Register of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) Project Files, 1914-1993

Collection number: MSS 061

Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research

Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) Project Files,
Date (inclusive): 1914-1993
Collection number: MSS 061
Creator: Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
Extent: 4 boxes, 1 half-box, 1 half-box (legal), 2 tape boxes, and oversized material
3 linear feet
Repository: Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
Los Angeles, CA 90044
Abstract: Research files primarily consisting of photocopies of primary and secondary sources compiled by Mary Tyler during her research for the Library's conference on the Los Angeles ILGWU and subsequent book, co-authored by John Laslett. Also contains tapes and transcripts of oral history interviews by Dorothy Doyle and papers prepared for the conference.
Language: English.

Provenance
Created as work product by Library staff.

Access
The collection is available for research only at the Library's facility in Los Angeles. The Library is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Researchers are encouraged to call or email the Library indicating the nature of their research query prior to making a visit.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) Project Files, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, Los Angeles, California.

ILGWU
The International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) was founded in New York City on June 3, 1900 by representatives from seven local East Coast unions. The union represented both male and female workers who produced women's clothing. Though affiliated with the more conservative American Federation of Labor for most of its history, the ILGWU was unusual in representing both semi-skilled and unskilled (or automated) workers. The first ILGWU local in Los Angeles was founded in 1907 and lasted only a few months. The first lasting local was founded in 1910 or 1911. By 1924 Los Angeles was the fourth largest garment center in the United States. Starting with the skilled Cloak and Suitmakers, primarily Jewish and Italian men, the union expanded into the largely female and Latina dressmakers. However, this expansion was rocky. In 1933, ILGWU President David Dubinsky sent Rose Pesotta to Los Angeles to organize the dressmakers. The union continued to grow and expand through the 1940s. Changes in the industry (the growth of the sportswear industry, the decline of the suit industry and the increase in the practice of section sewing where workers completed only a single portion of a garment) created increased challenges for the union. The failure to organize the mostly Latina swimsuit, sportswear and casual clothes workers and to make use of Spanish-speaking organizers came to a head in 1949, with a call for a Spanish-speaking local. The ILGWU also became involved in anti-Communism activities. The union went into a decline in the 1950s-1970s. In 1972 Miguel Machuca, who in 1981 became the Western States Organizing Director, began organizing his fellow employees at the California Swimwear Company. From the 1970s on, the union has had to face INS (the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service) raids, growing numbers of South and Central American and Asian workers, increasing union resistance by employers, the growth of small fly-by-night shops, and an increasing tendency for manufacturers to outsource (send garments to countries with cheaper workforces for completion).

In July 1995 the ILGWU merged with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU)) to become the Union of Needle trades, Industrial and Textile Employees or UNITE.

Project
In the mid-1980s, the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research (SCL) pursued a project on the history of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in Los Angeles. Library staff Sarah Cooper and Mary Tyler, in collaboration with John Laslett, a member of the SCL Board and a professor of history at UCLA, had decided that the Library’s commitment to documenting labor history in Southern California could best be served by focusing attention on a very large (at the time) industry in Los Angeles and its union history. To that end, SCL applied for and received a grant from the California Council for the Humanities to research the history of and organize a public symposium about the ILGWU in Los Angeles. The symposium, co-sponsored by the ILGWU Western States Region, was held on June 6, 1987, at the ILGWU building at 675 South Park View (near MacArthur Park) in Los Angeles. Among the speakers were Professor Rodolfo Acuña of the Chicano Studies Department at California State University, Northridge, ILGWU Western States Region Director Steve Nutter, and local ILGWU organizers Miguel Machuca and Tony Orea. Dorothy Doyle, an SCL Board Member and ILGWU Project Interviewer, and Mary Tyler, whose SCL assignment for several months was researching and writing a preliminary sketch of ILGWU history in Los Angeles, presented a slide show on the union’s history. Because of the success of the symposium, SCL expanded the project to include publishing a book on the ILGWU in Los Angeles, co-authored by Laslett and Tyler. Ten Star Press published the book, The ILGWU in Los Angeles, 1907-1988, in 1989.

Scope and Content
This collection contains photocopies of research articles and correspondence, manuscript drafts, articles, flyers, pamphlets, grant applications, reports, correspondence, audiotapes, and photographs.

This collection consists materials related to the research, preparation and holding of the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research’s symposium, "Los Angeles Garment Workers: Past and Present," held June 6, 1987 and the subsequent book on the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). The research materials in the collection consist primarily of photocopies and clippings, with only a small amount of original documents and items. Also included are administrative files, materials relating to the symposium, articles and notes written by Mary Tyler, John Laslett, and Dorothy Doyle (slide show with slides), drafts of the manuscript, and a record copy of the completed book, The ILGWU in Los Angeles 1907-1988.

Arrangement
The collection is divided into 3 series: 1: RESEARCH FILES, 2: CONFERENCE AND BOOK FILES, and 3. ADMINISTRATIVE FILES.
Box 6 contains legal-size documents; Boxes 7 & 8 are tape boxes and contain the audiotapes as well as the slides. Oversize materials are housed with oversize materials from other collections - ask archivist for assistance.

Title: Abe Plotkin Papers (ILGWU),
Date: 1924-1980
Physical Description: 2 boxes

Title: ACTWUA (Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union of America) Records
Physical Description: [unprocessed]

Title: ACTWUA - Ruth Miller Papers
Physical Description: [unprocessed]

Series 1. Research Files, 1914-1993
Physical Description: 37 folders, 3 legal folders, 1 oversize folder, 6 oversize items, and 16 audiocassettes

Scope and Content Note
This series contains the materials collected by Mary Tyler as a part of her research for the SCL symposium, "Los Angeles Garment Workers: Past and Present" and for the book she co-authored with John Laslett, The ILGWU in Los Angeles 1907-1988. Most of these documents are photocopies of research articles and correspondence from the ILGWU archives in New York (these archives are now at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY) and from by Steve Nutter, Regional Director of the Western States Region of the ILGWU. It also contains oral history interviews done by Dorothy Doyle, both transcripts and audiocassette tapes.

Box-folder 1/1-1/4  Articles on the ILGWU
Box-folder 1/1  1984, 1986, n.d.
Box-folder 1/3  1955-1987, n.d.
Box-folder 1/4  1925-1993, n.d.
Box-folder 1/5  Articles from the ILGWU, 1949-1988
Box-folder 1/8  Conventions (ILGWU) Reports and Proceedings, 1922-1953
Box-folder 6/1  Court Cases, 1981, 1983
Box-folder 1/9-2/1  David Dubinsky Correspondence from the ILGWU Archives
Box-folder 1/9  1933
Box-folder 1/10  1940-1941
Box-folder 1/11  1946-1947
Box-folder 1/12  1948
Box-folder 1/13  1949
Box-folder 1/14  1950
Box-folder 2/1  Communist Party Related, 1947-1950
Box-folder 2/2  ILGWU Los Angeles, 1949, n.d.
Box-folder 2/3  Lasser, Florence - The Story of the ILGWU: A Radio Play in Six Episodes - ILGWU Education Department, 1936
Box-folder 2/4  Laslett, John H.M. - Gender, Class or Ethno-Cultural Struggle? The Problematic Relationship Between Rose Pesotta and the Los Angeles ILGWU, 1933-1942, n.d.
Box-folder 2/5  General Outline - Unidentified outline on ILGWU, 1885-1932, n.d.
Box-folder 2/6  Notes on ILGWU, n.d.
Box-folder 2/7  Official Dues Card, 1947
Box-folder 6/2  Springer, Preva and Joseph - Clippings concerning, 1953-1987
Box-folder 2/9-2/10  Quarterly Meeting of the General Executive Board
Box-folder 2/9  1934-1944
Box-folder 2/10  1948-1954
Box-folder 2/11  Rose Pesotta Exhibit Materials, 1933, 1942, n.d.
Box-folder 2/12  Benjamin Schlesinger Collection Materials (Cornell University), 1914-1919
Box-folder 6/3  Souvenir Journal - ILGWU Local 1 - Fiftieth Jubilee Anniversary, 1936
Box-folder 2/13  Structure and Functioning of the ILGWU, 1934-1953
Box-folder 2/14  Taft-Hartley - Memorandum Presented to CIO Executive Board, 1947
Box-folder 2/15  Transcripts of Oral Interviews by Dorothy Doyle, 1987
Box-folder 3/2  Weinstone, William - The Case Against David Dubinsky, [Book], 1946
Box-folder 3/3  Westoff, Marie Louise - An Inquiry into the Activities of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union in Los Angeles, MA. Thesis, USC (Dept. of Economics), September 1938
Box-folder 3/4-3/7  Pamphlets
Box-folder 3/4-3/5  Formerly in SCL Pamphlet Collection
Box-folder 3/4  1934-1936
Box-folder 3/5  1937-1965
Box-folder 3/6  Miscellaneous, 1867-1986
Box-folder 3/7  Songbooks, 1986, n.d.
Box-folder 3/8, 9/1-9/7  Photographs
Box-folder 9/1  Folder [3 items], 1924-1936
Box-folder 9/2-9/7  6 Rolled Panoramas, 1924-1940
Box-folder 7/1-7/16  Tapes
Box-folder 7/1  ILGWU Strike - Speeches & Interviews, April 10, 1987
Box-folder 7/1  Oral History Interviews by Dorothy Doyle
Box-folder 7/2-7/16  Bertolini, Ethel Shapiro [2 tapes], March 10, 1987
Box-folder 7/2-7/3  Dobbs, Ben, November 17, 1986
Box-folder 7/4  Fields, Kathryn [2 tapes], n.d.
Box-folder 7/5-7/6  Gordon, Dave [2 tapes], January 21, 1987
Box-folder 7/7-7/8  LeCover, Harry, January 20, 1987
Box-folder 7/9  Levy, Abe
Box-folder 7/10-7/11  January 12, 198[7]
Box-folder 7/10  February 5, 1987
Box-folder 7/11  Silver, Sophie, November 24, 1986
Box-folder 7/12  Springer, Preva, January 7, 1987
Box-folder 7/13  Wall, Cornelius [2 tapes], January 21, 1987
Box-folder 7/14-7/15  Weintraub, Hi, May 12, 1987
Box-folder 7/16
### Series 2. Conference and Book Files, 1996-1988

**Physical Description:** 13 folders and 9 audiocassettes  
**Scope and Content Note**

This series includes materials produced for the SCL's 1987 symposium, *Los Angeles Garment Workers: Past and Present*, and preliminary articles and working drafts of the subsequent book *The ILGWU in Los Angeles 1907-1988* published in 1989. The symposium materials include program and planning materials, transcripts of talks, a slideshow, and audiocassette tapes of the proceedings. Speakers included Jeff Stansbury, Political and Education Director, ILGWU Western States Region, Sarah Cooper, Director, Southern California Library, Mary Tyler, Dorothy Doyle, Antonio Orea, Peter Olney and Rodolfo Gutierrez, ILGWU Organizers, Christina Vasquez, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Organizer, Cornelius Wall, Retired Director, ILGWU Western States Region, John Laslett, Ethel Bertolini, author and retired organizer, Rodolfo (Rudy) Acuña, Professor of Chicano Studies at California State University Northridge, Steven T. Nutter, Director, ILGWU Western States Region, and Richard Rothstein, Manager, ACTWU California Joint Board. The book materials include a preliminary paper written by Mary Tyler, partial drafts of the book including a section by John Laslett, various notes, and a final complete draft of the manuscript. Administrative and other materials relating to the actual production of the book, and a record copy of the published work can be found in the Administrative Files series.

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<tr>
<th>Box-folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>Planning Materials, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>Transcripts of Talk by Steve Nutter, June 6, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/11, 8/10</td>
<td>History of the LA-ILGWU (Then and Now) A Slide Show - Mary Tyler and Dorothy Doyle, Transcript 1987</td>
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<td>3/11</td>
<td>Slides, n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>Other Written Materials Produced by Mary Tyler and Dorothy Doyle, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/1-8/9</td>
<td>Audio Tapes</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>Acuña (Rudy), June 6, 1987</td>
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<td>8/2-8/3</td>
<td>Afternoon Panel Discussion - Steve Nutter, Miguel Machuca, Tony Orea, Rudy Acuña - [2 tapes], June 6, 1987</td>
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<td>8/4</td>
<td>General Session - Jeff Stansbury, Sarah Cooper, Dorothy Doyle, Mary Tyler, June 6, 1987</td>
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<td>8/5</td>
<td>The Immigrant Experience, June 6, 1987</td>
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<td>8/6</td>
<td>Organizing the Unorganized, June 6, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/7-8/8</td>
<td>Radical Left and the ILGWU [two tapes], June 6, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>Structure of the Garment Industry, June 6, 1987</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
<td>Southwest Labor Conference - Papers presented by Mary Tyler, April 30, 1988</td>
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<td>3/14-4/2</td>
<td>Book</td>
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<td>3/14</td>
<td>History of the LA-ILGWU 1930-1950 by Mary Tyler - Draft only - Do not Cite, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>Handwritten Draft/Notes, n.d.</td>
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<td>4/2</td>
<td>Final Draft of Book, 1988</td>
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<td>4/3-4/5</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Notes</td>
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<td>4/3</td>
<td>Sarah Cooper, 1986-1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>John Laslett, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Mary Tyler, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/11</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Negatives, n.d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Physical Description:** 1 letter-size box and 1 legal folder  
**Scope and Content Note**

This series includes grant applications, correspondence, reports, contracts, budget, production and publicity materials concerning both the SCL's symposium and book projects. Also included is the record copy of the published book.
| Box-folder 5/1 | Grant Application, 1986-1987 |
| Box-folder 5/2-5/3 | Correspondence |
| Box-folder 5/2 | Conference, 1986-1987 |
| Box-folder 5/4 | Conference Registration, 1987 |
| Box-folder 5/5-5/6 | California Council for the Humanities |
| Box-folder 5/5 | "Official" Records - Grants, Correspondence, 1986-1990 |
| Box-folder 5/6 | Reports, 1987 1987 |
| Box-folder 5/7 | Oral History Releases 1987 |
| Box-folder 5/8-5/18, 6/4 | Book |
| Box-folder 5/8 | Abstract for Distributor Catalog, 1989 |
| Box-folder 5/9 | Budget, 1989-1990 |
| Box-folder 5/10 | Contract, 1989 |
| Box-folder 5/11, 6/4 | Cover |
| Box-folder 5/11 | Text & Graphics, 1990 |
| Box-folder 6/4 | Mock-up, n.d. |
| Box-folder 5/12 | Photograph (copies), n.d. |
| Box-folder 5/13 | Printing Quotes, 1987-1990 |
| Box-folder 5/14 | Publicity, 1990, n.d. |
| Box-folder 5/15 | Publishing Sponsors, 1989 |
| Box-folder 5/16 | Reviews, 1990-1991 |
| Box-folder 5/18 | The ILGWU in Los Angeles 1907-1988 - Printed Version, 1989 |