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for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ Working Class Oral History Project Collection, ca. 1930s-1980s ◀

MSS-214

Size: 0.5 linear ft.

Provenance: Received from Tim Messer-Kruse, UT Dept. of History

Access: Open

Related Collection: See MSS-213 for an oral history interview with Ms. Potter

Collection Summary: Collection consists of audio cassettes and transcripts of interviews with 13 former Jeep employees.

Subject: [Labor](#)

Processing Note:

Copyright: The literary rights to this collection are assumed to rest with the person(s) responsible for the production of the particular items within the collection, or with their heirs or assigns. Researchers bear full legal responsibility for the acquisition to publish from any part of said collection per *Title 17, United States Code*. The **Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections** may reserve the right to intervene as intermediary at its own discretion.

Completed by: Tamara Jones, July 2006 and May 2014

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Biographical Sketches

The oral histories collection consists of the transcripts of interviews given by several individuals. Most were employed by Jeep during and after World War II, although there are some exceptions; these are listed below.

Daniel Blochowski was hired by Jeep from Union Local 12 in November of 1941, working on the assembly line – first with paneled trucks and later Jeeps – before entering the service in 1942. He returned to the assembly line at Jeep in 1946.

Lela Brady worked for a rubber company before coming to Jeep in 1942. When she and another woman attempted to unionize, they were fired. The union eventually found Brady a job at Jeep, where she worked in the company's aircraft division for the duration of the war filling, drilling, and riveting parts on the Corsair aircraft.

Frank Csizmar began working at Jeep in 1943 at the age of sixteen. At his brother's suggestion, he got a job at Jeep after attending high school for two years. Although he initially planned to work only for the summer, Csizmar found that the pay, combined with the possibility of being drafted into the army, was sufficient to stay on full time. During the war years, Csizmar worked in the aircraft division, making wings for Corsair fighter planes. He was drafted into the Army in 1945 and served in the Philippines before returning to the Jeep plant (which had been retooled to manufacture civilian vehicles) in 1946, this time installing heaters.

Joanne Eckhart began her career as a practical nurse at Flower Hospital, where she found work upon arriving from Pennsylvania. She worked at Flower for three months before she began work at the Jeep plant in 1941, which was hiring hundreds of women at the time. She began as a seamstress at the plant before working on aircraft and inspecting bullet cores. She then entered the service for two years and afterwards returned to Jeep to work the hardware line, ultimately ending up on the assembly line. Eckhart retired in the mid-1970s after 35 years with the company.

Loretta Gauthier Fisher: The transcript of this interview does not give any indication as to whether Fisher was a Jeep employee, or if she was involved in the labor movement. It is known that her father was a machinist and a union organizer, but Ms. Fisher herself admits that she does not know where he was employed. Her uncle was also a machinist.

Richard Krupeany acquired his job at Jeep through his father. Before serving during the war, he worked in the 306 Department and was later placed in Mail Order after leaving the service in 1945. Krupeany worked at Jeep for 39 years.

Bertha Potter: see finding aid for MSS-213 for biographical information.

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James P. Quinlivan: The Quinlivan interview transcript is not so much about Quinlivan himself as it is about his uncle's role in the labor movement. Quinlivan's uncle was a union organizer beginning in the World War I era and was later involved in the infamous Auto-Lite strike of 1934. By the 1930s, he was also a professional politician and a strong supporter of the Democratic Party.

Clifford Thomas Quinn began his career at the News Bee in 1934 as a party boy and messenger. His father, a Jeep employee, lost his job at the factory, and the family ended up on public assistance until he found a job working for the WPA. During this time, Quinn supplemented his father's income by running football pools at the News Bee. In 1935, he asked for a raise and was promoted to reporter, covering the police beat during some of Toledo's more colorful years.

James Roller was born in 1910 and served in the military in the early 1940s. He appears to have been an employee at Chrysler, but little else is known of his background (see scope and content note below).

Arnold Shenofsky began his career at Willys-Overland in 1941. Prior to that, he served as a bodyguard for Richard Gosser. It was during this time that Shenofsky attended a UAW convention, which in turn led to his employment at the Willys-Overland/Jeep plant, where he worked for 37 years before retiring in 1978.

Ernest Smith: see scope and content note.

Jerome Smith began his career at LaSalle and Koch warehouse filling orders for housewares. He worked there for nine months, from 1941-42, before his father, a Jeep employee, asked if he wanted a job at that company. He began working at Jeep in March of 1942, working there for nine months before being drafted into the Army, where he served for the next three years. He returned to Jeep after the war and to his previous job in Mail Order – filling orders for parts – until he moved to the assembly line, where he worked for the next fifteen years. Taking the advice of a friend, he then moved to inspection, where he continued to work until his retirement. In total, Smith was employed by Jeep for 44 years.

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Scope and Content Note

The Working Class Oral History Project Collection is divided into two series.

Series 1 consists of audio cassette recordings of interviews given by individuals – most of whom were employed by Jeep – during the Depression and World War II, as well as the post-war period. Some of these recordings also have transcripts, which are listed in series 2. Two cassettes are not labeled and therefore the interviewees are unknown. The tapes are arranged alphabetically by last name. With the exception of the interviews conducted with James Roller and Ernest Smith, the recordings are in microcassette format (the Roller and Smith interviews were recorded on standard audio cassettes).

Series 2 consists of interview transcripts, which are also arranged alphabetically by last name. There is no transcript of the interview with James Roller, and his folder contains very limited biographical information. A transcript is also lacking for Ernest Smith; however, there is a handwritten timeline of events concerning MESA Local 3 that may be of interest to the researcher.

Series 2 also includes a folder of correspondence. One is a form letter from then-UT Assistant Professor of Labor History Timothy Messer-Kruse regarding Robert C. Travis, who was a major figure in Toledo's AFL Local 18384. The letter requests any information on Travis that may be of use in the oral history project professor Messer-Kruse was working on at the time. There are also two responses to his requests for information on other individuals involved in Toledo's labor movement.

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Folder List

Box	Folder	Item
		Series 1: Audio Cassette Recordings
1	--	G. Jones III
1	--	James P. Quinlivan
1	--	Clifford Thomas Quinn, 5/1/98 (3 cassettes)
1	--	James Roller, 3/1/98
1	--	Ronald and Kathryn Schwake, 6/10/98
1	--	Arnold Shenofsky, 4/10/98 (3 cassettes)
1	--	Ernest Smith
1	--	Unidentified interviewees (2 cassettes)
		Series 2: Interview Transcripts and Correspondence
1	1	Daniel Blochowski
1	2	Lela Brady
1	3	Frank Csizmar
1	4	Joanne Eckhart
1	5	Loretta Gauthier Fisher
1	6	Richard Krupeany
1	7	Bertha Potter
1	8	James P. Quinlivan
1	9	Clifford Thomas Quinn (includes 3" floppy disk)
1	10	James Roller
1	11	Arnold Shenofsky (includes photographs)
1	12	Ernest Smith
1	13	Jerome Smith
1	14	Oral History Correspondence