

[University of Pittsburgh's Archives Service Center](#)

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By Zach Brodt, Records Manager

The University of Pittsburgh's Archives Service Center (ASC) is a department of the University Library System (ULS). Consisting of about 40,000 cubic feet of material, the ASC is located about 5 miles off-campus along with several other behind the scenes ULS departments at the Library Resource Facility.

The ASC is composed of two distinct groupings of collections: The Archives of Industrial Society (AIS) and the University Archives. Established in 1963 by Pitt's History Department, the AIS contains a variety of records that document the development of southwestern Pennsylvania as an urban industrial society from the 19th century to the present. Collections include public records, such as the [Allegheny County Coroner's Inquest files](#); industry and business papers, such as records from U.S. Steel's [National](#) and [Duquesne](#) Works; records of local organizations, societies and institutions, like the Pittsburgh section of the [National Council of Jewish Women](#); images, such as the [Pittsburgh City Photographer's collection](#); and many more.

In addition to the records of numerous labor unions and organizations present in the AIS, since 1975 the ASC has also been the official repository of the historical records of the [United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America \(UE\)](#), an international independent labor union. This collection documents the entirety of the UE's history, beginning in 1936 with its founding convention, to the union's rise during World War II and its struggles during McCarthyism, to the UE's present day efforts. The UE archives also contains over 3,000 original drawings by [Fred Wright](#), the first labor union staff cartoonist in the United States.

The [University Archives](#) was officially established in 1966 from a ULS special collection that contained books published by Pitt faculty, as well as University catalogs, publications and memorabilia. While the University Archives is tasked with documenting the oldest learning institution west of the Allegheny Mountains, many of Pitt's early records were destroyed by a fire in 1845. However, the recently acquired [Larwill notebook](#) provides insight into the lessons taught at the school in its early years. The archives also contains records from several academic and administrative departments, including the records of the University Chancellors and Allegheny Observatory. Pitt's famed Cathedral of Learning and its Nationality Rooms are also well represented.

The ASC is also the host of two websites that provide online access to archival material regarding Pittsburgh history: Historic Pittsburgh and Documenting Pitt. [Documenting Pitt](#) features photographs, yearbooks, course catalogs and publications concerning the University. [Historic Pittsburgh](#) is a collaboration of over a dozen repositories in the Pittsburgh area featuring photographs, texts and maps that together provide a more complete history of southwestern Pennsylvania.

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