Labour Archives: An Annotated Bibliography

by ROD YOUNG

The need for a bibliography documenting the vast array of available secondary literature concerning labour archives is clearly recognized and has in the past been partly answered by numerous special issues of, and/or supplements to, labour history or archival periodicals which have assembled bibliographical listings of secondary literature available to readers.* To this compiler's knowledge, however, no attempt has been made to organize this scattered literature into a single bibliography designed to provide an annotated listing of existing North American periodical literature on labour and trade union archives.

This bibliography which seeks to direct researchers to useful reference tools in the field of labour and trade union archives has been compiled primarily from a review of major North American archival and labour history periodicals. Additional references were culled from numerous indexing and abstracting services, such as *American History and Life* and *Work Related Abstracts*, and other guides to periodical literature, as well as relevant articles gleaned from a systematic survey of existing bibliographical literature. Brief annotations accompany each entry, alerting readers to articles relating specifically to their subject areas.

The bibliography's inclusion in this theme issue of *Archivaria* provides a useful reference source for both labour archivists and interested individuals. Its clear focus of concentration is English North American trade union and labour archival literature.** Articles which merely allude to labour archives or trade union records as a cursory background for other topics have been omitted. Unfortunately, it has also been necessary to exclude the substantial corpus of British, European, and French Canadian literature concerning this subject.

Although the compiler has strived to be comprehensive, no attempt has been made to include published lists of archival acquisitions, unpublished papers, institutional or collection guides, archival inventories or finding aids, and other research tools frequently found in the reference areas of archives. Such a compilation, while undoubtedly useful, proved beyond the scope of this bibliography, but might be incorporated into future supplements.

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It goes without saying that any errors and omissions in this bibliography are the sole responsibility of the author himself. Should any shortcomings be uncovered, they can be brought to his attention at the following address: Labour Archives Bibliography, Labour Archivists' Special Interest Section, c/o Government Archives Division, National Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3. This bibliography is not an end in itself but will, one hopes, spur others to undertake similar work in this field. Labour archivists must gain bibliographic control over the essential body of reference literature needed to address the thorny problems encountered daily in the management of labour records in archives.

* These include the following issues: Archivum 27 (1980), Labor History 23 (Fall 1982), and extensive footnote references in Archivaria 4 (Summer 1977).

** Publication deadlines necessitated concluding the bibliographical search in December 1988. Consequently, some recent articles may have been missed.


The oral record is increasingly acknowledged by historians as a useful tool for the writing of labour history. This article, written by a Canadian labour historian, points out the value of such documentation.


When starting a labour archives, the support of organized labour is essential. The author traces the growth and development of the labour archives at Dalhousie University and describes some of its major collections.


Labour and trade union records are not the only sources available for the study of working-class people. The author emphasizes the value of business records held at the Dalhousie University Archives in reconstructing the lives and history of workers.


The diversity of the new labour history presents a serious challenge to archivists. This article argues for broader collection programmes to ensure that the unorganized worker is documented.

Bloomfield, Elizabeth. “As Accurate as is Humanly Possible”: Accessing the Manuscript Industrial Schedules of the 1871 Census of Canada.” Archivaria 23 (Winter 1986-87), pp. 185-192.
The author outlines the methodology and objectives of the ongoing 1871 Canadian census machine-readable data conversion project being conducted at the University of Guelph. When complete, the project hopes to serve a panoply of research interests from various academic disciplines.


The author summarizes the results of a questionnaire survey sent to approximately 1,200 Michigan AFL-CIO affiliates regarding the state of local union records.

Boccaccio, Mary. “Labor Resources at the University of Maryland at College Park.” Labor History 23 (Fall 1982), pp. 498-502.

Written by the first labour archivist of Maryland, the article discusses the institution’s collecting programme and the records of three labour organizations.


In an early article on the writing of labour history, Bornet urges historians to usurp the role previously played by economists in writing labour history and to produce histories which are based on records and written to study the past, not as a background for economic history.


The sources for local history and community study are both diverse and rich. This article explores many avenues of investigation open to professional historians and researchers when tracing the evolution of the labour movement at the local level.


The University of British Columbia Special Collections Division has long served as the labour movement’s repository in British Columbia. This article surveys some of the acquisitions at the institution which are useful for the study of labour history.
This article traces the development of the labour collections at the University of British Columbia Library’s Special Collections Division.


While the emphasis of this article is on the establishment of the Rio Grande archives programme, the author also discusses the value of the collection as a source for labour history.


The United States Department of Labor Library houses essential collections for the study of labour history. This article examines its establishment and purpose, as well as describing some of its holdings.


This article draws a distinction between the old and new labour history, and underlines the need for conventional source materials, when writing of the latter.


Browne proved the lone voice during the American Historical Association's convention of 1953 arguing that the American labour movement should cease “putting their records out for adoption” and instead establish their own archives.


The author provides an overview of the collections held at the Catholic University of America.


The article explains the scope, purpose, and methodology of this oral history project undertaken at the University of New Brunswick in 1974.

Cherwinski, W.J. “St. John’s Coopers’ Minutes Discovered.” Bulletin of the Committee on Canadian Labour History 7 (Spring 1979), p. 3.

The author briefly describes the discovery of early twentieth-century minute books created by the St. John’s Journeymen Coopers’ Union and provides an overview of this collection.

Connors argues that labour archivists must respond to changing political, economic, and social conditions facing unions to develop successful long-range planning for American labour archives.


The G. Robert Vincent Voice Library at Michigan State University is the largest such institution in the world. This article documents the Library's efforts to collect, preserve, and make available its rich collection of labour oral history.


The authors recount the history and growth of the Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University and offer an analysis of some influences common to the development of all emerging archival institutions.


From its inception, the Southern Labor Archives has sought to collect the records of all southeastern labour organizations rather than concentrating on the records of one or more international unions. These authors trace the institution's beginnings and describe its most important research holdings.


Di Roma details the extent of primary and secondary source materials for the study of labour history and industrial relations held at the New York Public Library.


An analysis of the difficulties encountered by the labour historian in locating relevant source material essential to the writing of labour history.

East, Dennis. "Labor History Resources in the Ohio Historical Society." *Labor History* 23 (Fall 1982), pp. 513-516.

During the period from 1975 to 1979, the Ohio Labor History Project undertook to locate, inventory, acquire, and preserve labour union records and personal papers of Ohio trade unionists. This article details the results of their past work and continuing efforts.

In 1959, the Committee for the Preservation of Labor Archives, consisting of archivists, librarians, and academics, was formed to persuade unions to preserve their records. The author describes the formation and early activities of the Committee in its efforts to document labour’s heritage.


An analysis and descriptive survey of the archival collections held at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University.


The author explains the factors culminating in the establishment of a labour archives at Pennsylvania State University and provides a list of its holdings.


The Fred Lewis Pattee Library of Pennsylvania State University contains a wealth of information for the study of labour history and industrial relations. The authors focus their attention on primary sources contained in two special collections: the Pennsylvania Historical Collections and Labor Archives and the University Library’s Microforms Division.


The National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C., is a storehouse of information concerning the life and labour of the American people. This lengthy article describes selected materials on a wide range of labour topics dating from the Revolutionary War to the recent past.


The city of Philadelphia has experienced a long and varied industrial and labour history. Not surprisingly, the collections at the Urban Archives of Temple University reflect this diversity. This article surveys the archives’ largest labour collections and comments on its recent efforts to acquire business and labour records relating to the city.


The paucity of union records dating back to the turn of the century is a lamentable but acknowledged fact. This article describes the accidental discovery of a cache of early union records in Peterborough.

In 1972 the Public Archives of Canada inaugurated an acquisitions programme designed to document the history of trade unions in Canada. In this brief survey of the programme, the author outlines the progress of the collection after its first year of operation.


This retrospective article surveys recent trends in the writing of labour history, suggests some current methodological problems, and insists on the need for primary documentation in writing authoritative labour history.

Gamble, Robert A. and George Green. “Labor Archives at the University of Texas at Arlington.” *Labor History* 23 (Fall 1982), pp. 526-528.

This article provides a succinct progress report on the Texas Labor Archives after 15 years of operation.


The authors trace the development of the Texas Labor Archives housed in the library of the University of Texas at Arlington and provide an overview of its holdings.


A discussion of the methodological aspects of a project undertaken at the University of Rochester to compile an extensive databank on the Knights of Labor.


The Berkeley campus of the University of California houses important source materials relating to labour history. This article presents a detailed inventory of these materials and special research tools available on the campus.


Printed source materials, until recently shunned by labour historians, can prove potentially useful to scholars. Nevertheless, such sources have not been systematically investigated. The author explores the wealth of historical information contained in collections of rare books, historical imprints, and pamphlets housed in the Library of Congress Rare Book and Special Collections Division.


The Hudson’s Bay Company Archives provides a unique opportunity for the historian to study a frequently ignored area of labour history, namely, rural and pre-
industrial labour. This article demonstrates the value of a myriad of sources held at this institution.


In this retrospective article on American labour archives, the author provides a detailed account of the history of these institutions in the United States.


Ham, Gerald F. "Labor Manuscripts in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin." Labor History 7 (Fall 1966), pp. 313-342.

A discussion of the establishment of the labour acquisition programme at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, plus a descriptive survey of its holdings.

Hann, Russell G. See: Kealey, G.S.


An analysis of a project undertaken at the United States Department of Labor to prepare an inventory of the official correspondence of the Secretaries of Labor.


Any survey of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress would reveal many collections related to both individuals and organizations which scholars would find rewarding for the study of labour history. The author provides a description of the general scope and content of the Division’s more significant and relevant twentieth-century collections.

Hough, Leslie S. See: Dinwiddie, Robert.


A brief overview of the creation and progress of the Southern Labor Archives, touching on its major archival holdings.


A descriptive survey of key holdings on American radicalism held at various institutions in the United States.

In addition to its importance for the study of the fur trade, the Hudson’s Bay Company archives also contain invaluable information relevant to the study of Canadian business and labour history. The author briefly outlines its significance to scholars.


This article by two Canadian labour historians stresses the connection between archival sources and labour history and underlines the common interests of the archival and historical professions.


The appraisal of labour union grievance case files proves a difficult task due to their voluminous extent and repetitive nature. This article states that when appraising these and other case files, both an internal and external analysis of the files, coupled with interviews with creators, provides one solution to this problem.


A brief article explaining the origin and development of the Texas Labor Archives and its eventual evolution into the Texas AFL-CIO’s official repository.


Established in 1974, one year prior to the organization’s seventy-fifth anniversary, the Archives of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union is a rich source of information chronicling the ILGWU’s involvement in crucial social, political, and economic issues in American history. This archivist highlights significant ILGWU collections and explains their importance for researchers.


In 1953, when the Society of American Archivists reactivated its Committee on Labor Records, the Committee sent questionnaires to those organizations possessing labour collections. The author summarizes the results of this questionnaire and comments on the information compiled.


Written by the former Chairman of the Committee on Labor Records of the Society of American Archivists, this piece provides the results of a survey completed in the United States detailing the existence of both trade union and government labour records.

In late 1960, the Committee on Labor Records of the Society of American Archivists distributed a questionnaire to unions at the State-Federation level. In this article, the authors report on the survey's results.


This brief note on the development of the national inventory of oral history collections undertaken between the Public Archives of Canada and the Canadian Oral History Association outlines some of the goals of this project.


This article surveys the valuable holdings for labour historians held at a number of libraries connected with Harvard University.

Maher, Edward. See: Chaison, Gary N.


The decades since 1950 may be accurately described as the "golden age" of archives in the United States. In this retrospective article surveying the historical development of labour archives south of the border, the author summarizes past triumphs and offers his projections for the future.


A thorough review of the origins and ongoing programme of the Wayne State University Archives in the field of collecting labour records.


A direct appeal to AFL-CIO affiliates to place their records in archives in order to safeguard labour's history.


The Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, established in 1960 to collect the records of the American labour movement, has considerably expanded its collecting scope over its years of operation. The author highlights the institution's achievements in collecting labour records and provides an overview of its extensive archival and manuscript collections.
The author provides a review of the Wayne State University Archives collecting programme in the area of labour records and gives an analysis of its development.


A brief synopsis and overview of the Vancouver City Archives’ programme and progress in the field of collecting labour records.

Miller, Harold L. “Labor Records at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.” Labor History 23 (Fall 1982), pp. 546-553.

A labour archivist at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin provides researchers with an introduction to the institution’s labour holdings, emphasizing the collection’s strengths, time periods, and subject areas. The article is divided topically and touches on such general headings as nineteenth-century labour, national labour organizations, as well as workers’ lives and work.


In celebration of an exhibition entitled “The Canadian Labour Congress — Twenty-Five Working Years,” the author discusses the history of the labour archives programme at the Public Archives of Canada, detailing the Canadian Labour Congress’ past and ongoing support.


The paucity of sources for the student of American labour history in the colonial, revolutionary, and early national periods poses a major obstacle to the historian. This article demonstrates the value of court records for the study of social and labour history during these years.


A survey of significant source material relevant to labour history located in three separate collections held at the University of Illinois Library.

Parr, G.J. “Case Records as Sources for Social History.” Archivaria 4 (Summer 1977), pp. 122-137.

The value of case records as a source for social history has long been recognized by many historians. Through her use of case files relating to the Barnardo Homes, the author demonstrates their intrinsic value for the study of child labour.

One of the rarest immigration collections in the United States is housed at the Archives of the Jewish Labor Bund in New York. The author outlines the history of this institution and explains its importance for the study of American Jewish labour history.


Periodic redescription of archival holdings is both an essential and ongoing professional responsibility of labour archivists determined to respond to changing directions of scholarly inquiry. This article describes the efforts of a two-year redescription project undertaken by the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University with the aid of funding by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Reiger, Morris. See: Lewinson, Paul.

Scanlan, Eleanor H. “The Labadie Collection.” *Labor History* 6 (Fall 1965), pp. 244-248.

A brief article outlining the history of the Labadie Collection, its eventual deposit in the University of Michigan’s library, and its subsequent care and custody.


Oral history is an increasingly important archival source of historical information. This article outlines the reasons for the creation of the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University and explains its importance to the labour historian.


In the fall of 1959, the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University formally began an oral history project on the development of unionism in the automobile industry. The author reviews the project's operating procedure, examines its methodology, and comments on its overall value.


The author comments on the origins and development of the Southern Labor Archives of Georgia State University.

The Labadie Collection of American social radicalism proves an important source for labour scholars. The author examines the nature of this unique collection held at the University of Michigan in Detroit.


There is a growing awareness of the need to preserve the records of national and international labour unions in archives. This article examines the problems and prospects of this endeavour.


This article, penned by the Assistant Director of the Martin P. Catherwood Library, surveys the holdings of the United States’ largest academic collection on labour and industrial relations.


The struggle to preserve labour’s heritage is an ongoing and frequently uphill battle. This article offers the perspective of a Canadian labour archivist in the field and poses some possible solutions to this vexing problem. See also: Stunden, Nancy. “Labour Archives: The Canadian Scene.” *Archivum* 27 (1980), pp. 43-50.


The Tamiment Library from its inception has actively collected trade union records and assumed a prominent role in preserving and promoting labour history. The author traces this institution’s formative years and surveys its vast manuscript collections.

Tselos, George D. “Out of the Stacks and into the Streets: Outreach Activities at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs.” *Georgia Archive* 10 (Spring 1982), pp. 535-541.

The value of outreach programmes to archival institutions has received widespread acceptance in the archival community. The author discusses the type of outreach projects developed at the Wayne State University Archives in Detroit and demonstrates their importance to both the institution and its supporters.


The Immigration History Research Center of the University of Minnesota was established in 1965 for the specific purpose of collecting records of American immigrant and ethnic groups. Because the great majority of immigrants soon
became industrial workers, however, this institution’s ethnic collections are useful for the study of labour history. This article focuses on the manuscript holdings relating to three such ethnic groups: Finnish, Italian, and South Slavic.


This article by a former educational director for the Canadian Labour Congress urges unions to place their documents in archives to ensure that trade union history is preserved.


As a result of two years of preparatory work by a joint committee representing the University, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the Ontario Federation of Labour, the McMaster Labour Studies Programme was officially launched in July 1976. The author describes the programme and examines the progress of the labour archives designed to complement it.


The Joseph Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan is a rich and diverse collection documenting the early history of American radicalism. The head archivist of this collection outlines its background, surveys its contents, and describes its organization.


On 10 May 1967 the Western Federation of Miners and the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers formally donated their records to the University of Colorado’s Boulder Campus library. This article provides a detailed description of this 1,000-linear-foot archival collection.


The diverse and complicated nature of modern industrial society poses a formidable task for archivists attempting to document its activities. This article describes the efforts of the Archives of Industrial Society at the University of Pittsburgh and briefly touches on its collections relating to labour history.