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Knowledge is Power:

The Rise and Fall of the Libraries of the United Automobile Workers' Union

Dominique DANIEL
Oakland University Library
Rochester, Michigan
daniel@oakland.edu

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Abstract

This article traces the history of libraries run by local unions of the International United Automobile Workers' union (UAW) from the mid-1930s through the 1950s. Using the records of the UAW it examines the purpose of its libraries and the workers' education program they were part of. It analyzes the collections in these libraries and considers how they were developed, who used them, and how they fared in light of the role of print in the UAW's activities and of Depression, wartime-era, and postwar working-class reading culture.

When Local 174 of the United Automobile Workers union (UAW), one of the biggest locals of the international union, held a membership rally in early 1939, it issued a souvenir program that promoted its 5,000 book library. Under the headline “Knowledge is Power” the souvenir program boasted that the library was “crammed full of facts and figures of real importance to all union members who are anxious to better understand and better serve the American Labor Movement.”¹ The collection had been purchased from Brookwood Labor College, a two-year residential school for workers that had just closed down. An amalgamated local on the West side of Detroit with some 11,500 dues-paying members, Local 174 was a fitting new home for its library. The local leaders included several Brookwood graduates like Walter Reuther, future UAW president, and his brother Victor, future head of the union’s education department after the war.² From the late 1930s until the late 1940s, UAW leaders encouraged libraries like this one as tools in the effort to develop an education program. The UAW often pointed to the Local 174 library as a model and eagerly publicized it. Thus a 1941 article in the union’s newspaper claimed that the library was “one of the finest labor libraries in

the country,” and that it had grown “from something nice to have around into an integral working part of the organization,” “used by almost everyone at some time or other.” The article claimed that every labor-related aspect of “human endeavor was catalogued,” meeting the needs of the labor organizer who wanted to know what a company’s strikebreaking weapons were and those of the teacher of an evening class seeking information on the Knights of Labor.³

The UAW local libraries were part of a broader union enterprise to produce and distribute printed matter to union members across the United States and Canada. They were an important part of the union’s education apparatus, which ranged from summer schools to film and radio programs. This article will examine what role local libraries played within the union’s growing education program from 1936 to the 1950s, what kind of literature they offered, and what reading habits UAW members had. Libraries for workers could be found in the United States as early as the first workers’ education initiatives in the 19th century, in the form of mechanics’ institutes, factory libraries, and other private libraries. But union libraries differ from other workers’ libraries as they were created and controlled by labor unions, rather than employers, philanthropists, left-wing intellectuals, or workingmen’s clubs and other associations of unorganized workers.⁴ Libraries run by organized labor in the United States can be traced back to the Civil War, as exemplified by the library of the Trades Assemblies of Philadelphia and the libraries of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, starting in the 1870s.⁵ In the 1910s the International Ladies’ Garments Workers’ Union’s pioneering education services systematically relied on books and libraries.⁶ The UAW was inspired by the success of the ILGWU’s initiative and built the largest education program of American industrial unions at a time when it grew from 27,000 members in 1935 to over a million in 1950, expanding across the United States and Canada.⁷

There is only one study of education at the UAW, that produced by Thomas Linton in 1965 for his dissertation in education, and it barely refers to its libraries.⁸ In general there has been little scholarship on union libraries, although they are sometimes mentioned in histories of labor unions and in studies of workers' education.⁹ By contrast public library services to workers and collaboration with organized labor have been studied more extensively.¹⁰ So have philanthropic libraries designed for the working class.¹¹ The history of the UAW libraries in the transformative period of the New Deal, World War II, and its aftermath can fill a gap in scholarship at the intersection of the history of library services to the lower classes, workers' education history, reading history, and labor history. As Michael Denning has shown, this was the time the Congress of Industrial Organizations' unionism laid the groundwork for a "cultural front."¹² From its founding in 1935 it attempted to create what Lizabeth Cohen called a "culture of unity" among industrial workers across ethnic origins, race, gender, and industrial sectors.¹³ The UAW's local libraries and other book distribution strategies can be seen as one such practice in the union's effort to build a culture of unity within its own ranks and the CIO as a whole. Over the years the goals of the UAW education program shifted under the pressure of competing ideological factions and changing leadership in the union, as well as the broader national and international context. But through the period the program experienced the same tensions between two conceptions of education – an idealistic vision of a new social order enabled by labor consciousness and pragmatic approaches to unionist training – which were reflected in the collections of the local libraries. In addition, differences between the book selections by union leaders and the reading inclinations of the rank-and-file fueled internal debates about the benefits of educational or recreational reading for working people.

The UAW local libraries' mission

Local union libraries are first mentioned in official UAW publications in the fall of 1937: in Cleveland, with the help of the public library, libraries were set up “in halls near the shops where the workers may drop in after work to read books dealing with problems that concern them.”¹⁴ A 1943 article in its *Ammunition* magazine best explained why libraries mattered: “One of the signs of labor consciousness is a labor library.... Workers’ education, no matter how successfully it may operate on other levels, is inadequate unless it is accompanied by a certain amount of education that must be discovered by oneself. One of the best ways to make self-education available is to set up a union library in your own local.”¹⁵ Self-education through libraries was in line with the UAW’s expressed desire to have active and engaged union members – a mission given from the start to its education department. Indeed, workers’ education was central at the UAW.

At its 1936 convention the UAW adopted a constitution that stated that “education shall be a recognized part of the business of each local union, in particular education in the history, principles and objectives of this International Union and the American Labor Movement.”¹⁶ The union recognized that “only through an understanding of the Labor Movement, its objective and philosophy, can we hope to draw our membership into conscious and intelligent participation.”¹⁷ Walter Reuther expressed similar ideas in 1947, shortly after becoming president of the union, when he declared the need for “understanding and trade union consciousness” for all in the rank-and-file, so they are “not ... dues paying members, not ... card carrying members, but ... soldiers in labor’s fight.”¹⁸ Regardless of their ideological inclinations, through that period UAW presidents, executive board members, and education department directors all agreed with the overarching principle that the union should control its own education program. They did not trust

the public school system or the media, influenced or controlled by corporations hostile to organized labor.¹⁹

In practice, education initiatives, including local libraries, often took a back seat to organizing, strikes, and in-fighting, due to ideological and personality struggles that affected the young union. The education department remained plagued by such internal struggles until Walter Reuther became UAW president in 1946, appointed his brother Victor as director of the education department, and eliminated rivals from the executive board the following year, thus ensuring the union's control by his group. Furthermore, the education program relied on different conceptions of "labor consciousness" as the UAW membership grew, its organization became more complex, and different factions fought for control of the union. In the early years, the first two education directors of the International, Merlin Bishop and Morris Field, focused its limited resources on practical instruction, especially classes in locals and summer schools on topics like parliamentary law, contract interpretation, or collective bargaining. The education program was greatly enlarged after Richard Deverall became its director in 1939. Deverall, who came from the Catholic workers' movement, had an ambitious conception of education as a "school for democracy." He also hoped that the rank-and-file would become "conscious of what they owe the union, of their rights and duties, and thus produce the disciplined union member." His successors, William Levitt and Jack Zeller, favored a more politicized approach to education, in line with the Communist faction they belonged to. While continuing the existing education program, they also emphasized national and international politics.²⁰ Thus, through its existence the union's education program pursued a mix of objectives that included "leadership training, union loyalty, political education, general education, and public relations."²¹ The idealistic conception of education that underlay official pronouncements competed with more pragmatic

and easier to reach goals such as equipping secondary leaders with the skills necessary to run a local union and raising awareness of union policies and relevant political issues.

Workers' education could not be done without reading materials, and these were widely available in 1930s' America. For educators the easiest sources were the publications of the CIO, with which the UAW was affiliated, and those of labor-friendly publishers, research centers, and authors. The UAW also started to produce its own pamphlets.²² Yet distributing such literature and encouraging workers to read faced serious obstacles. Factory workers had little free time before or after their shifts, and in the plant they were subjected to constant surveillance by management, who often banned union literature. Furthermore, the International union spread across the United States and Canada, and the distance between locals and the headquarters created significant logistical problems for the education department, based in Detroit.²³ Consequently, the UAW constantly suggested to locals different ways to put reading materials in the hands of their members, from handing out materials at union meetings to creating their own libraries in the local union halls. In an age when most information was transmitted through the printed text, a local library could provide immediate access to essential information. It could make bargaining committees "better negotiators" during contract negotiations and help stewards handle grievances.²⁴ More generally it could allow local elected officials, committee men and women, and shop stewards to learn the skills and acquire the knowledge needed to fulfill their responsibilities. It could also give local officers the tools they needed to organize services to members, such as classes on topics like public speaking, workers' safety, and time study. In short, it would make local unions more efficient.

In addition, UAW leaders knew that factory workers were not "book buyers," as they had neither the time, the money, nor the inclination to acquire books.²⁵ However, successive

education directors believed that making books and periodicals available to workers in their local union hall would encourage them to read. Of all reading materials, books were the best suited to give workers a better understanding of the broader economic and political forces that determined their lives and work. Reading was an individual experience of self-learning, but it could also be the foundation for the development of a shared union culture. Place – the interior space of the union hall – played a key role in that conception of the library. As Local 174 was the first in the union to get its own building in 1937, its leaders saw it as “a vital community center that could develop solidarity and class consciousness among its members in order to serve as a base of support for further organizing and political activities.” In it union members could visit the library, read the bulletin boards, and attend educational or recreational events.²⁶ It is no wonder, then, that the library and other socializing spaces of the hall were often featured in the pages of *Ammunition*, the official organ for UAW local leaders, and the *United Automobile Worker*, the union’s newspaper for all members.²⁷ Large local unions produced their own shop papers, which also provided library news alongside accounts of local events for members and their families.²⁸ Thus union halls helped foster a sense of community at the local level, and, it was hoped, a shared union culture between locals in support of the nationwide network of UAW unions.

The rise and fall of UAW local libraries

In practice, UAW libraries developed very slowly and unevenly across the country in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as locals set up education committees and started gathering a few books. A 1940 overview of workers’ education programs in American labor unions reported wide differences in their libraries: some locals had 2 or 3 shelves of books, a few had large collections.²⁹ In 1943, a UAW survey found that although most of its locals had an education

committee, only 52 percent met regularly and only 23 percent had “some sort of collection of reading matter.”³⁰ That same year, the UAW education department launched a new campaign to encourage the development of libraries and reading. Director Levitt pointed out that the department now had more staff and resources to help locals cover the costs of a library.³¹ Four years later, though, Victor Reuther noted that progress had been made but that not every local had a library.³² Such problems are not surprising, considering that creating a library required an active local education committee, money, space, and expertise.

To be sure, the locals had money: by constitutional requirement the UAW set aside 5 cents out of each dollar of monthly dues for education purposes – 2 and a half cents for the general secretary treasurer, and the same amount for the local treasury.³³ Space was also usually available, from a shelf to an entire room in the union hall. Expertise, however, was harder to come by. Local education committee members had no training in librarianship and limited time to learn. Consequently, libraries worked best in larger locals like Local 174, whose membership peaked at over 45,000 in 1943, and which had significant human and financial resources at its disposal. Detroit’s Chrysler Local 7 started acquiring books as early as 1936 and set up its library in 1938 for about 4,500 members.³⁴ Dodge Main Local 3 in Hamtramck also started a lending library in 1938, reporting two years later that it had “a good selection of books for its 14,000 members.”³⁵ In 1942, the local moved to a new union hall with a comfortable reading room.³⁶ Plymouth Local 51, for its part, created a labor library in 1940 for its 4,000 members.³⁷ One year later they had built “a library valued at over \$400 without any assistance from the local treasury” and were “accumulating a wealth of research material” which were “constantly being used to wage war against our enemies.”³⁸ By 1943 their library boasted 1,000 books.³⁹ These were all large locals, considering only 15 percent of UAW locals ever had more than 1,000 members.⁴⁰

The proximity of the union halls to the factories where UAW members worked was an important factor in shaping the libraries' services. When the hall was just across the street, workers could come in before or after their shifts.⁴¹ Workers were often carpooling, which forced them to wait for their rides and gave them time to spend in the hall. Some union halls, like those of Locals 7 and 51, offered a furnished reading space equipped with book cases, newsstands and magazine racks.⁴² The Local 51 hall was near the Plymouth plant, which enabled the education committee to show films during lunch breaks – for workers who had half-hour breaks – and at the end of the shifts, when people waited for their rides. Thus, its officers claimed, it successfully brought people in.⁴³ More rarely, education committees tried to publicize the union hall library directly inside the plant, like White Motor Local 32, a Cleveland local with about 4,000 members which posted lists of books on bulletin boards.⁴⁴

The UAW International education department tried to support the locals' efforts by sending them advice from professionals. An *Idea Book for UAW CIO Education and Recreation Committeemen*, issued under Director Deverall, outlined a realistic and effective strategy of starting small with book donations and UAW pamphlets.⁴⁵ A 1943 issue of *Ammunition* included a more ambitious two-page article on how to plan a lending library.⁴⁶ *Ammunition* also gave local officers examples of successful libraries in locals. Thus a 1945 issue mentioned that every new member of Flint's Buick Local 599 – with well over 10,000 members at the time – received a library card, as a way to “make new members into good union men (or women), not just card carriers.”⁴⁷ The International also organized education conferences where local leaders could learn from experts and from their peers. The library panel at the first conference in 1944 recommended using “best sellers and good books” to attract people, promoting the library through handbills and posters, and organizing discussions on featured books.⁴⁸

More successful, however, were efforts that enlisted external help. UAW locals across the country used the Workers' Service Program of the Works Progress Administration to obtain the services of trained librarians. Such was the case of Locals 174, 3, 7 and 51, among others.⁴⁹ Many more locals that could not afford to purchase books, or did not know how to, sought the help of public libraries, which responded enthusiastically. While public librarians had long been reaching out to industrial workers, the workers' education movement of the 1920s and 1930s and the growth of organized labor sharpened librarians' desire to serve the labor community. At the same time, organized labor's longstanding mistrust of public libraries was eroding.⁵⁰ Many cases of collaborative programs existed locally. For example, in 1941 UAW Local 205 arranged for the loan of 100 books per month from the Detroit Public Library and placed them in a "pleasant reading room" in the basement of its hall.⁵¹ When the WPA program concluded in 1943, putting an end to the employment of professional librarians in UAW locals, the union increasingly relied on the services and collections of public libraries. In 1945 the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations partnered with the American Library Association to form a Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor, whose goal was to help public libraries develop library services to labor groups.⁵² The public libraries of cities like Cleveland, Boston, and Philadelphia reached out to UAW local unions, as frequently illustrated in *Ammunition*.⁵³

After the war, the UAW education department continued to encourage locals to have their own library, a recommendation which some locals did follow. In 1946, the education committee of Local 51 voted to re-establish classes, movies, and book circulation.⁵⁴ In 1948-1949, Local 599 still loaned between 85 and 150 books per month.⁵⁵ But overall, in the post-war period, even as Education Director Victor Reuther boasted about progress in his 1947 report, local libraries faced growing difficulties because they had no reliable staff.⁵⁶ All too often, opening the library

depended on volunteers, who themselves had time constraints due to their jobs.⁵⁷ Alternatively, if the books were left in an open area, they would disappear. Many locals complained about losing books as borrowers failed to return them or the books were shelved in the wrong locations.⁵⁸ In the 1950s, issues of *Ammunition* progressively stopped featuring library news. Local libraries slowly fell into neglect, and their decreasing attractiveness failed to draw members' interest. In 1956, Local 599 – which had invested more time and resources into its library than most locals – noted that the library was “not doing the job that the [education] committee had hoped it would.” The library was only used by employees working for the local and “half a dozen” members.⁵⁹ In the 1950s, therefore, locals increasingly prioritized other educational and recreational activities.

The UAW libraries' collections

When local unions began to set up libraries starting in the late 1930s, their education committee populated them with books and periodicals they obtained through a variety of channels, both inside and outside the UAW. A few locals have left extensive records of their library activities, including education committee meeting minutes, library reports, and accession lists. Those records provide a revealing, although incomplete, illustration of the types of reading material UAW members could find in their locals. For example, extensive library inventories and accession lists are available for Local 51 for the 1946-1955 period, when its membership fluctuated between 3,500 and 6,000. They show how diverse the local's library holdings were.⁶⁰

On the one hand, some books were of direct use to working people in their jobs as well as union activities. Local 51 often acquired books that would help workers do their jobs better or get promoted, such as *Welding and Its Applications*.⁶¹ It also had books that could help local leaders fulfill their duties and that would give rank-and-file members the skills needed to

volunteer for office, such as manuals on public speaking, parliamentary procedure, shop steward duties, and collective bargaining.⁶² Also common were publications produced by the International to acquaint its vast membership of its mission, achievements, and policies, like the proceedings of its constitutional conventions. Finally, the library had many publications that informed members of their legal rights as workers and union members, such as books on industrial safety, occupational diseases, and workmen's compensation. For a large local like Local 51, reference works for their research needs on economic, political, and social topics were necessary. Eric Dearnley, the education committee chair, stated in 1941 that their library's "research material" included "the Consumers' Union, legislative material from Washington, reports of the National Labor Relations Board, information on commodity prices, and facts and figures from a multitude of sources."⁶³

On the other hand, local libraries offered books in history, labor, politics, sociology, economics, war, and any discipline or subject of interest to the local or the International. Not surprisingly there were many books on the history and role of the labor movement, on capitalism, business, and the working class. For example, Local 51 had a book on the unionization of the shoe industry, Samuel Yellen's *American Labor Struggles* – a sympathetic history of strikes –, and the autobiography of Bill Haywood, a founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World. The Local 51 library also contained books covering current affairs, especially World War II and post-war politics, such as the diary of William Dodd, ambassador to Germany in 1933-1938, Ernie Pyle's journalistic accounts of wartime operations, and Arthur Derounians's investigation into American fascists published in the bestselling *Under Cover* under the pseudonym of John Roy Carlson. General U.S. and world history were also present, as well as scientific and philosophical writings. Antisemitism, race relations, and women's issues

were also covered with books like *Black Workers and the New Unions* – a denunciation of racial prejudice and an account of the CIO’s importance to black workers – , Carey McWilliams’ powerful condemnation of racism in *Brothers Under the Skin*, and Elizabeth Hawes’ *Why Women Cry*. At the same time, the members of Local 51 could check out self-improvement books and consumer interest publications such as *Life Insurance: A Legalized Racket* and the *Consumers Union Buying Guides*.⁶⁴

Yet works of fiction formed the majority of Local 51’s collection. They included labor stories by labor-friendly authors such as John Steinbeck, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, Charles Dickens, and Emile Zola. Popular radical and proletarian fiction – like Thomas Bell’s *All Brides Are Beautiful* (1936), a realistic narrative of a young couple’s struggles in Depression era New York, and William Attaway’s *Blood on the Forge* (1941), a story by an African American author set in Pittsburgh’s steel mills – was also well represented. The local’s volunteer librarians clearly favored fictional works with a real-life message aligned with their views on labor, race, and politics. *Strange Fruit*, Lilian Smith’s 1944 polemical but bestselling novel dealing with an interracial romance, figured prominently in many local libraries.⁶⁵ Local 51 also offered some classics like the works of Shakespeare. Many of its novels, however, were detective stories, romances, or historical novels written by the bestselling popular authors of the day such as Erle Gardner, Kathleen Norris, or Mabel Seeley, whose *Chuckling Fingers* won the 1941 Mystery of the Year award. It also offered some comics and juvenile literature. Finally, the local library subscribed to union periodicals and news magazines like *Time* and *US News*, as well as popular magazines like *Life*, *Look*, *Field and Stream*, and *Gags*.⁶⁶

The collection of Local 51’s library, like that of other locals, was the product of deliberate choices and random opportunities, recommendations from the International and local

decisions. The education department widely advertised publications it endorsed and encouraged locals to acquire them. Book reviews and lists were published in *Ammunition* from 1941 to 1957 and in the *United Automobile Worker* as early as 1936.⁶⁷ The department regularly produced lists of reading materials – as Victor Reuther’s staff did in 1946 for distribution to locals “as a guide in the selection of books for union libraries.”⁶⁸ It kept supplies of books and other publications at the International headquarters, which locals could order. In 1944 it even established a bookstore in Detroit that sold books at a discount to locals, individual union members, and the general public. Originally, the bookstore was designed to help start local libraries, with the hope that orders from those libraries would ensure the bookstore’s financial viability.⁶⁹ In fact, the bookstore was never financially sound and closed in 1951. In addition, the education department operated a Labor Book Club in 1945-1947, through which subscribers received a new book every other month for below-market prices.⁷⁰

Through these methods, the International wanted not only to help locals but also to control the literature distributed within the union. The executive board itself was in charge of selecting titles for the Labor Book Club, and decisions were made unanimously by its four members.⁷¹ The book reviews often ended with a note that the book “should be read by all active unionists,” or that it was “a must item for every union library.”⁷² However, there was no effective way for the International to control book selections and use by locals. Local education committees were free to accept the International’s suggestions or to make their own selections. They purchased publications from the UAW bookstore, the CIO, and other labor organizations, but also from other bookstores in their area, or directly from publishers. They sometimes got books from public libraries and from donations from other locals or from individual members.

Thus, the records of Local 51 show that the education committee ordered books from Baker & Taylor, the Doubleday One-Dollar Book Club, Modern Age Books, and other publishers.⁷³ They also purchased books from another local union in 1946 and accepted donated books from local members.⁷⁴ Local 599's education committee bought books in Flint rather than at the Union Bookstore in Detroit, because they were closer and less expensive.⁷⁵ Locals also acted on occasional requests by patrons. Frank Marquart, who had a long career as education director for three UAW locals, recalls in his memoir that "Now and then a worker asked for a 'how to do it' book and if it was not in our collection I ordered it."⁷⁶ Furthermore, there is evidence that books suggested by the International were sometimes considered and rejected: Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* and Lloyd Douglas' *The Robe* – books available at the UAW bookstore and recommended in *Ammunition* – are crossed out on a list of books proposed to Local 51's education committee.⁷⁷ In 1950, the local was still buying books from the Book Find Club, which Walter Reuther had rejected as a good source.⁷⁸ As a result, it is likely that the collections of local libraries did not reflect the ideal library conceived by the union's leadership.

The UAW libraries' readers

In 1941 Dearnley reported that Local 51's library "is continually growing, but what is very important regarding this is the fact that if the library were not utilized it would not grow. It is through circulation of books that we obtain funds to acquire new additions for our shelves."⁷⁹ Since education workers had an incentive to highlight the success of their initiatives, the reality on the ground was undoubtedly more mixed. The UAW's own 1943 survey found that 58 percent of the local libraries saw less than 5 percent of their books checked out each month.⁸⁰ Although there are no records documenting circulation for Local 51, other locals' records provide some

information. Thus we know that circulation volumes at the libraries of Locals 3 and 599 remained small, considering the size of their memberships.⁸¹

<insert table 1>

While usage data is rarely found in the records of local education committees, there is evidence that the libraries only catered to a minority of motivated members. The Local 3 librarian noted that the longer work days of wartime production meant workers had less free time to read: “Longer hours bring less rest, and less time for recreational reading.”⁸² At Local 599, a push for more publicity for the library in 1946 was motivated by disappointing attendance but ten years later, library frequentation remained low.⁸³ Marquart explained in his memoir that “only a handful of radicals in each local borrowed books from the union library frequently.”⁸⁴

Local education committees repeatedly tried to entice union members to patronize their local libraries in the 1930s and 1940s by promoting the libraries’ services in the pages of the local shop paper. Thus, in the *Beacon*, Local 51’s newspaper, Dearnley vaunted the library and services available at their union hall: “Get into the habit of coming into your V Headquarters once in a while.” At the same time, an “On the Shelf” column assured readers: “We can cater to all tastes of reading.”⁸⁵ Dearnley painted an enticing portrait of the union hall: “well heated, clean, and equipped with comfortable chairs, the daily newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, books in the library, all free, belonging to you for your pleasure and use.”⁸⁶ Local 7’s paper had a regular feature, “Our Library, Its Contents,” which first appeared in the October 11, 1939 issue with a review of Upton Sinclair’s *Oil*.⁸⁷ Local 599’s *Headlight* had a similar “Your Library” column.⁸⁸ Book reviews attempted to paint books in a positive light, underlining the story’s suspense, humor, dramatic plot, and other features likely to please readers.

Local officers and the International also appealed to union members' sense of duty. Thus an officer of Hudson Local 154 wrote in the *United Automobile Worker* in 1939: "Your money has been the means of buying a truly informative library. It is your duty to yourself and to your union that you make the best use of this institution of learning so that you might more fully understand the problems your union is striving to solve and why you must take an active part if your union is to be a real success."⁸⁹ Another article in the *Champ*, Local 594's paper, appealed to female workers: "Women are responsible for keeping the union strong and bettering their working conditions. Read Sister, you need the union.... And the union needs you!"⁹⁰ Shop papers also regularly reminded workers that the source of their poverty and misery was often "ignorance of what is being done by their employers to control them."⁹¹ Such appeals probably had a limited impact, however. For UAW leaders, reading was designed to expand and deepen useful knowledge, not to entertain members. Libraries were part of education, not the union's recreation program which helped locals organize bowling competitions, family picnics, or holiday parties. There could be no doubt in the minds of UAW members, therefore, that libraries were not part of the "fun." Furthermore workers were generally not inclined toward "book larnin'."⁹² Not only were they tired after a day of work, but in the plant "intellectual" workers were regarded with suspicion by their peers for whom "the reader was probably a non-conformist and a political radical."⁹³

More importantly, the kind of reading matter that auto workers were likely to enjoy was different from what the union wanted them to read. 90 percent of UAW members were semi-skilled or unskilled workers and the majority were not high school graduates, although many had had some high school education.⁹⁴ Reader surveys conducted from the 1930s to the 1950s consistently showed that people with lower education levels favored newspapers over books.

Lower education groups also enjoyed pulp magazines and if they read books, they favored popular fiction, especially detective, espionage, romance, and adventure stories.⁹⁵ After 1939 paperbacks made such fiction affordable to lower income readers.⁹⁶ Available evidence in the records of UAW locals confirms these reading patterns. The collections of some local libraries, like those of Local 51 and 599, did have extensive collections of popular fiction. Although it is impossible to measure circulation and reading behaviors, through the few book check out slips that are available in the records of Local 51, one can see that books that circulated most were novels like Berenice Thorpe's 1943 *Reunion on Strawberry Hill* – a growing up novel –, mysteries, Woody Guthrie's autobiography, and marriage counseling manuals.⁹⁷ In 1952 Local 599's library committee recognized that *Life*, *Look*, and *Today's Woman* were popular with the membership, but that news magazines "are not read by the membership as much as they should be."⁹⁸ Unfortunately, analysis is limited by the absence of information about the age, gender, race, or ethnic origin of their readers and non-readers in the locals' records. Reader surveys of the period tell us that women read more magazines and works of fiction than men, and that African Americans' reading habits did not significantly differ from those of whites of the same class.⁹⁹ There is also no evidence that the International or local libraries included books in foreign languages, which might have appealed to workers of immigrant origins.

We do know, however, that in the 1941-1957 period, only about 14 percent of books showcased in *Ammunition* – and its predecessor, *Distributor* – by the education department were fictional works, and most of those had a labor or political message with a didactic value – from Amen Dell's *Johnnie on the Spot*, a progressive mystery, to Richard Wright's *Black Boy*.¹⁰⁰ Whether fiction or non-fiction, favorite subjects were U.S. and labor history, war and world affairs, politics and legislation, business and economics, as well as race relations. The UAW

education department did not shy away from controversial books like Smith's *Strange Fruit*, Lee and Humphrey's account of the 1943 Detroit riot, which denounced discrimination, or Ben Hecht's analysis of antisemitism in his 1944 *Guide for the Bedeviled*. This was particularly true between 1943 and 1945 when the department was dominated by communists.¹⁰¹

Caught between the International leadership's guidelines and their own membership's tastes, local education committees sometimes openly debated whether their libraries should enlighten or entertain readers. Some objected to collecting materials that did not endorse labor and unionization.¹⁰² Local 599, for its part, changed course several times. In 1943, the education director recommended purchasing more fiction and popular magazines.¹⁰³ The following year, though, the education committee insisted that the library get "a better grade of books in the future" and removed all children's books.¹⁰⁴ Ten years later, a new committee decided to limit fiction purchases and prioritize labor literature, limiting the library to its reference role.¹⁰⁵ A problem UAW leaders faced whenever they considered acquiring more works of popular fiction was that they perceived the publishing industry was at best indifferent, and at worst hostile, to organized labor. In 1944, Levitt regretted that "Many times detective stories are released in which the labor organizer is the villain." Most books, he felt, did not "really represent the real feelings... of the working people."¹⁰⁶ While many education directors therefore refused to encourage workers to read such literature, some were more tolerant and saw value in it. An experienced union officer thus noted: "Picture magazines, while sometimes anti-labor, are useful because they draw members to the reading room. These members then get the habit of reading the labor material also."¹⁰⁷ This was also the rationale at the UAW bookstore, which carried labor books as well as mysteries, children's books, and other popular fiction.¹⁰⁸

However, working families in urban areas had many different methods to get books, and union libraries were not the most common one. In their daily lives, working people were exposed to a wide variety of print materials. Newspapers and magazines, pamphlets and leaflets, handbills and advertisements were everywhere in industrial cities, so much so that they were “literally awash with text,” as historian Toby Higbie has put it.¹⁰⁹ A 1936 study of library non-users in Flushing, New York, found that library card holders represented no more than a third of registered voters.¹¹⁰ Surveys show people liked to purchase books or check them out from rental libraries in department stores and drugstores.¹¹¹ In a 1946 publisher survey, bookstores and book clubs were the main sources of book purchases, but drugstores and newsstands were more important among lower-income people and book clubs and department stores among women. The same survey found that 57 percent of readers borrowed their books and that 51 percent of those borrowed from friends and family, while 37 percent borrowed from a public library.¹¹² While some public libraries made significant efforts to provide services to workers and unionists in the late 1940s and 1950s, those efforts remained limited to large cities and had mixed results. A “Public Library Inquiry” after World War II found that “for the working person, the public library still looks and feels a little “like a rich man's collection.”¹¹³ The 1946 publisher survey noted that perceived accessibility of the public library varied significantly by income level, with 20 percent of lower-income respondents saying that the public library was not convenient.¹¹⁴ More importantly, from the 1920s surveys showed that the radio was Americans’ favorite pastime, outperforming reading.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

After 1960 libraries simply disappear from the meeting minutes of local unions' committees, a sign of their neglect by UAW locals. Mike Kerwin, who joined the UAW in 1950 and worked for Local 174's education committee, recalls that the local's large library remained largely unused during his time.¹¹⁶ Strikingly, a 1952 booklet issued by Local 174 describes education services without once mentioning the library although it had been seen as the flagship library of the union.¹¹⁷ At their apex in the 1940s, local libraries were most successful at large union locals that had strong education committees and officers eager to learn. But they were frequented at best by a small percentage of workers, they were poorly managed for lack of librarian expertise, and they progressively declined in the 1950s as the union leadership prioritized other educational methods.¹¹⁸ Education leaders saw the local newspaper, the radio, and later on the television, as the most effective methods to reach members.¹¹⁹ In addition, the development of local libraries was hampered by political divisions within the union, which led either to neglect or to disagreements about the goals and methods of the education program and the kind of books to be promoted.

Still, the UAW's education initiatives demonstrate an exceptional commitment to books. The UAW experimented with multiple methods of book selection and distribution, especially its bookstore in Detroit, which sold books locally and nationally by mail, and a Labor Book Club, which attempted to emulate the popular Book-of-the-Month Club. For a while the union ambioned to create a cultural infrastructure, using printed matter to further labor consciousness. The program therefore deserves further study to assess not only the impact of the UAW's local libraries but more generally that of its print initiatives on the "cultural front" from the Great Depression to the postwar years. To create and distribute printed texts, the UAW relied on the

CIO's own infrastructure, but also on workers' education experts, publishers, and authors. These partners often cited the UAW education program as a model of workers' education.

Nevertheless, idealist educators, who believed in shaping a union-leaning democratic working class culture, were at odds with union leaders whose priority was to train shop stewards and officers and to inform the rank-and-file of the union's policies. While both approaches remained in the UAW, the idealist view was weakened after Reuther took control.¹²⁰ In 1941 union organizer and labor educator Alice Hanson recognized the challenge: "Like the workshop, a library is an auxiliary to other educational activities, and functions most fruitfully when it is not operating as an independent project."¹²¹ In fact the UAW only marginally succeeded in integrating local libraries into other union activities. This may be because in spite of its official goals – to expand workers' labor consciousness – the UAW's education program as it was carried out prioritized "the central function of internal control," for which books and self-education were not useful tools.¹²² The union's plan for a cultural infrastructure was never achieved. By the 1960s the union defined the goals of education somewhat differently: "to keep bargainers skilled and knowledgeable; to inform members on issues and history; to acquaint public with union facts; to challenge each of us to think about the future."¹²³ The term "informing" – rather than educating or empowering – illustrates the evolution of the UAW's education program during Walter Reuther's presidency and the ascendancy of the pragmatist, instrumentalist approach to workers' education – to the detriment of the union's libraries.

Ultimately, however, the UAW libraries' rise and fall were probably determined less by factors specific to that union than by broader market and social forces that created challenges for workers' educators and public libraries alike as they attempted to reach working class readers and shape their reading habits. Of all the ways that reading materials could be acquired in mid-

20th-century American society, union libraries were not the most appealing. Furthermore, in the postwar era, the conditions that had favored the flourishing of an influential leftist culture in American society were gone. Anticommunism and a conservative backlash created new obstacles for partnerships between libraries and organized labor, reduced market opportunities for alternative, labor-friendly publishers and authors, and diverted the UAW and other unions' resources toward countering an all-out public relations campaign by business interests to win over their employees and the general public. This sophisticated effort included mass distributions of company magazines and other texts to employees and extended into mainstream media, schools, churches, and popular culture. In response, unions reinvigorated education programs in the 1950s, using newspapers, the radio, and television.¹²⁴ But even with the help of public libraries their limited resources could hardly slow down the weakening of union consciousness among the rank-and-file and of "big labor" in the eyes of the public.

Notes

1. UAW Local 174 Membership Rally Souvenir Program, Jan. 28, 1939, folder 6, box 22, UAW President's Office: Walter Reuther Records, Walter P. Reuther Library. All archival sources are from the Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

2. For a history of the UAW and the Reuther brothers, see Nelson Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther: The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (New York: University of Illinois Press, 1995) and John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935-1970* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004). All UAW local numbers are taken from the roll call of delegates at the UAW constitutional conventions.

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3. “West Side Library Tops,” *United Automobile Worker: West Side Local ed.*, Aug. 15, 1941.
See also “West Side Local Leads the UAW Educational Field,” *United Automobile Worker*, Aug. 15, 1942; “This is the UAW,” *Detroit Free Press*, Nov. 17, 1940.
 4. For an overview of the different types of library services to workers, see Sidney Ditzion, *The Arsenals of a Democratic Culture: A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1947), 110–28; David H. Stam, ed., “Workers’ Libraries,” in *International Dictionary of Library Histories* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001), 179–82.
 5. Ditzion, *Arsenal of a Democratic Culture*, 122.
 6. Robert J. Schaefer, “Educational Activities of the Garment Unions, 1890-1948” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1951); Maria Tamboukou, *Women Workers’ Education, Life Narratives and Politics: Geographies, Histories, Pedagogies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
 7. Daniel Nelson, “How the UAW Grew,” *Labor History* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 5–24.
 8. Thomas E. Linton, *An Historical Examination of the Purposes and Practices of the Education Program of the United Automobile Workers of America, 1936-1959*, University of Michigan Comparative Education Dissertation Series, no. 8 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1965).
 9. See for example Theodore Brameld, ed., *Workers’ Education in the United States* (New York: Harper, 1941).
 10. Ann C. Sparanese, “Service to the Labor Community: A Public Library Perspective,” *Library Trends* 51, no. 1 (2002): 19–35; Dorothy Kuhn Oko and Bernard F. Downey, *Library Service to Labor* (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1963); Ditzion, *Arsenals of a Democratic Culture*.
 11. Jeffrey Douglas, “William Maclure and the New Harmony Working Men’s Institute,” *Libraries & Culture* 26, no. 2 (1991): 402–14; David M. Hovde and John W. Fritch, “In Union

There Is Strength: The Farmers' Institute and the Western Literary Union Library," *Libraries & Culture* 40, no. 3 (2005): 285–306; Thomas P. Glynn, "Books for a Reformed Republic: The Apprentices' Library of New York City, 1820-1865," *Libraries & Culture* 34, no. 4 (1999): 347–72; Kate C. Larson, "The Saturday Evening Girls: A Progressive Era Library Club and the Intellectual Life of Working Class and Immigrant Girls in Turn-of-the-Century Boston," *Library Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (2001): 195–230.

12. Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1996).

13. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

14. "Train Workers as Teachers," *United Automobile Worker*, Nov. 13, 1937.

15. "Planning a Library," *Ammunition*, Oct. 1943, 38–39.

16. 1936 UAW Constitution Sec. I, Art. XX, p. 28 (cited in Linton, 41).

17. UAW-CIO, *Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the UAW-CIO*, vol. 2 (UAW-CIO, 1936), 150.

18. Walter Reuther, "Address to the UAW-CIO Education Conference, Cleveland, Ohio, Jan. 24, 1947," typescript, folder Education Conference 1947, box 26, UAW Public Relations Records.

19. UAW-CIO, *Proceedings, Second Annual Educational Conference* (Detroit: UAW-CIO, 1945), 11; Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, "Business Propaganda in the Schools: Labor's Struggle Against the Americans for the Competitive Enterprise System, 1949-1954," *History of Education Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 255–78 (especially 257-258); Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

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20. Linton, *Historical Examination*, 187-188, 45-54, 94-95, and 161-62.
 21. Linton, 10.
 22. Linton, *Historical Examination*, 56-62. For a list of publications in the first year of the union's education program, see William Davenport, "Pamphlets for Labor," *United Automobile Worker*, Dec. 4, 1937.
 23. Linton, *Historical Examination*, 62.
 24. UAW Local 174 Membership Rally Souvenir Program.
 25. Linton, *Historical Examination*, 55.
 26. Stephen McFarland, "'The Union Hall Was the Center of the Worker's Life': Spaces of Class Formation in the United Auto Workers, 1937-1970," *Journal of Historical Geography*, no. 55 (2017): 20, 23.
 27. See for example "West Side Local Leads." An issue of *Ammunition* reported that Local 248 (West Allis, Wisc.) "recently dedicated its new club house and union headquarters, containing a library, auditorium, reading room and offices." ("What Goes on There: A Communique on Local Union Activities," *Ammunition*, Apr. 1945, 25).
 28. See for example "Notice!" *Propeller*, Mar. 9, 1944; "You Own a Library," *Propeller*, Jun. 15, 1944. *The Propeller* was the shop paper of Local 50, Ford's Willow Run bomber plant which boaster over 30,000 members in 1943 (Nelson, "How the UAW Grew," 8).
 29. Alice Hanson, "Action and Study: Some Representative Examples of Workers' Education Programs," in *Workers' Education in the United States*, ed. Theodore Brameld (New York: Harper, 1941), 149.
 30. "Surveying for the Future," *Ammunition*, Oct. 1943, 16-18.
 31. William Levitt, "Reporting on Education," *United Automobile Worker*, Dec. 15 1943.

32. Victor G. Reuther, "Report on Education to the Convention Committee on Education, Annual Convention, November 9-15, 1947," folder Education Department-Reports, box 6, UAW Education Department Records, 1945-1949.
33. Linton, *Historical Examination*, 36.
34. Local 7 Education Committee Minutes, Nov. 1, 1936 and Jun. 10, 1938, folder 2, box 3, Nick DiGaetano Papers; "Educational Committee Moves With Extensive Program," *United Automobile Worker: Local 7 edition*, Nov. 12, 1938.
35. Local 3 Education Committee Minutes, Jun. 10, 1940, in folder 12, box 36, UAW Local 3 Records.
36. *Educational Notes*, Apr. 22, 1942, folder 17, box 36, UAW Local 3 Records.
37. "Educational Committee Report, Proceedings of the First Educational Convention, Plymouth Local 51, Detroit, Jan. 27, 1940," typescript, folder 5, box 9, UAW Local 51 Records.
38. "Second Educational Convention of Plymouth Local 51, UAW-CIO, Fort Wayne Hotel, Jan. 25, 1941," 5, typescript, folder 6, box 9, UAW Local 51 Records.
39. "Answer to Education Questionnaire," folder 1, box 10, UAW local 51 Records.
40. Nelson, "How the UAW Grew," 8.
41. Mentioned by a Local 32 delegate, in UAW-CIO, *Proceedings, First Annual Educational Conference* (Detroit: UAW-CIO, 1944), 185.
42. Local 7 Education Committee Minutes, Jun. 10, 1938 and following dates, folder 2, box 3, Nick DiGaetano Papers; folder 11, and letters in folder 10, box 15, UAW Local 51 Records.
43. UAW-CIO, 63.
44. "Report of Frank Kliskey," *Proceedings of the International Education Conference, International Headquarters*, Detroit, Jan. 6-7, 1940, folder 4, box 36, UAW Local 3 Records.

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46. "Planning a Library." See also "How to Organize Education in Your Local Union," *Ammunition*, Apr. 1943, 4.
47. "What goes on There."
48. UAW-CIO, *Proceedings, First Annual Educational Conference*, 182.
49. "Plans," *Distributor*, Feb. 1942, 32; Local 7 Education Committee Minutes, Jun. 8 1941, folder 2, box 3, Nick DiGaetano Papers; "Report of Workers' Service in Educational Department, Dodge Local 3, Jul. 25-Sep. 25, 1942," folder 13, box 36, UAW Local 3 Records.
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51. "New Business – Local 205," *Distributor*, Dec. 15, 1941, 24.
52. See Sparanese, "Service to the Labor Community," 25-26; Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups, *Public Library Service to Labor Groups: Five Case Studies: Akron, Boston, Milwaukee, New York, Newark* (American Library Association, 1950).
53. "What the Locals Are Doing and How They Go About It," *Ammunition*, Dec. 1946, 36; "What Goes On There"; "Education Ideas and Activities," *Ammunition*, Apr. 1947, 38;

“Education Ideas and Activities,” *Ammunition*, June 1947, 37; “Union Men Using Union Ideas,” *Ammunition*, Dec. 1947, 31.

54. See Local 51 Education Committee Minutes for January and February 1946, folder 2, box 9, UAW Local 51 Records.

55. “Monthly Circulation of Books, May 10, 1949,” folder Library 1942-1952, box 1, UAW Local 599 Records.

56. Reuther, “Report on Education,” 14.

57. Comment by Local 32 delegate, UAW-CIO, *Proceedings, First Annual Educational Conference*, 185.

58. Olen Manley to Sam Sweet, Apr. 12, 1949 and Jun. 1, 1950, folder 10, box 15, UAW Local 51 Records.

59. Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, Sep. 7, 1956, folder Education Committee Minutes 1956, box 3, UAW Local 599 Records.

60. Folder 12, box 15, UAW Local 51 Records. All books cited below are from this source unless otherwise indicated.

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62. Examples include J. V. Garland and Charles F. Phillips, *Discussion Methods, Explained and Illustrated*, 2nd ed. rev (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1940); Willard H. Yeager, *Effective Speaking for Every Occasion* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940).

63. “Second Educational Convention of Plymouth Local 51.”

64. Horace B. Davis, *Shoes; the Workers and the Industry* (New York: International Publishers, 1940); Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles 1877-1934* (New York: Pathfinder, 1936); Big Bill Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; The Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York:

International Publishers, 1929); William E. Dodd, *Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941); John R. Carlson, *Under Cover* (New York: Dutton, 1943); Horace R. Cayton and George S. Mitchell, *Black Workers and the New Unions* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939); Carey McWilliams, *Brothers Under the Skin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1943); Elizabeth Hawes, *Why Women Cry: Or Wenchies with Wrenches* (Cornwall: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1943); Mort Gilbert & E. Albert Gilbert, *Life Insurance: A Legalized Racket* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1936).

65. "The Books People Are Buying," *Ammunition*, Nov. 1944, 30. Local 51 had two copies.

66. Educational Report for Year of 1946, folder Library 1942-1952, box 1, UAW Local 599 Records; Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, Sept. 22, 1943, folder Education Committee Minutes 1943, box 2, UAW Local 599 Records.

67. Most *Ammunition* issues between 1943 and 1945 and its predecessor the *Distributor* in 1941-1942 had book reviews. After four years of absence book reviews returned in 1950 but disappeared quickly. In the February 1957 issue a list of "Paperback books with a hard union core" was published – the last one on record. See also "Books for Workers," *United Automobile Worker*, Oct. 1936.

68. Reuther, "Report on Education," 18.

69. Elizabeth Hawes, "A New Bookshop for the Auto Workers Union," *Publishers' Weekly* (Mar. 1944): 1285–86; William Levitt, "Reporting on Education," *United Automobile Worker*, Dec. 15, 1943 and Jan. 15, 1944.

70. UAW-CIO, *Proceedings, Second Annual Educational Conference*, 37–41.

71 "Book Club's Choice Wins High Honor," *United Automobile Worker*, Jun. 15, 1945; UAW-CIO, 39.

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72. "For a Worker's Bookshelf: Labor Relations in the Automobile Industry," *United Automobile Worker*, Jul. 1, 1940; "Books: Wenches With Wrenches or Why Women Cry," *Ammunition*, Dec. 1943, 26.
73. Folder 10, box 15, UAW Local 51 Records; and folder 9, box 20, UAW Local 51 Records.
74. Handwritten lists of accessions for 1946-1955 record the source (folder 12, box 15, UAW Local 51 Records).
75. Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, May 24, and Sep. 20, 1944, folder Education Committee Minutes 1944, box 2, UAW Local 599 Records.
76. Frank Marquart, *An Auto Worker's Journal: The UAW from Crusade to One-Party Union* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 118. Marquart became education director for Local 3 in 1937, then switched to Local 670 in 1941 and to Local 212 in 1944.
77. "Proposed Books for Library," ca. 1946, folder 12, box 15, UAW Local 51 Records.
78. Letter from Book Find Club to Local 51 Education Department, Oct. 31, 1950, folder 10, box 15, UAW Local 51 records; UAW International Executive Board Meeting Minutes, Aug. 5-18, 1946, 290, box 3, UAW International Executive Board Minutes and Proceedings Collection.
79. "Second Educational Convention of Plymouth Local 51."
80. "Surveying for the Future."
81. Sources for the Local 3 data are from box 36, UAW Local 3 Records: "Director's Report to Education Committee, Nov.28, 1940," folder 17; "Education Director Report to Local 3 Education Committee," in Local 3 Education Committee Minutes, Jan. 31, 1942 and "Education Director Report, July 25, 1942," folder 13; "Report of Workers' Service in Educational Department, Dodge Local 3," Jul. 25 to Sep. 25 1942, and Sep. 26 to Oct. 25, 1942, folder 13. For Local 599: "Library Report, Buick Local 599, UAW-CIO, from Apr. 1, 1942 to Jan. 29,

1943,” “Statement Concerning Library and Educational Director’s Report for Year Ending April 30, 1944,” “Educational Report For Year of 1946,” “Number of Books, May 10, 1949,” and John R. McGill, “Library Committee Report, April 16, 1952,” folder Library 1942-1952, box 1, UAW Local 599 Records.

82. “Report of Workers’ Service.”

83. Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, Apr. 30, 1946, folder Education Committee Minutes 1946, box 2, and Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, Sep. 7, 1956, folder Education Committee Minutes 1956, box 3, UAW Local 599 Records.

84. Marquart, *An Auto Worker’s Journal*, 118.

85. Eric Dearnley, “Educational,” and “On the Shelf,” *Beacon*, Aug. 15, 1943.

86. Eric Dearnley, “Local’s Reading Room is in Quarantine,” *Beacon*, Jan. 1944.

87. Dacia Ward, “Our Library – Its Contents,” *United Automobile Worker: Local 7 ed.*, Oct. 11, 1939.

88. See for example “Your Library,” *Headlight*, Dec. 06, 1944.

89. E. E. Hoopes, “Hudson Local: Your Library and Your Study Classes,” *United Automobile Worker*, Jan. 14, 1939.

90. “Union Library,” *Champ*, March 19, 1944.

91. Hoopes, “Hudson Local.”

92. The phrase was used in a chart produced by the education officers of Local 600, which distinguished four stages of growth: organized, unionized, educated, and “politicalized.” (Local 600 UAW-CIO Education Department, “Our Task”, Nov. 17, 1941, folder 16, box 36, UAW Local 3 Records).

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94. Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 14. One admittedly limited study provides information on education levels: Ely Chinoy, *Automobile Workers and the American Dream* (New York: Doubleday, 1955).
95. William S. Gray and Ruth Learned Munroe, *The Reading Interests and Habits of Adults; a Preliminary Report* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929); Harry B. Devereaux, Richard B. Sealock, and Grace O. Kelley, *Woodside Does Read! A Survey of the Reading Interests and Habits of a Local Community; Conducted under the Auspices of the Queens Borough Public Library* (Jamaica, N.Y.: Queens Borough Public Library, 1935); Helen A. Ridgway, "Community Studies in Reading. III. Reading Habits of Adult Non-Users of the Public Library," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 6, no. 1 (1936): 1–33; Henry C. Link and Harry A. Hopf, *People and Books: A Study of Reading and Book-Buying Habits* (New York: Book Industry Committee, Book Manufacturers' Institute, 1946), 113; Carl F. Kaestle and Helen Damon-Moore, "Surveying American Readers," in *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading Since 1880*, ed. Carl F. Kaestle (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 184.
96. Frank T. Higbie, "Unschooling but Not Uneducated: Print, Public Speaking, and the Networks of Informal Working-Class Education, 1900-1940," in *Education and the Culture of Print in Modern America*, ed. Adam R. Nelson and John L. Rudolph (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 107; Erin Smith, "Dressed to Kill: Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction, Working-Class Consumers, and Pulp Magazines," *Colby Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2000): 13.
97. Misc. book slips, folder 12, box 15, UAW Local 51 Records.
98. John R. McGill, "Library Committee Report," April 16, 1952, folder Library 1942-1952, box 1, UAW Local 599 Records.

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99. Ridgway, "Community Studies"; Link and Hopf, *People and Books*; Jonathan Rose, *Readers' Liberation: The Literary Agenda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 101-104.
100. "Books," *Ammunition*, May 1943, 36; "The Books People Are Buying," *Ammunition*, Apr. 1944, 25.
101. "Books," *Ammunition*, Nov. 1943, 25; "The Books People Are Buying," *Ammunition*, Jul. 1944, 31; Alfred M. Lee and Norman D. Humphrey, *Race Riot* (New York: Dryden Press, 1943).
102. Local 212 Education Committee Minutes, Feb. 4, 1942, folder Education Committee, 1939-1949, box 39, UAW Local 212 Records.
103. Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, July 7, 1943, and Sept. 22, 1943, folder Education Committee Minutes 1943, box 2, UAW Local 599 records.
104. Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, Aug. 9, 1944 and Aug. 23, 1944, folder Education Committee Minutes 1944, box 2, UAW Local 599 records.
105. Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, Aug. 31, 1955, folder Education Committee Minutes 1955; Local 599 Education Committee Minutes, Sep. 4, 1957, folder Education Committee Minutes 1957, box 2, UAW Local 599 records.
106. UAW-CIO, *Proceedings, First Annual Educational Conference*, 183.
107. "Saginaw Offers Education Program for Local Unions," *United Automobile Worker*, Sep. 13, 1939.
108. Catalog of the Union Bookstore, n.d., folder 7, box 163, UAW Region 1B Records.
109. Higbie, "Unschooling but Not Uneducated," 105.
110. Ridgway, "Community Studies."
111. Gray and Munroe, *Reading Interests*, 184; Ridgway, "Community Studies," 22; Link and Hopf, *People and Books*, 76-93.

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112. Link and Hopf, *People and Books*, 80-83. However, it is difficult to rely on surveys that have different population samples, different methodologies, and different objectives. Ten years earlier, a library survey of a local community had found that public libraries were the first source of books (Devereaux et al., *Woodside Does Read*, 129).
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121. Hanson, "Action and Study," 149.
122. Wilensky, *Intellectuals in Labor Unions*, 87.
123. Guide for Education Committee Chairs, 1966, folder 1, box 168, UAW Region 1B Records.

124. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise*, 80, 108-134.