

Finding Aid for the Ecumenical Coalition of the
Mahoning Valley Records, 1966-1979



Collection Number: RG 77/8

Archives & Special Collections

William F. Maag, Jr. Library
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley Records, 1966-1979, bulk 1977-1979

Record No.: RG 77/8

Accession No.: MSS 2005.16

Creator: Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley

Extent: 1 box, 1.5 cubic feet

Abstract: The Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley was a multi-faith group of religious leaders, who united in response to the Campbell Works steel mill closure during September 1977. After the coalition's proposal to reopen the Campbell Works was unable to acquire the necessary financial resources, the coalition discontinued further action in April 1979.

Administrative Information

Provenance: Original provenance is unknown. The collection was housed at the Maag Library, Youngstown State University, after the Ecumenical Coalition disbanded. The collection came into the custody of librarian Debra Beronja, who transferred them to the University Archives in 2004.

Preferred Citation: Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley Records, Archives & Special Collections, William F. Maag, Jr. Library, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio.

Restrictions: None

Processing Information: Processed by Emily Lockhart, September 2006

Agency History

September 19, 1977, became known as “Black Monday” in Mahoning Valley history.¹ The Campbell Works of Youngstown Sheet and Tube closed that day. Five thousand workers lost their jobs, and five thousand more jobs would be eliminated within three years.

Within a week of the closing of Campbell Works, religious leaders and community members met to discuss the economic and social future of the Mahoning Valley. Religious leaders from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths believed extensive job loss and a down-turned economy would cause many negative results including: marital problems, depression, and alcoholism. To discuss combating potential problems, a Steel Crisis Conference, open to religious leaders only, was held on October 28, 1977. The Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley formed as a result of the conference.

The main initiative developed by the coalition was the possibility of opening a community/worker-owned operation at the Campbell Works. After this was declared possible by a feasibility study, the coalition promoted the grassroots Save Our Valley campaign in February 1978. A campaign staff was hired to promote and manage fundraising. The coalition encouraged local citizens and organizations to put money into a personal savings account. The money would be set aside for future stock in the community-owned company, when/if the company opened. By June 1978, the campaign went national and an Ecumenical Coalition office opened in New York. At that time, the amount contributed reached over \$2 million.

From the beginning, the religious leaders contacted federal and state government officials. To reopen the steel mill, the coalition needed hundreds of millions of dollars. They hoped most of the funding would come from government grants. The National Center for Economic Alternatives (NCEA) assisted in developing a community/worker corporation model.

However, the coalition’s community/worker-owned company never materialized. During March 1979, the plan for reopening Campbell Works was rejected. The Economic Development Administration, citing multiple flaws in the proposal, could not provide the millions of dollars needed. On April 5, 1979, the Ecumenical Coalition decided to close the campaign office and not pursue the Campbell Works project any further.

Scope and Content Note

The original provenance of this collection is unknown. It had been stored at the Maag Library since the 1980s and then transferred to the University Archives by Debra Beronja, Access Services Librarian, in 2004. As a result, the order imposed over most of the collection is artificial. Exceptions to this are the Save Our Valley file and the Save

¹ Background information about the Youngstown steel crisis and the Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley was compiled, in part, from: Fuechtmann, Thomas G. *Steeple and Stacks: Religion and Steel Crisis in Youngstown*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Our Valley press packet, which are in the Subject Files series. Original order was retained in these two files.

The collection is arranged by type of materials and then chronologically within each series. The collection contains a variety of records produced by or of interest to the Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley. The files directly relating to the coalition and its internal workings are: articles of incorporation, meeting minutes and agendas, legal, and financial documents. The correspondence series contains copies of letters to and from state and federal agencies, including the White House and Ohio Governor James Rhodes. Personal statements and membership lists provide insight into the people involved in the coalition. Press releases and printed materials reflect the local and national concern over the closing of the steel mills in Youngstown. Although this collection is not complete, it provides information about the social impact and religious response to the steel mill closing in the Mahoning Valley. Researchers should note that many of the documents are photocopies. Location of the originals is unknown.

Series Description

Series I:	Articles of Incorporation
Series II:	Meeting Minutes & Agendas
Series III:	Correspondence
Series IV:	Press Releases
Series V:	Reports
Series VI:	Financial Documents
Series VII:	Legal Documents
Series VIII:	Membership Lists
Series IX:	Printed Materials
Series X:	Personal Statements
Series XI:	Maps
Series XII:	Subject Files

Related Materials

Various transcripts, Oral History Program, Youngstown State University
Department of History

Fuechtmann, Thomas G. *Steeple and Stacks: Religion and steel crisis in Youngstown*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Lynd, Staughton. *The Fight against Shutdowns: Youngstown's steel mill closings*. San Pedro: Singlejack Books, 1982.

The Ohio Historical Society, Youngstown Center of Industry and Labor has "Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley, Inc. Records," MSS 0008, in their manuscript collections.

Index Terms

Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley
Steel industry and trade – Ohio – Youngstown
Clergy Ohio
Youngstown (Ohio). Economic conditions.
Youngstown (Ohio). Social conditions.
Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company. Campbell Works.
Plant shutdowns – Ohio – Youngstown
Iron and steel workers – Ohio -- Youngstown

Key Terms

Save Our Valley
Lykes Corporation
Reverend James Malone
Bishop John Burt
Governor James Rhodes
CASTLO
Mahoning Valley Economic Development Committee

BOX 1

SERIES I: ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

Folder	Content
1	Articles of Incorporation, Community Steel, Inc., 25 Nov 1978

SERIES II: MEETING MINUTES & AGENDAS

Folder	Content
2	Executive Committee, 16 Feb 1978-8 Dec 1978
3	Corporate Structure Meetings, July 1978

SERIES III: CORRESPONDENCE

Folder	Content
4	Correspondence, Incoming, 1978-1979
5	Correspondence, Outgoing, 1977-1978, undated

SERIES IV: PRESS RELEASES

Folder	Content
6	Press Releases, 1977-1979

SERIES V: REPORTS

Folder	Content
7	"Work Program: The Preparation of a Community Renewal Program," Sep 1966
8	"The Future of American Steel Cities: Problems, Options, Actions," 8 Sep 1977
9	"Steel in Crisis," 21 Nov 1977
10	"Report to the President: A Comprehensive Program for the Steel Industry," 6 Dec 1977
11	"New Steel at Campbell: A Study of the Feasibility of Reopening the Campbell Works," 16 Dec 1977
12	"Will the Justice Department Anti-trust Investigation of the Lykes-LTV Merger Protect the Interests of Steel Communities and Steelworkers?" 14 Mar 1978

SERIES VI: FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

Folder	Content
13	Financial Documents, 1977-1978 (See also Series VII: Legal Documents)

SERIES VII: LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Folder	Content
14	Legal Documents, 1978 (Also contains financial documents)

SERIES VIII: MEMBERSHIP LISTS

Folder	Content
15	Membership Lists, 1979, undated

SERIES IX: PRINTED MATERIALS

Folder	Content
16	Magazine Articles, 29 Aug 1977-15 May 1978, undated
17	<i>Pig Iron</i> , No. 6, 1979

FLAT FILE 2, DRAWER 4:

Folder	Content
2	Posters, 1978, undated

BOX 1 (continued):

Folder	Content
18	Bumper Sticker, undated
19	Newsletters, 1977-1978
20	Song Lyrics, undated

SERIES X: PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Folder	Content
21	Personal Statements, 1977, 1978, undated

FLAT FILE 2, DRAWER 4:

SERIES XI: MAPS

Folder	Content
3	Youngstown Area Development Foundation, 1961

BOX 1 (continued):

SERIES XII: SUBJECT FILES

Folder	Content
22	Anniversary Commemoration, undated
23	CASTLO (CAmpbell, STRuthers, and LOwellville) Community Improvement Corporation, Mar 1978-Dec 1980
24	Conferences & Convocations, Oct 1977-Sep 1978
25	Historical Summaries, 29 Nov 1977, undated
26	Mahoning Valley Economic Development Committee, Inc., 1978-1979
27	Save Our Valley, 1977-1978
28	Save Our Valley press packet, 16 Feb 1978
29	Youngstown Area Task Force, 3 Nov 1977
30	The Youngstown Foundation, 9 Apr 1918