
Preserving the Historical Record of American Labor: Union-Library Archival Services Partnerships, Recent Trends, and Future Prospects

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ABSTRACT

THE ARCHIVAL RECORDS OF American labor institutions are a rich resource for the studies of American history, society, and culture. Not only can a researcher find evidence for the institutional history of unions by examining these records, but a whole array of other research topics come into play: strikes and their effects on communities and businesses, the effects of technology on employment and work processes, race and gender issues, and workers' culture, to name a few. This article briefly reviews endeavors by academic research institutions to capture and preserve this important historical resource, focusing on a recent project to assess the state of labor archives efforts and on the challenges facing union officials and labor archivists if a comprehensive documentation of American workers and their unions is to be achieved.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LABOR ARCHIVES EFFORTS

Efforts to document the American labor movement by archivists, librarians, and scholars date back to the early part of the twentieth century with the work of Richard T. Ely and John R. Commons, founders of the "Wisconsin School" of labor history. Through the American Bureau of Industrial Research, and in cooperation with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Ely and Commons gathered data from a wide range of sources for their classic studies of American industrial society and organized labor. That data ultimately became available to other researchers to examine and use.¹ Other data-gathering efforts followed Ely and Commons: the American Labor Year Book (began in 1916) and labor-collecting by the Rand School for Social Science and the Tamiment Library. In the 1940s, the U.S. National Archives began to take an active interest in fostering the preservation of

labor union records, and the Labor-Management Documentation Center (now known as the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation) at Cornell commenced its collecting activity. The establishment of this research facility represents the first instance of labor unions agreeing to work in partnership with an academic institution to preserve union records to support labor history.

Perhaps the signal event that launched a widespread effort to locate and collect American union records was the establishment of the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University in Detroit. Founded in 1960 and housed in the Walter Reuther Library since 1975, the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs has collected and made available the records of national and international unions such as the United Auto Workers, the American Federation of Teachers, the Service Employees International Union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Air Line Pilots Association, the United Farm Workers, and others. The Reuther Library also collects the records of labor-support organizations, state and regional labor councils, and the papers of labor activists. Wayne State's collecting efforts ushered in an era of vigorous union records-gathering activities by university special collections departments and state historical societies such as the Pennsylvania State University, the University of Connecticut, California State University at Northridge, the University of Texas at Arlington, the University of Maryland, Rutgers University, and the Ohio Historical Society. Georgia State University established the Southern Labor Archives in 1969, and in 1977 the Robert F. Wagner Archives at New York University was established.

Encouraged by the research needs of social and "new" labor historians, labor archives enjoyed a period of reasonable financial support and strong scholarly interest. But even as the George Meany Memorial Archives was being established by the AFL-CIO in 1980 and new regional efforts were taking shape at California State University at Northridge, San Francisco State University, the University of Massachusetts, and the University of Connecticut, the activism of the American labor archives effort seemed to peak. Labor archivists and other interested parties meeting at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, Silver Spring, Maryland, in November 1980, assessed the situation and made several recommendations. Noting that repositories were unable to keep up the collecting pace of the 1960s and 1970s, that huge backlogs of unprocessed records had accumulated, and that the costs of processing had risen, they suggested that unions develop their own in-house archives, with the newly established AFL-CIO archives program offering consulting services in archives and records management. They also called for the establishment of a clearinghouse of information on the location and extent of holdings in the many repositories holding labor materials.

Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, steps were taken to implement these suggestions. *Labor History* published a special issue on labor archives in the U.S. in 1982 (which was updated and published in book form in 1992). The George Meany Center for Labor Studies has periodically offered a course in records management for local unions and has produced a records-management manual for distribution to local unions (Bernhardt, 1992). The Labor Archives Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists, composed of archivists from repositories with strong labor collections or agencies dealing in labor-related records, has sustained a discussion of labor archives issues since 1985. It was from the Labor Archives Roundtable that the Labor Archives Project, a recent effort to assess the work of labor archivists in the context of a changing labor movement, emerged. In 1997, the Labor Archives Project pulled together a large body of data relating to unions and organizational change, the current holdings of institutions that collect labor materials, and research trends.

THE LABOR ARCHIVES PROJECT, 1995–97: PROJECT OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1995 a group of ten archivists responsible for union collections held by academic institutions commenced a discussion on what effect the changes in the American labor movement—in other words, the new AFL-CIO leadership, a spate of mergers, union institutional reorganizations, and increasing labor militancy and aggressive organizing campaigns—would have on the documentary record created by unions. This discussion led to research efforts into how unions were actually experiencing organizational changes, and how this was affecting established agreements between unions and repositories. In 1997, archivists representing five repositories holding substantial labor materials applied for and were awarded a Bentley Library Fellowship for the Study of Modern Archives Administration to assess the labor archives scene in light of the changing face of the American labor movement.²

In July 1997, Debra Bernhardt (Wagner Labor Archives, New York University), Les Hough (Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University), Lee Says (George Meany Memorial Archives), Julia Marks Young (Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University), and the author gathered in Ann Arbor to review preassigned areas of research and to develop an action plan for American labor archives. The group summarized its findings as follows:

- A detailed organizational analysis of American trade unions, examining typical union structure, administrative functions and the extent of current organizational change, indicates that despite historical stability, many unions are entering a period of organizational transformation. The growing merger movement among AFL-CIO affiliates, the increas-

ing number of unions undergoing internal reorganization, and expanding efforts in organizing and community outreach will have serious consequences for union record-keeping practices and thus the records produced.

- Most unions engage in some form of records management. Approximately thirty of the seventy-eight AFL-CIO affiliates have in-house archives programs or agreements for archival services with outside repositories. The increased use of personal computers and the decline of central filing systems in union offices, as well as the overall fragility of records at the district and local levels, however, make it urgent that unions review and upgrade record keeping practices to ensure that crucial historical documentation from these organizational levels and entities is not lost.
- With national holdings of more than 130,000 linear feet, labor archives serve steadily increasing numbers of researchers. Students and academic faculty continue to be the most reliable users, with union administrative staff comprising a significantly growing user group. Unions are rightly proud of their rich cultural and historical legacies. Outreach programs by archives to unions will help guarantee that union culture and history are used to benefit their creators.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were derived:

Immediate Actions

- Disseminate LAP findings and recommendations to labor unionists, archivists, and historians through publications, presentations at professional meetings, and labor-sponsored regional meetings.
- Enlist the support of national unions to pass constitutional provisions requiring appropriate disposition of records of enduring value of active and inactive affiliated bodies.
- Encourage partnerships between labor organizations and interested repositories.
- Organize basic records management and archival training for union records keepers.
- Raise the archival consciousness of union officials about the disposition of historical and cultural materials when mergers and amalgamations occur.
- Update and reissue the directory of labor archives published in *Labor History* and the manual *How to Keep Union Records*.
- Establish a Labor Documentation Action Network, a national labor archives coordinating council to be convened at the George Meany Memorial Archives with the participation of unions, archivists, and user communities to begin to implement the long-term recommendations.

Long-Term Goals

- Conduct a systematic analysis of holdings and gaps in U.S. labor documentation.
- Bring under archival care significant historical records of the national unions, state labor federations, city central bodies, and significant locals that currently do not have archival partnerships.
- Explore enhanced electronic access to labor archives.
- Mount a pilot project to develop guidelines for the management of historically significant electronic records created by labor organizations.
- Establish a labor archives field program to foster cooperative efforts.

The LAP group's intention was to bring its findings and recommendations to as wide a body of constituents and interested parties as possible. The annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists became one venue for distribution, as did the Labor History Conference held annually at Wayne State University. The Project was also discussed at a gathering of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference in 1998. Key to moving to an implementation stage was obtaining a hearing from the leadership of the AFL-CIO to ask its support in moving ahead on building the network. A hearing proved difficult to obtain, however, and significant changes in the occupational status of several of the key LAP participants further delayed implementation of the recommendations.

LAP'S RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND COMPOSITE DATA SUMMARY

From the outset, the Labor Archives Project team realized its work would be more impressionistic/qualitative than scientific/quantitative. Although a more rigorous research methodology might have produced more thorough results, limited time and resources forced a fairly rough and ready approach. To gather information on the holdings, use, and organizational climate of unions, the team developed three questionnaires, two of which were applied to repositories maintaining significant labor holdings and one to unions. The repository respondents were:

Aldrich Public Library, Barre, Vermont

Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives, Butte, Montana

Catholic University of America, Department of Archives, Manuscripts and Museum Collections

Cornell University, Theodore Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives

Duke University, Perkins Library, Manuscripts Department

George Meany Memorial Archives, AFL-CIO

Georgia State University, Southern Labor Archives

Indiana State University, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections

Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana

New York University, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives

Pennsylvania State University, Historical Collections and Labor Archives

Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island

Rutgers University, Special Collections-Archives

Southwest Missouri State University, Ozark Labor Union Archives

State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Archives Division

Temple University, Urban Archives Center

University of Colorado, Western Historical Collections

University of Connecticut, Historical Manuscripts and Archives

University of Maryland, Historical Manuscripts and Archives

University of New Orleans, Archives and Special Collections Department

University of Pittsburgh, Archives of Industrial Society

University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Labor Archives

University of Washington, Northwest Regional Manuscripts Collection

University of West Virginia, West Virginia and Regional History Collection

Wayne State University, Walter P. Reuther Library

(Note: Not all the above repositories responded fully to the two survey instruments provided.)

Appraisal, Selection, and Documentation Survey Form

1. Please report the quantity of labor records (union archives of affiliates, papers of labor activists, etc.) that your repository has accessioned in each of the ten preceding years: 1987 ____, 1988 ____, 1989 ____, 1990 ____, 1991 ____, 1992 ____, 1993 ____, 1994 ____, 1995 ____, 1996 ____.
2. Are there labor history collections you could not accession because you lacked resources? ____ yes ____ no If yes, please estimate how many collections/linear feet ____
3. Are you accessioning collections now that you would not have preserved 10 years ago? Why or why not?
4. Is your collecting mission solely labor or more broadly social history? Outline or attach mission statement.
5. Please indicate your collection's strengths in documenting the following labor history topics: (Strong, Adequate, Could be stronger)

Organizing

Political action

Labor disputes

Craft unionism

Radical unionism

Industrial unions
 Public employees
 Service workers
 Labor insurgency
 Rank and file documentation
 Civil rights

6. What areas of the economy of your region have you (or other collections at your institution) documented?
7. What areas do you wish you could better document?
8. Do you serve as the repository for local or state central bodies? Please list.
9. Do you collect trade association records related to the industries for which you collect labor records? Please list.
10. What kinds of records do you routinely decline to take when you are in the field?
11. What is your practice regarding deaccessioning?
12. How large is your backlog?
13. To what level do you process?
14. By what means do you find resources to process large collections? Please send samples of donor agreements.
15. Have you established records management programs with the unions for which you serve as an historical repository?
16. What do you regard as the issue of greatest concern to labor archivists?
17. What joint projects might labor archivists undertake to strengthen our collections?

A second repository questionnaire was developed to solicit data on use of labor materials.

Labor Archives User Survey Form

1. Please indicate the number of linear feet of archival material relating to labor you hold in your repository.
2. Please indicate the number of staff employed in support of your labor collections.
3. The total number of research visits (1 day = 1 visit) utilizing your labor collections over each of the last 10 years has been: 1987 ____, 1988 ____, 1989 ____, 1990 ____, 1991 ____, 1992 ____, 1993 ____, 1994 ____, 1995 ____, 1996 ____.
4. Over the last decade, researchers have been seeking information on the following subjects (check those that apply):

Organizing
 Political action
 Labor disputes

Craft unionism
Industrial unionism
Radical unionism
Public employees
Service workers
Labor insurgency
Rank and file
Civil rights
Genealogy
Other topics

5. The types of use of your labor records over the entire period has been (please rank in order of frequency—1 = most, 12 = least):

Administrative use by unions themselves
Public relations use by unions themselves
Attorney or other legal user
Government official
Projects by elementary or secondary school student
Academic work by undergraduate or graduate student
Scholarly work by historian or other humanities faculty member
Research by labor studies, industrial relations or human resources professional
Genealogist or family historian
Media professional
Other user

6. Over the last decade researchers have requested records of these types most frequently (please rank in order of frequency—1 = most, 17 = least):

Union charters, constitutions, by-laws and records concerning jurisdiction
Minutes of meetings and conventions at all levels of organization
Membership records
Copies of contracts, minutes of collective bargaining meetings, grievance files, arbitration awards
Correspondence relating to the records listed above and general correspondence
Personal papers of labor officials and members
Organizing and field service reports
Annual and monthly financial reports, annual audits, account ledgers
Official union publications
Films and videotapes
Photographic prints or negatives
Posters, placards, badges, buttons etc.

All other financial records, including bills, canceled checks, bank statements, receipts and vouchers, work sheets, and pertinent resolutions

Ballots and other election records

Personnel and employment records including application forms and other records having to do with hiring, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, rates of pay, and selection for training

Records used in making up the EEO-1, EEO-2, and EEO-3 reports

7. Please make any other suggestions you might have for the project team.

Sample findings from repository forms:

- Total labor archival holdings in linear feet (18 repositories reporting): 126,364
- Total collections in repositories (15 repositories reporting): 3,223
- Total number of labor archives full-time staff in U.S. repositories: 42.15

Records most frequently requested in ranking order:

- Correspondence
- Personal papers of labor officials
- Photographic prints and negatives
- Minutes
- Contracts, grievances, arbitration files
- Union publications
- Union charters, constitutions, by-laws
- Organizing and field reports
- Membership records
- Oral histories
- Films and videos
- Posters, badges, buttons
- Annual financial records, audits
- Personnel and employment records
- Ballots and election records
- Other financial records
- EEO reports

Types of users in ranking order:

- Graduate and undergraduate students
- Historians and humanities faculty
- Unions for administrative purposes
- Unions for public relations
- Community members

- Labor studies users
- Media professionals
- Rank and file
- Genealogists
- Elementary and secondary students
- Attorneys
- Government officials

Part of the Labor Archives Project involved an assessment of organizational structural and administrative functional changes in American labor unions and the implications of these changes for records-keeping and creation. To do this, two LAP team members compiled information from twelve unions based on personal meetings or telephone interviews with knowledgeable union officials. Supplemental organizational information was collected on another eight unions based on brochures and Web site visits.

Unions personally contacted were:

- American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
- Bakery, Confectionery, and Tobacco Workers Union (BCT)
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
- International Chemical Workers Union
- International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craft Workers
- International Union of Electrical and Electronics Workers (IUE)
- International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)
- National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
- United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (UBC)
- United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
- United Steelworkers of America (USWA)

Supplemental information came from the following unions:

- United Auto Workers (UAW)
- International Association of Machinists (IAM)
- United Mineworkers of America (UMWA)
- Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Workers (AFSCME)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)
- Communication Workers of America (CWA)

Labor Organization Survey Form

Name of union

Address

Contact/Source

Title/Position

Telephone number

Office/Division checklist (Does your organization maintain the following organizational units at present?)

- Office of the President
- Office of the Secretary-Treasurer
- Legal Counsel's Office
- Organizing Department
- Member Services Department
- Community Services Department
- Research Department
- Legislative Department
- Civil Rights Department
- International Affairs Department
- Publications Department
- Information/Records Management/Archives
- Public Affairs/Relations Office
- Library
- Finance and Accounting Office

Has there been significant organizational change in the past 10 years?

If so, from

- merger with another union or unions?
- merger of interorganizational units or departments?
- creation of new departments, offices or other units?
- disbanding of existing departments, offices or other units?

Please describe.

Records Keeping

Is there a central file system? Y N

Do offices/departments/units maintain their own files? Y N

Is there a records management program? Y N

Is there an archives program or partnership with an outside institution?

Y N

If partnership, with whom?

What is the percentage of records being created and maintained electronically?

10% 25% 50% more than 50%

Are there any disposition policies in place for electronic records?

If yes, please describe.

Have inactive records been microfilmed over the years? Y N

If yes, please describe (for example, ongoing, one time only, etc.)

In the course of our conversations with union contacts on the matters listed above we also discussed records creation issues, the existence and disposition of union cultural materials, and audiovisual records at the national, regional, and local levels. Narrative notes on these were appended to the survey form.

COMPOSITE DATA FEEDBACK

Organizational Structure

Based on the questionnaire and other information sources, the team found that the typical American labor union is structured as follows:

- Executive Board
- Office of the President
- Office of the Secretary-Treasurer
- Legal Counsel's Office
- Organizing Department
- Member Services Department
- Legislative Department
- Data Processing (Management Information Systems)
- Public Relations Department
- Library
- Publications Department
- Finance and Accounting Office or Department

Many unions also maintain the following alternate administrative units:

- Education Department
- Research Department
- Human Resources Department
- Civil Rights Department
- Records Management Office
- International Affairs Office
- Community Services Department
- Women's Affairs Department or Office
- Health and Safety Department
- Retired Members Office

In some cases a special office for Canadian affairs is maintained.

Significant Organizational Change

Of the twelve unions contacted directly, most reported some significant organizational change over the past decade. The Carpenters union, for example, (ca. 1997) was undergoing far-reaching restructuring. IUE, SEIU, UFCW, Steelworkers, Bricklayers, and Chemical Workers all reported mergers of some kind. BCT reported some mergers of locals and national office administrative units. NALC, APU, the Operating Engineers, and IBEW re-

ported no significant organizational changes during the ten years prior to the survey.

Records Management

Of the twelve unions contacted directly, six had some form of records-management system in place, six did not. Those with partial or full records-management programs were: NALC, IBEW, IUE, Steelworkers, SEIU, and UFCW. Those without were: APU, BCT, Chemical Workers, Operating Engineers, Carpenters, and the Bricklayers.

Archives Programs

Of the twelve unions contacted directly, seven reported partnerships with academic research facilities. These were: Carpenters and BCT (University of Maryland), IUE (Rutgers University), Steelworkers (Penn State University), UFCW (State Historical Society of Wisconsin), SEIU (Walter Reuther Library), and Chemical Workers (University of Akron). IBEW and APU reported maintaining a limited in-house archives programs.

Electronic Records

Circa 1997, the unions contacted maintained certain financial records in electronic form. All were interested in expanding electronic information technologies covering contract, arbitration, and membership data within their organizations. All of the unions contacted had made the move from central filing systems to decentralized filing motivated by the introduction of institution-wide personal computing.

A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR A NEW GENERATION OF LABOR ARCHIVISTS

Although an interesting and generally useful body of repository and union data was gathered during the Labor Archives Project, certain project weaknesses need to be addressed. The repository data-gathering instruments were the product of serious deliberation by LAP team members, yet the fact that respondents did not—and perhaps could not—respond fully suggests that the forms erred on the side of seeking too much information. However, the union survey form, since it was administered for the most part face-to-face, perhaps erred on the side of gathering not enough information. All qualitative research runs into the same problem: how much information is enough? Though the Bentley Historical Library supported the work of assessing and summarizing data gathered, the Labor Archives Project was a labor of love, conducted when the archivists involved could find time to focus on the basic research. While not throwing the baby out with the bath water, it must be admitted that what was learned through the LAP was cursory; the picture derived, fleeting.

The approaching centennial of Ely and Commons' work in documenting American workers and their unions is a good occasion to think about

revisiting the Labor Archives Project and updating its findings. Toward that end, I have compiled a research agenda and offer it to the labor archivists now moving into positions of influence in their repositories and encourage them to step forward to launch a Labor Archives Project II.

The Labor Archives Project did not closely examine the status of union-repository partnerships other than to note the number of unions with archival service agreements and the number of American repositories collecting labor materials. LAP II would present the opportunity to update these figures and examine the nature of standard archival services agreements and how or if they are being regularly enforced.³

Research Proposal

In the interests of data-gathering manageability and optimum response, focus on ten repositories based on either their regional or national standing as representatives of the current levels of labor-collecting. Good candidates would be:

1. Walter Reuther Library
2. Pennsylvania State University
3. San Francisco State University
4. New York University (Wagner Labor Archives)
5. University of Maryland
6. Georgia State University (Southern Labor Archives)
7. Cornell University
8. University of Massachusetts
9. University of Texas at Arlington
10. State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Contact curators or other spokespersons for these collections and ask the following questions:

- How many unions do you currently serve?
- How many cubic feet of union records have you acquired since 1997?
- What is the average number of researchers using union records you have served per year since 1997?

And, further:

- Will you share a copy of your standard deposit agreement/instrument gift with us?
- What do you select for transfer in terms of document types?
- How often do you communicate with your union contacts?
- Are you facing a backlog? Big, medium, or small?
- What is your rate of processing labor records?
- Are you satisfied with the terms of your agreements?
- Are there specific problem areas?
- Should your agreements be revisited with union officers and updated?

Contact union officers from a select group of AFL-CIO affiliates⁴ responsible for overseeing archives agreements and ask the following questions:

- Have there been any mergers in this union since 1997?
- Has there been any change of leadership since 1997?
- Has there been any significant reorganization since 1997?
- Has a records management program been instituted in this union?
- How frequently do you transfer records to your designated repository?
- To what extent are office transactions in your union conducted electronically?
- Has the repository made any recommendations for identifying electronic records of enduring value?
- Are audiovisual materials—training, organizing, legislative—included in materials scheduled for eventual transfer to the repository? Union memorabilia?
- Are you satisfied with your agreement?
- Should it be revisited and updated?

A report based on this research approach would present the data according to the following categories:

Repository Feedback

- Summary of the kinds of agreements in force
- Summary of selection criteria
- Frequency of communications
- Quantity of backlog and processing rates
- Satisfaction quotient
- Problem areas
- Revisit agreement, yes or no?

Union Feedback

- Summary of mergers, leadership change, reorganization findings
- Records management program, yes or no?
- Records transfer frequency
- Summary of electronic records, AV, and memorabilia
- Satisfaction quotient
- Revisit agreement, yes or no?

CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Labor unions retain an important role in American society as mediating institutions between deregulated corporate power and workers and their families. Though there are those who proclaim the irrelevance of the American labor movement in this era of global markets and the unhindered movement of capital, workers who enjoy the protections made possible by their union contracts see it differently. The content of the AFL-CIO's Web site and the sites of any of the major affiliates reflect both the domestic and

global concerns of the American labor movement in traditional terms of wages and working conditions and in terms of the full range of social amenities currently under attack by antiunion conservative forces intent on turning back the clock to the late nineteenth century. The need to ensure the preservation of the historical record of American labor unions is perhaps more important than ever. The current organizational dynamics of unions bespeak the urgency of the task facing labor archivists. Past efforts at establishing a coordinated approach to labor archives have succeeded only to a degree and the most crucial work remains to be done. The agenda set by the Labor Archives Project was ambitious, perhaps too ambitious, given the workaday realities facing labor archivists. But its honest and enthusiastic intent should not be demeaned or its results forgotten. With the proper preparation, a Labor Documentation Action Network⁵ could be established and sustained. Key ingredients to such an effort are understanding and support on the part of labor union officials and active commitment by labor archivists. What is needed to achieve the recommendations of the Labor Archives Project is a catalyst, a vehicle to bring the necessary players together. LAP II may be just that catalyst.

NOTES

1. For a more detailed history of the work of Ely and Commons, see Miller (1984). For a more detailed account of labor documentation in the U.S. to the mid-1980s, see Connors (1987).
2. From 1982 to 1997, the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, offered residential fellowships to archivists to foster systematic research into areas of professional concern. The fellowships were supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Originally called the Labor Archives Appraisal Project, the project's name was shortened to reflect the fact that research efforts involved the whole range of archival endeavors, not simply archival appraisal.
3. It is unlikely that a team of five labor archivists such as came together in 1997 could be assembled again. The proposed research agenda is geared for undertaking by a single investigator or by a team of two investigators.
4. These should be representative of craft, industrial, and service union spheres.
5. Debra Bernhardt, late director of the Wagner Labor Archives/Tamiment Library at New York University, suggested this nomenclature to convey the need for an ongoing activist approach to labor documentation.

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