

Southern Labor Archives

Leslie S. Hough

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The Southern Labor Archives was founded in 1969 out of the coincidence of interest on the part of the trade union and academic communities in the Southeastern United States in creating a repository for materials on the history of the labor movement in the region. Starting in 1971 the Archives gathered such materials, and now makes them available to scholars at its offices in Atlanta. The Archives is a unit of the Library at Georgia State University, and is located in Alumni Hall on the University's downtown campus. Hours for research are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and by appointment. Scholars are encouraged to visit and make use of our collections.

In pursuit of its interest in regional labor research resources, the Southern Labor Archives sought the blessing of the state labor federations in the Southeast, beginning with Georgia, and later in other states. State federations in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia gave substantial bodies of records to the Southern Labor Archives. AFL-CIO central bodies in a number of Southern cities, including Atlanta, Birmingham, Augusta, Memphis, and Jacksonville, followed suit.

Two international unions, the United Textile Workers of America and the United Furniture Workers of America have donated their historical records to the Southern Labor Archives. Both represent workers in two of the most important Southern industries, and each of the unions themselves has a most interesting history. Southern regional offices of a number of other international unions, including the Woodworkers, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, Communication Workers, Ladies Garment Workers, and Machinists have also given records to our repository in Atlanta.

Historical materials from local unions of both industrial and building and construction trades unions are among our most important collections. These records span the period from the late nineteenth century to the 1970s. International union affiliations of these locals include the Typographers and Machinists among the oldest materials, and Rubber Workers, Asbestos Workers, Carpenters, Electrical Workers, and Printing Pressmen among those donating records of more recent vintage. Workers in the service sector are represented by historical materials from other unions, including Barbers, Firefighters, Paperworkers, Postal Workers, Retail Clerks, Transit Workers, and Nurses.

Personal papers of leaders of the labor movement in the South are prominent among the Southern Labor Archives holdings. Among the individuals involved are Stanton Smith, former President of the Tennessee State Labor Council; John Ramsay, former head of community relations for the CIO Southern Drive; Stetson Kennedy, labor and civil rights activist; Southern CIO official Carey Haigler; and the late Tennessee State Labor Council President, Matt Lynch.

The Southern Labor Archives welcomes inquiries regarding our holdings.

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