

P048 Gilbert H. (Gib) Gilchrist fonds
1944-2002 (predominant dates 1950-1980)
5 lm of textual records and other types of records

Biographical sketch: Gilbert H. “Gib” Gilchrist (February 14, 1922 – October 23, 2011) was a union organizer, educator, and activist. Gilchrist served in a variety of positions within the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) from 1957 until his retirement in 1983.

Born on Manitoulin Island in Spring Bay to Neil and Sarah (née McKechnie), he was the youngest of 9 siblings. Gilbert Gilchrist’s father died in 1924. Gilchrist attended the Grimethrope Schoolhouse for his primary education and earned his secondary school diploma in Mindemoya through night courses. In 1942 Gilchrist joined the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers and would serve as an instructor until 1946. In 1944 he married Donaldda (Donnie) Beange from Gore Bay. He was the father of five children: Sarah, David, Alma, Lorna, and Sharon.

Gilchrist worked in the International Nickel Company (INCO) Froid Mines in 1941, prior to joining the military. Following the Second World War Gilchrist returned to Spring Bay to raise his family. In 1955 he worked for a short time in Kimberly, British Columbia for the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company (COMINCO) for a short time and returned to Ontario to work as a carpenter in Elliot Lake where he joined the Carpenters’ and Joiners Union. In 1957 Gilchrist was elected the founding President of USWA Local 5615 and in 1958 was appointed as the USWA Staff Representative. During this period he wrote articles for the weekly USWA newsletter, *Miners’ Voice* and hosted a radio show. In 1964 Gilchrist relocated to Sudbury to serve as Senior Staff Representative of the new USWA Local 6500, where he responsible for over 15’000 workers in the mining industry. He served three terms as President of Sudbury & District Labour Council. In 1970 he was Chief Negotiator and Coordinator for contract negotiations between INCO and USWA. He served in various other positions in the labour movement, including: USWA Northeastern Ontario Supervisor (1970); Canadian Worker Representative at the International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland (1974); member of the Industrial Training Council for the Province of Ontario (1976); and USWA Assistant Director for District 6 (1981).

Gilchrist was also an active member of the Sudbury community and lifelong CCF/NDP supporter. From 1972-1978 he was a member of the Board of Governors for Cambrian College; he was the Labour Studies Coordinator for Cambrian’s Labour Studies Institute from 1983-1989. Gib Gilchrist is the author of *As Strong as Steel* (1999).

Scope and Content: The fonds informs us of Gilchrist's professional life and his role and activities within the labour movement in Northern Ontario and focus predominantly on the late 1950s to early 1960s during the period of membership raiding between USWA Local 6500 and International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (IUMMSW) Local 598 prior to the 1967 merger of the two unions.

Gilchrist's various roles and positions within USWA, at different locations, such as Elliot Lake and Sudbury, are well documented through correspondence, reports, collective agreements, speeches; photographs, and tape interviews with many prominent personalities in the labour movement. Many files are concerning union organizing in Elliot Lake and Sudbury, but also in the Timmins area. Some files address the negotiations with INCO and different strikes of the miners. The fonds also comprises notes and texts attesting of teaching at Cambrian College in the labour program. Notes, documentation and photographs Gilchrist's used to write *As Strong as Steel* are also included in the fonds.

Note: Immediate source of acquisition: This fonds was donated by Gib Gilchrist in 1999.

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Restriction of access may apply to some records.

: Accruals: This fonds was received in three accruals. The first accrual was received on February 24, 1999, the second in April, 1999, and the third was received May, 2005.

: Finding Aid: A partial listing is available in the Laurentian University archives.

: Related Material: The following fonds may contain complimentary information.

P020- IUSWA /District 6 (Timmins) fonds

P024-USWA. Local 5417, Elliot Lake fonds

P038- International USWA/District 6 (Sudbury) fonds

P040- Homer Seguin (USWA) fonds

P073- Mick Lowe fonds