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TABLE GRAPE GROWERS NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE
COLLECTION, 1965-1987
3 linear feet

ACQUISITION: The collection was donated by Frieda Rapoport Caplan, Al Caplan's wife, in 2003.

ACCESS: The collection is open for research.

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Background

On September 8, 1964, farm workers in Delano, California, began a five-year table grape strike that escalated into an international boycott. The purpose of these organized demonstrations was to bring about unionization of the table grape industry in the Coachella Valley of California. In 1965, table grape growers hired Al Caplan of Al Caplan and Associates to advise them on how to respond to these increased pressures and remain non-union. He became the labor relations consultant and spokesman for the Table Grape Growers Negotiating Committee.

The Table Grape Growers Negotiating Committee entered into negotiations with the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) and its leader, Cesar Chavez, in order to resolve the conflict between grape growers and farm workers. There were periodic boycotts and strikes until 1978, when Chavez called off agricultural boycotts in the San Joaquin and Coachella Valleys.

Scope and Content Note

The Table Grape Growers Negotiating Committee collection measures 3 linear feet and dates from 1965 to 1987. It is primarily comprised of extensive scrapbooks that detail the actions of growers and farm workers in the Coachella Valley. The scrapbooks contain clippings, pamphlets, and correspondence detailing boycotts, demonstrations, and negotiations regarding the table grape industry.

The Californians for Right to Work folder contains pamphlets and correspondence related to California Senate Bill 1119 (1969). The bill was designed to prevent compulsory unionization of many areas of production, including the table grape industry. Californians for Right to Work, in conjunction with the National Right to Work Committee, “is a coalition of employees and employers organized in 1967 for the purpose of promoting the rights of individuals to join or to refrain from joining a labor union without losing their jobs” (Box 1, Californians for Right to Work).

There are also newspaper clippings, press releases from the Table Grape Growers Negotiating Committee, reward posters, and a speech by Jennetta Shoenback titled “Chavez the Charlatan” (1978).

Table Grape Growers Negotiating Committee

Box no. **Description**

Box 1

Californians for Right to Work, 1969
"Chavez the Charlatan" (Shoenback, Jenetta), 1978
Newspaper clippings, 1965, 1969-1970, 1973-1975, 1987 and undated [oversize: in box 5]
Press releases, 1969
Reward posters, undated [oversize: in box 5]

Box 2

Scrapbooks
Loose pages [oversize: in box 5]
1985-1986
1986-1987
Volumes
1966-1970 [oversize: in box 5]
1970-1973 and undated
1971-1972 and undated
1973-1974 and undated

Box 3

1974-1975 and undated
1975 and undated
1976

Box 4

1977-1979
1979-1982
1982-1985

Box 5

Oversize:
Newspaper clippings, 1973-1974
Reward posters, undated
Scrapbooks
Loose pages
1985-1986
1986-1987
Scrapbooks
1966-1970