
Finding Aid for SCRTD files on Blue and White Bus Company of Watts, 1952-1974

Finding aid prepared by Dvorah Lewis with assistance from Angel Diaz; December 2015.

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Title: Southern California Rapid Transit District files on Blue and White Bus Company of Watts

Creator: Southern California Rapid Transit District

Identifier/Call Number: 45-DPGTL

Physical Description: 1.25 Linear Feet (3 boxes)

Date (inclusive): 1952-1974

Date (bulk): 1970-1971

Abstract: On November 26, 1967, Dr. Thomas William Matthew of the National Economic Growth and Reconstruction Organization (NEGRO) acquired two South Los Angeles bus companies from Frank and Herbert Atkinson. Atkinson Transportation Company (ATCO) and the South Los Angeles Transportation Company originally began in the 1920s as extensions of streetcar lines. They were merged to create the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts (Blue and White). The Blue and White Bus Company was an African-American owned company created out of a merger of two local bus companies and operated from 1967 to 1971. After much hardship, the bus company was taken over by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) in September of 1971. The collection consists of materials related to the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts collected by Rapid Transit District including correspondence, Public Utilities Commission hearings, financial and service studies, and newspaper clippings.

Physical Location: LACMTA Research Library and Archive

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], SCRTD files on Blue and White Bus Company of Watts, 45-DPGTL. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Research Library and Archive.

Acquisition Information

Blue and White Bus Lines and Eastern Cities Lines files assembled by SCRTD were transferred to the SCRTD archives by Wayne Reinecke in the Planning Department on August 26, 1983, on the advice of Director of Schedules and Operations Planning Steve Parry. SCRTD was merged into LACMTA in 1993.

Processing Information

Processed by Dvorah Lewis with assistance from Angel Diaz; December 2015.

Biography/Administrative History

On November 26, 1967, Dr. Thomas William Matthew of the National Economic Growth and Reconstruction Organization (NEGRO) acquired two South Los Angeles bus companies from Frank and Herbert Atkinson. Atkinson Transportation Company (ATCO) and the South Los Angeles Transportation Company originally began in the 1920s as extensions of streetcar lines and were merged to create the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts. This new bus company was African-American owned and ran from 1967-1971.

Blue and White's Route #1 was abandoned in 1968 and shortly after another route, #6, was discontinued resulting in SCRTD enacting emergency services in 1970. At one point in 1969, SCRTD did have interest in acquiring the bus company, but did not carry through with the acquisition. On February 8, 1971 SCRTD created a new route, #123, that crossed four of the Blue and White routes. In response, Dr. Matthew had Blue and White operating along SCRTD's route #3 giving passenger free rides while informing passengers of the conflict between the two companies. In May 24, 1971, Dr. Matthew created a new route, Route #9, without gaining permission first from the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC). One month later the PUC suspended Blue and White's operating certificate after finding out the company failed to pay insurance premiums resulting in a loss of coverage.

Ignoring the suspension, Blue and White continued to run, but on July 17th Blue and White employees went on strike when the bus company held insufficient funds to pay them. The buses were impounded by county marshals on August 10th for two days until drivers were paid. A month following this, the buses were impounded again but this time by the Internal

Revenue Service when Blue and White failed to pay federal taxes. SCRTD immediately took over Blue and White's routes and hired their bus drivers and mechanics. Dr. Matthew attempted to reestablish Blue and White providing services only in downtown Los Angeles and to Disneyland, but in 1972 the bus company officially went out of business.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection consists of materials related to the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts collected by the Southern California Rapid Transit District including correspondence, Public Utilities Commission hearings, financial and service studies, and newspaper clippings. Most of the correspondence is from Howard Beardsley, Assistant Manager of Rapid Transit and Surface Planning as well as Jack Gilstrap, the General Manager of SCRTD. The majority of materials are correspondence and studies related to PUC hearings, SCRTD's interest to acquire Blue and White in 1969, conflict between SCRTD and Blue and White in 1971, and SCRTD's takeover of Blue and White in September 1971.

Arrangement

There appears to be no intended order; materials seem have been placed together arbitrarily. Original order was not maintained for this collection. The collection is arranged in the following series (and subseries when necessary):

1. Legal Proceedings, July 1969 - September 1971
2. Cessation and Acquisition, 1965-1974
3. General Operations, 1952-1971
4. Diversion Contract, 1970-1971
5. Public Relations, 1970-1971

Related Materials

55-DPGTL SCRTD files on Eastern Cities Transit

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Local transit -- California -- Los Angeles County

Minority business enterprises -- California -- Los Angeles -- Watts

Buses -- California -- Los Angeles -- Watts

Local transit -- Social aspects -- California -- Los Angeles County

Southern California Rapid Transit District

California Public Utilities Commission

Series 1: Legal Proceedings July 1969 - September 1971

Subseries 1.1: Public Utilities Commission Hearings July 1969 - September 1971

box 1, folder 1	PUC Application No. 51244 1969 July 14 Scope and Contents Decision No. 76167 "...for an order granting permission to abandon certain portions of its passenger stage lines..."
box 1, folder 2	PUC Application No. 51777 1970 March 18 Scope and Contents Decision No. 77328 "...for an order granting permission to re-route and extend certain portions of its passenger stage lines..."
box 1, folder 3	PUC Application No. 52218 1970 October 1 Scope and Contents Decision No. 77867 "...for an order authorizing issuance of a Note and Security Agreement in connection therewith, and for a permit to issue and sell capital stock and for a permit to issue warrant for capital stock."

box 1, folder 4

Cal. PUC No. 3 1971 February 3

Scope and Contents

In compliance with Decision No. 78274, issued by Mayme G. Davies, Blue and White Project Administrator, "...local passenger tariff naming passenger fares and rules and regulations governing the same..."

box 1, folder 5

PUC Application No. 52311 1970 November 13; 1971 April 23

Scope and Contents

Amendment to application "...for an order granting permission to increase fares." and a "report on results of operations of Blue and White Bus Company of Watts..."

box 1, folder 6

PUC Resolution No. PE-102 1971 June 29

Scope and Contents

"Resolution ordering suspension of authority to operate as a passenger stage corporation."

box 1, folder 7

PUC Case No. 9261 1971 August-September

Scope and Contents

Decision No. 79147 "Report on order instituting investigation of Blue and White..."

Subseries 1.2: Conflict Between RTD and Blue and White 1971

box 1, folder 8

Materials regarding conflict 1971 February

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, reports on Blue and White activities on February 8th, 9th, 10th and 16th, origin & destination checks, copy of newspaper articles, legal advice, as well as other materials

box 1, folder 9

Meeting with B&W Representatives 1971 March 8-10

Scope and Contents

Materials regarding March 10, 1971 of representatives from Blue and White, RTD, PUC, and the Transportation Employment Project, includes correspondence, notes, attendance, and meeting minutes.

box 1, folder 10

Letter from Rev. Jesse L. Boyd Jr. to Wilson Kline 1971 August 30

Scope and Contents

Letter from Reverend Jesse L. Boyd Jr of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference sharing his concerns with Wilson Kline of PUC about Blue and White being a victim of discrimination on the part of RTD.

Series 2: Cessation and Acquisition 1965-1974

Subseries 2.1: Blue and White Cessation 1965-1971

box 2, folder 1

Blue and White activities and related materials 1965, 1971, undated

Scope and Contents

Route descriptions, headways, B&W line descriptions, fact sheets, trouble report forms, copies of timetables, copies of newspaper articles, correspondence, handwritten notes, and excerpts from "Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?" in a report by John A. McCone.

box 2, folder 2

RTD emergency services 1970-1971

Scope and Contents

Materials regarding RTD emergency services to provide transportation in the wake of Blue and White cessation. Folder includes correspondence, passenger checks, route maps, bulletins, handwritten notes, clippings. Also included are copies of letters from and to Augustus F. Hawkins and Carlos C. Villarreal regarding Blue and White discontinuation of Line No. 6 in November 1970.

Subseries 2.2: RTD Acquisition of Blue and White 1971-1974

box 2, folder 3

Service and financial studies (1 of 2) 1971-1972, undated

Scope and Contents

Origin and Destination report, line descriptions including route maps, passenger checks, proposal for fare increase, and a call for a turn-around study. Materials mostly handwritten and mostly undated.

box 2, folder 4

Service and financial studies (2 of 2) 1971-1972, undated

Scope and Contents

Survey of passenger opinion regarding RTD and its acquisition of former B&W lines, proposed establishment of combined routes, run-time formulas, and passenger check lists. Mostly handwritten.

box 2, folder 5

SCRTD Interim Study 1973 December 10

Scope and Contents

The study's purpose is to "advise and inform District's management and Board of Directors of the status of the former Blue and White..."

box 2, folder 6

Post-cessation of B&W 1971-1974

Scope and Contents

Included is a study of former B&W lines, one-way operation proposal, copy of interim study, operating costs, study of revenues, passenger checks, origin and destination report and analysis, correspondence regarding bus improvement plan, and clipping. Materials mostly handwritten.

box 2, folder 7

RTD's hiring of former B&W employees 1971-1972

Scope and Contents

Handwritten memos and notes regarding hiring of former B&W employees, seniority rosters, payroll adjustment, and an agreement between SCRTD and Amalgamated Transit Union.

Series 3: General Operations 1952-1971

Subseries 3.1: Atkinson Transportation Company (ATCO) and South Los Angeles Transportation Company 1952-1968

box 3, folder 1

ATCO service, financial, and PUC hearing materials (1 of 2) 1952-1966

Scope and Contents

Includes correspondence regarding routes and changes, school service operation, passenger checks, financial reports, route maps

- box 3, folder 2 **ATCO service, financial, and PUC hearing materials (2 of 2) 1952-1966**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes route maps, timetables, transcript of PUC hearing for application No. 35299, PUC Application No.35189, PUC Applicaton No. 48302 (Decision No. 70747), and correspondence related to PUC
- box 3, folder 3 **ATCO services and RTD acquisition interest (1 of 3) 1954-1968**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes recommendations from the transportation employment project, correspondence regarding PUC applications and hearings, timetables, materials related to connection adjustments,
- box 3, folder 4 **ATCO services and RTD acquisition interest (3 of 3) 1954-1968**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes line schedules
- box 3, folder 5 **ATCO services and RTD acquisition interest (3 of 3) 1954-1968**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes route maps, timetables, and materials regarding RTD interest in acquisition of ATCO and South LA Trans. Co: correspondence, and financial records.
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Subseries 3.2: RTD Interest in Acquiring Blue and White 1969-1971

- box 3, folder 6 **RTD interest in B&W acquisition 1969-1971**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes study of B&W services, revenues, and expenses, lists of B&W employees and equipment, and passenger checks
- box 3, folder 7 **RTD interest in B&W acquisition 1969-1971**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes correspondence regarding acquisition interest and B&W review materials, proposed purchase agreement, copies of B&W study. Only one item is dated from the year 1971; it is a letter calling for an update to estimates found in the B&W study.
- box 3, folder 8 **Eminent Domain Valuation Law 1970 September-October**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes a legal memorandum and a complaint in Eminent Domain of SCRTD vs. B&W

Series 4: Diversion Contract 1970-1971

- box 3, folder 9 **Materials regarding diversion contract 1970-1971**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes correspondence regarding diversion billing and contract renewal, summary of diversion payments, copy of SCRTD Line 100 contract, passenger checks, legal opinion, Notice of Levy from the IRS, and handwritten notes.

Series 5: Public Relations 1970-1971

- box 3, folder 10 **B&W publicity materials 1970-1971, undated**
 Scope and Contents
 Includes a timetable, a bulletin, press releases, and a flyer.
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box 3, folder 11

B&W press releases 1970 July-1971 October

Scope and Contents

Includes press releases and newspaper clipping regarding B&W.