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State Historical Society of Wisconsin: Manuscript Resources on Georgia History

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Research materials on Georgia history are of course available in many different institutions, not all of them physically near Georgia's borders. One distant institution with a surprisingly sizeable amount of Georgiana is the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, located on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison. The Society, founded in 1846, two years before the state itself was organized, contains among other things the University's American history library, a museum, the state archives, and extensive collections of manuscripts, maps, photographs, films and sound recordings.

The Society has more than 15 million manuscript items. Collecting originally focused on early Wisconsin, the Old Northwest, and the Great Lakes states. Especially notable are the Draper Collection of manuscripts relating to the trans-Allegheny frontier from 1750 to 1815 and the Cyrus H. McCormick Collection of interrelated family and business papers. Recent collecting policy has emphasized more contemporary phases of American life and history, for instance, mass communications, theater and motion pictures, the labor movement, socialism, civil rights, contemporary social action, and related modern political and economic issues.

Materials on Georgia primarily fall into the areas of the labor movement and civil rights. But there is also a large amount on the Civil War and almost a dozen collections on various other topics.

*Ms. Baumann is an Archivist at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. She is grateful to Dr. Josephine Harper, Reference Archivist, and to John Gerber for their assistance in the preparation of this article.
LABOR MOVEMENT COLLECTIONS

The relevant labor movement collections are mainly records of national bodies which include materials on the activities of affiliated local groups. Dating 1933 to 1968, the records primarily concern unions in textile and hosiery mills, trucking companies, and meat, chemical and fertilizer plants.


American Federation of Labor, Papers, 1881-1953 [549 boxes and 20 volumes]: files of the national office including (1) correspondence, telegrams and a press release on anti-labor legislation in Georgia, 1942-1949; (2) strike correspondence and telegrams, 1935-1942, from Augusta Federal Labor Union, and a copy of a strike agreement with Hercules Powder Company, 1941, by Chemical Workers Local 22660, Brunswick; (3) correspondence and memos with Rubber Workers Local 21255, Atlanta, pertaining to research on wage scales; and (4) correspondence with the Georgia Federation of Labor, 1937-1938, and with the Atlanta Central Labor Union, Atlanta Federation of Trades, Atlanta Building Trades Council, Macon Federation of Trades, and Trades and Labor Assembly of Savannah, 1937-1938, 1944.

Highlander Research and Education Center (New Market, Tennessee), Papers, 1917-1973 [91 boxes, tape recordings, and photographs]: papers of the Highlander Center, formerly the Highlander Folk School, an adult education center active in the labor movement, civil rights movement, and Appalachian poverty programs; including materials on labor organizing in Georgia, on 1933 and 1935 strikes at Rossville hosiery mills, and on Don West.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Papers, 1904-1952 [87 reels microfilm (originals also available). Restricted]: records of the international headquarters including their files for locals in Atlanta, Brunswick, Columbus, Rome, and Savannah, and for Joint Council #68, Atlanta.

Textile Workers Union of America, Papers, 1918-1964 [431 boxes, 7 reels microfilm, 9 disc recordings]: files of the international office, departments and divisions, and area directors and joint boards, including (1) correspondence, memos, reports, and meeting minutes, 1949-1951, comprising the files of Georgia state directors Lisk, Lawrence, Young and Douty, and of J. D. Pedigo of the Northwest Georgia Joint Board; (2) the Education Department's files on the State Industrial Union Council, 1952-1955, and on Georgia workers education, 1946-1950; (3) the Publications Division's files on a strike against the Celanese Corporation, Rome, 1948, and a strike at Mary-Leila Cotton Mills, Greensboro, 1941; and (4) the Research Division's file on the Celanese Corporation, Rome, including correspondence, arbitration hearing transcripts, newspaper clippings, pay scale proposals, reports, financial statements, wage schedules, and payroll analyses, 1937-1957.

United Packinghouse, Food and Allied Workers, Papers, 1937-1968 [546 boxes, 70 record center cartons, 41 tape recordings, 20 disc recordings and 1 film]: correspondence, proceedings, publications, reports, speeches, and other documentation from the union's national office, including information on activities of union locals in meat, chemical, cotton seed oil, and fertilizer plants in various cities in Georgia.

Weissman, George, Papers, 1955-1958 [1 box]: material relating to Weissman's articles about the activities of the Reverend Don West in Dalton, Georgia, during
the mid-1950s. West was editor of The Southerner and The New Southerner, and a minister of the Church of God of the Union Assembly. The material centers around the church's role in organizing the textile workers of Dalton and the attacks on West as a Communist. The collection consists of correspondence, research materials, pamphlets, press releases, newspaper clippings, labor hearing statements, and copies of several published and unpublished articles by Weissman on West.

CIVIL RIGHTS COLLECTIONS

The civil rights collections include records of national organizations like the Congress of Racial Equality and Students for a Democratic Society, but also papers of private individuals who were contacted by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin field staff traveling in the South in the mid-1960s. Both native Southerners, black and white, and Northerners who worked in the South for a summer or a year are represented by manuscripts.

Bond, Julian, Interview, July 6, 1967 [1 tape recording]: discusses the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Bond's other civil rights activities, and his election to the Georgia Legislature.

Braden, Carl and Anne, Papers, 1928-1972 [97 boxes, 88 tape recordings, 2 disc recordings, 5 reels microfilm and 1 film. Restricted]: papers of the Bradens—journalists, activists for civil rights and civil liberties, and one-time directors of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF)—plus other records of SCEF and related organizations; including (1) Southern Patriot and field organizers' files containing a variety of materials on civil rights activities in Atlanta, 1957-1965, and Albany, 1962-1966, and on the Atlanta Civil Liberties Workshop, 1962; and (2) SCEF central office correspondence with various Georgia groups, 1967-1969.


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Hamwee, Lillian, Papers, 1965, 1967 [1 folder]: correspondence, reports, newsletters, and notes of a summer volunteer with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in Albany, concerning her work in the Dougherty County tutorial program and as a freedom school teacher.

Highlander Research and Education Center, Papers, 1917-1973 [see entry under Labor Movement]: papers include information on Koinonia Farm and on civil rights activities such as citizenship program workshops.

King, Slater, Papers, 1961-1964 [1 box]: materials dealing with the civil rights movement in Albany.

Samples, Cadmus A., Papers, 1965-1967 [1 box. Restricted]: illuminate a black pastor's work with a variety of Atlanta organizations concerned with civil rights, poverty, and politics.

Sherrod, Charles, Papers, 1964-1967 [1 reel microfilm]: civil rights materials of a Negro minister active in southwestern Georgia consist of newsletters, reports, statements, correspondence, court subpoenas, and minutes of mass meetings, plus several statements issued by Julian Bond and minutes of the Baker County Movement.


Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Atlanta, Georgia--Vine City Project, Records, 1966-1967 [2 boxes and 1 package. Restricted]: general notes and correspondence, clippings, reports, posters, and pamphlets concerning activities of a SNCC experiment in urban black consciousness. These activities involved a black culture program, anti-draft actions, freedom schools, housing and police problems, and political and voter registration work.

Students For A Democratic Society, Records, 1958-1970 [57 boxes and 24 tape recordings]: records of the radical, mainly student organization, including a small amount of material on Georgia SDS chapters, and a tape
recorded interview with people from Americus on instances of police brutality and harassment at a civil rights demonstration, September 9, 1963, plus a statement on the demonstration by Julian Bond.

Wells, S. B., Scrapbook, c. 1962-1967 [1 reel microfilm]: newspaper clippings, fliers, occasional correspondence, and miscellaneous materials relating to the civil rights movement in southwest Georgia, including material on Albany and Dawson, and on Slater King.

CIVIL WAR COLLECTIONS

The Civil War collections fit the more traditional pattern of having been preserved by family members and presented to the Society many years later by heirs. They consist primarily of letters, diaries, and reminiscences of soldiers who served in the Union army or were prisoners of war in Georgia.

The soldiers whose papers are at the Society are:

Dwight S. Allen, Corporal, Co. C, 22nd Wisconsin Infantry
Van S. Bennett, Captain, Co. I, 12th Wisconsin Infantry
Adelbert M. Bly, Sergeant, Co. B, 32nd Wisconsin Infantry
John F. Brobst, Private, Co. G, 25th Wisconsin Infantry
Wilson S. Covill, Sergeant, Co. I, 14th Wisconsin Infantry
William Leander Harrison, Private, Co. D, 14th Wisconsin Infantry
Benjamin Franklin Heuston, Corporal, Co. C, 22nd Wisconsin Infantry
David G. James, Corporal, Co. C, 16th Wisconsin Infantry
George B. McMillan, Private, Co. A, 16th Wisconsin Infantry
Alonzo Miller, Private, Co. A, 12th Wisconsin Infantry
Merritt Miller, Corporal, Co. K, 75th Illinois Infantry
Thomas Morrison, Private, Co. D, 22nd Wisconsin Infantry
Levi H. Nickel, Corporal, Co. I, 17th Wisconsin Infantry
James T. Reeve, Surgeon, 21st Wisconsin Infantry
John H. Roberts, Corporal, Co. A, 22nd Wisconsin Infantry
James F. Sawyer, Private, Co. K, 21st Wisconsin Infantry
William F. Saylor, band leader, First Brigade, Third Division, 20th Army Corps
Frederick E. Schmitt, Private, Co. D, 3rd New Jersey Cavalry
Charles M. Smith, Corporal, Co. F, 16th Wisconsin Infantry
Charles H. Spencer, Private, Co. D, 40th Wisconsin Infantry
Frederick C. Winkler, Lieutenant Colonel, 26th Wisconsin Infantry.

One additional item is a letter from G. W. Crawford, President of the Secession Convention, to the Governor of Wisconsin, January 22, 1861, transmitting a copy of Georgia's Ordinance of Secession from the Union.

OTHER COLLECTIONS

The remaining collections that contain material relating to Georgia range in date from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Included are records of national organizations, several single documents which originated in Georgia, and papers from the Revolutionary War era collected by Lyman Copeland Draper, founder of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Allen, Gideon Winan (1825-1912), Papers, 1862-1867, 1872 [1 reel microfilm]: correspondence, including two letters describing conditions in Georgia in 1872 from the point of view of a Northern business man.


Americans for Democratic Action, Papers, 1932-1965 [409 boxes]: include (1) in the Administrative file, materials on the Atlanta chapter consisting largely of correspondence between the chapter and the ADA southern representative, Barney Taylor, 1950, plus lists of members and prospective members; (2) in the Chapter file, correspondence with Georgia members and non-members, 1944-1950, including several letters to and from Governor Ellis Arnall; and (3) in the Campus Division file, correspondence, 1951-1956, with the Atlanta chapter.

Clay, Joseph [1 item]: lease of land in Georgia by Joseph Clay to Joseph Butler, January 16, 1775.
Draper Collection: Though Draper's historical interests never centered on any single Georgia event or person, the Draper Collection contains some scattered manuscripts pertaining to the Revolution in Georgia and to Revolutionary service elsewhere by Georgia residents, and to other topics. In Series V, Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina Papers (1 volume), there are a few pieces of original correspondence of Elijah Clarke, 1782-1794, relating to Georgia militia action in the Revolution and to postwar land and legislative business. In this same volume are Draper's correspondence and notes about Elijah and John Clarke, Macajah Williamson, Richard McGriff, William Candler, and Benjamin Few. In Series VV, Thomas Sumter Papers, original autobiographical letters written in 1811 by Andrew Pickens describe his operations against the Loyalists in Georgia (volume 1 VV), and the narratives of Joseph McJunkin (volume 23 VV) discuss his military services in Georgia, as well as in South Carolina. Numerous other references to Georgia residents, land, boundaries, government, Indians, and military affairs in the eighteenth century are widely dispersed in this and other Draper series. Such references in Series XX and DD are itemized in the published calendar Tennessee and King's Mountain Papers (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1929).

Foreign Policy Association, Papers, 1918-1966 [91 boxes, 7 reels microfilm. Partially restricted]: a national non-partisan educational organization formed to stimulate interest and understanding of world affairs, papers include correspondence, field reports, and printed matter about local affiliated groups throughout Georgia, 1953-1960, particularly in Atlanta and Macon, 1958-1960.

Harris, Elizabeth [1 item]: marriage settlement between Elizabeth Harris and Donald MacLeod, both of Savannah, June 19, 1782.

Mann, Harold W. [1 item]: a 17-page paper, "Wisconsin Men in Georgia, 1865-1876," written in 1951 by Mann, a University of Wisconsin history student.

Mitchell, David Bradie, Papers, 1809-1820 [1 folder]: eight letters to and one from David B. Mitchell, Governor of Georgia and army general, all printed in the Georgia Historical Quarterly, December, 1937, pp. 383-392;
plus one letter, May 31, 1820, from John Clark concerning a probe of Mitchell's conduct as a U.S. Agent for Indian Affairs.

These materials are available for use in the Society's Manuscript Reading Room whose hours are 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday and usually Saturday. Tape recording and typewriting are permitted, and researchers may use the xerox copier conveniently located in the reading room. Photostat and microfilm copying can also be arranged. Access to the manuscript holdings is through a card catalog, registers or detailed inventories, and published descriptive guides which can be found in many research libraries throughout the country.

Because collections are occasionally on loan through a system of Area Research Centers within the state, researchers are advised to write well ahead to insure that the materials wanted are available for use. Advance inquiry also should be made about restrictions on use or reproduction of materials. Limited reference service is available by mail. All inquiries should be addressed to Dr. Josephine L. Harper, Reference Archivist, Division of Archives-Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.