas
 - 504.6 Station A, Main & Rutger Streets
 - 504.7 Station B, Station E
 - 504.8 Station E
 - 504.9 Station J, Fitting Department, Californi and Gravois Streets, view from California (back)
 - 504.10 Constructing a holder station, 6/15/25
 - 504.11 Labor Day Parade - Hamilton, 1937
 - 504.12 A. E. Nicholls; Sam Laudlow; Geo. D. Dodd; John Clancy; H. O. Nies; Pat Hinnely; V. Bixler; Al Parent; Henry Schuermann; Al Knobe (foremen), Sept. 20, 1937
 - 504.13 Meter Readers at Laclede Gas, c. 1937
 - 504.14 John Hamilton, organizer in meter reading department for Gas House Workers, became president on union in 1939? Scottish, this is from 1939?
 - 504.15 Oven and By Product - Coke Station, 1947

OVERSIZE PHOTOGRAPHS

- 504.16 Laclede Gas Company, Meter Department, April 29, 1930
- 504.17 North District Fitting Department, Laclede Gas Light, May 12, 1930
- 504.18 Laclede Gas Light, Street Department, May 12, 1930

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