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Index and Introduction to the Buffalo Cooperative Economics Society, Inc.; 1974

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Index And Introduction To
Records And Documents Pertaining To
The Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society, Inc.
A Black Self-Help Organization.

Also

Biographical Sketches Of Its Founder And His Wife
Dr. E.E. Nelson And Mrs. Alberta F. O'Leary Nelson.

Microfilmed By
Monroe Fordham and Ralph Watkins

1974

The Records And Documents Were Microfilmed Using A 34X Lens.

Introduction

The financial records, ledger sheets, minutes, membership rolls, and other documents pertaining to the Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society, Inc., and its community store are preserved on this microfilm. The society was founded in the 1920's and continued to function until about 1960. Some of the goals and objectives of the society are contained in document # 1. The main mover and founder of the organization was Dr. E.E. Nelson, a local medical doctor. Dr. Nelson and his wife--Mrs. Alberta F. O'Leary Nelson kept detailed records of the society during its more than 30 year history. When the cooperative's store was legally dissolved in the early 1960's, Dr. and Mrs. Nelson moved the many boxes of documents and records into the garage of their home at 445 Cornwall Avenue. The documents remained there until they were made available to this writer in August, 1973.

I learned of the documents while taping some interviews with Dr. and Mrs. Nelson during the Summer of 1973. Those interviews were to be part of a larger project which was to be co-conducted by Ralph Watkins (a fellow Ph.D. candidate in history at SUNY) and myself. Our intent was to collect and preserve primary sources (oral history initially) which could be used in researching problems and themes in the history of the Buffalo black community. It is certainly an understatement to say that the records of the

Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society was an unexpected windfall. It is hoped that the microfilming of those documents represents the beginning of a giant step in the collecting and preserving of primary sources dealing with the history of blacks in Buffalo.

Acknowledgements

It seems appropriate to acknowledge some of those who have offered support for this project. Dr. and Mrs. Nelson, in addition to giving me complete freedom in examining and organizing the documents, offered many, many, valuable leads that will eventually be useful in compiling a more detailed history of the society.

A special expression of gratitude is extended to the State University of New York and the Research Foundation for granting me a summer fellowship. The financial support from the fellowship was especially welcome in lieu of the high cost of microfilming.

I also wish to thank Ralph Watkins for taking precious time from the research for his dissertation project on the Urban League and the Buffalo black community during the depression. His help in sorting the documents during the early stages of the project was most helpful. He also assisted in microfilming the documents.

Monroe Fordham

1974

Monroe Fordham

CONTENTS

Document Number

1. Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society, Inc., (promotional pamphlet).
2. Membership list and date joined (1930's).
3. Share Certificates (incomplete) (1931-1932).
4. Board of Directors, bylaws, store employees, (1939-1940).
5. Members present at meetings, April, (1938-April, 1939).
6. Board of Directors Reports (February, 1936-October, 1941).
7. Members attending meetings (1936).
8. Membership list, Financial record (1936-1941).
9. Money Paid out of store cash register (1939-1941).
10. Store expenditures (October, 1932-December 1932).
11. Voting record of membership (1939).
12. Notes for a speech given at mass meeting to promote the the cooperative (July 2, 1931). *(then known as Citizens Coop)*
13. Speech notes, etc., used to explain the cooperative.
14. Note to delinquent members of Society's credit union requesting payment.
15. Year end financial report (1937), and program for 1938.
16. Membership rolls (1938).
17. BCES Statement of Incorporation (1939).
18. Balance sheets (1939).
19. Promotional pamphlet (Story of Toad; Story of cooperative)
20. Is Plenty Too Much For Common People? (This book was found among the promotional materials. It was probably used in preparing speeches for mass meetings and other gatherings of prospective members).
21. Expense book for Society's store (1940).

22. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1940).
23. Members eligible for office (1940).
24. Minutes, notes, etc., on meetings (1941-1943).
25. Information on Eastern cooperatives.
26. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1941).
27. Weekly breakdown of store sales and expenses (1941).
28. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1942 ?).
29. Audited profit loss statement for store (1942).
30. Supplies purchased for store (1942).
31. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1943).
32. Weekly breakdown of store sales and expenses (1943).
33. Bank statements for store (1943).
34. BCES membership list and amount paid in shares (1943-1948).
35. Check stubs for cooperative store (1943-1952).
- * 36. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1944). (*Follows # 42*)
37. Quarterly financial reports for store (1944).
38. BCES membership rolls (1944-1947).
- * 39. Board of Directors meetings ~~1944~~ *1940's (for 1944; follow 42a)*
40. Sale ad for cooperative store.
41. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1945).
42. Weekly breakdown of store sales and expenses (1945).
- * * (*36 + 39*)
43. Bank statements for store (1945).
44. Wage reports for store employees (March-June, 1945).
45. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1946).
46. Weekly breakdown of store sales and expenses (1946).
47. Store employees time records (1946).
48. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1947).

- 49. Weekly breakdown of store sales and expenses (1947).
- 50. Record of members' purchases from cooperative store (1947).
- 51. Bank statements for store (1947).
- 52. Annual report (1947).
- 53. Store employees' work records (Nov., 1946-March, 1947).
- 54. Time sheets for store employees (1947-1948).
- 55. Financial report for cooperative store (1947).
- 56. Supplies purchased for store (1947-1948).
- 57. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1948).
- * 58. Weekly breakdown of store sales and expenses (1948). ^(partially) (46-47)
- lost 59. Withholding tax for store employees (Oct., 1948-Jan., 1949). (Lost)
- 60. Members present at Board meetings (1945-1948).
- 61. Annual report (1948).
- 62. Record of members purchases from cooperative store (1948).
- 63. Record of members purchases from cooperative store (1948-49)
- * 64. Bank statements for store (1948). and 1946
- * 65. Financial report for store (1948). (see #61)
- 66. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1949).
- 67. Quarterly financial reports for store (1949).
- 68. Financial report (1949).
- 69. Record of members purchases from cooperative store (1949).
- 70. Weekly breakdown of store sales and expenses (1950).
- 71. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1950).
- 72. Accounting sheets (pre-1950, 1950-1951).
- 73. Bank statements (1950-1952).
- Not omit legible → 74. Report on members shares (1950); ← (omitted)
- 75. Wages (Nov., 18-24, 1951). ← (not legible)

- 76. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1951).
- 77. Board of Directors meetings (1951-1952).
- 78. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1952).
- 79. Weekly totals of sales and expenses (~~Feb. 14, 1952~~ + 1953)
- 80. Record of members' purchases from cooperative store (1950-57).
- 81. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1953).
- omit * 82. Inventory (1953). (omitted)
- 83. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1954).
- * 84. Weekly breakdown of sales and expenses (1954). (See # 89)
- See # 87 * 85. Weekly breakdown of sales and expenses (Dec. 15, 1954-Jan. 19, '55).
- 86. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1955). See # 89
- annexed to approp. year * 87. Enumerated purchases and expenses (Jan., 1952; Jan., 1953; April, 1953; March, 1954; and Feb., 1955). (annexed to approp. year)
- 88. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1956).
- 89. Weekly breakdown of sales and expenses (1953-1958).
- 90. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1957).
- 91. Balance sheets for cooperative store (1958).
- 92. Membership dues and shares in cooperative (1950's).
- 93. Wages and withholding for store employees (1950's).
- 94. Membership shares and reports (summary) (1930's-1950's).
- 95. Statement on economic status (1959-1961).
- 96. Certificate of recognition to cooperative's credit union.
- 97. Employee (store) tax statements (1961)
- 98. Liquidation statement (1961).
- 99. Esther Gore, et. al. v. E.E. Nelson, et. al., Erie County Supreme Court (1961). (Statement an exam. of E. E. Nelson)
- 100. Membership history and statement on "Why we failed."