

GREATER NEW HAVEN LABOR HISTORY ASSOCIATION



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS

Local Lodge 1990

Papers of Frank Panzarella, President and Chief Steward, 1988-1992

Located at Greater New Haven Labor History Association, 267 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06513

This Local was certified on December 5th, 1967, to represent “all production and maintenance employees employed by [New England Die Casting Company] at its West Haven, Connecticut plant...excluding all office clerical employees, guards, professional employees and supervisors as defined in the [National Labor Relations Act.]” From that time until the closing of the plant in 1992, the Local remained the bargaining agent for 100% of the shop employees. Its long time President was Sarah McIver, who stepped aside in 1988 to become Financial Secretary when Frank Panzarella became President. Its strongest and most active members were African-Americans, who were a slight majority of the work force. A 1982 company document noted ruefully, “there is very little possibility of future de-certification of the Union.”

Frank Panzarella was President and Chief Steward of the Local from 1988 until its closing in 1992. During his tenure, he says that he spent about 60% of his time working on safety related issues. Especially dangerous conditions prevailed in the die cast room and the punch press department (which was composed predominantly of women workers), and the Local conducted regular, thorough team inspections of the plant. The company was, Mr. Panzarella says, “somewhat cooperative” in making the necessary changes.

Another major issue was job allocation—ensuring a fair share of the “good” jobs for all employees. This was especially important because of the piece rate system, and because, Mr. Panzarella says, the company was “constantly trying to sidestep the contract language, and playing workers off against each other.” One strategy in particular was to try to create divisions between white and black workers.

From Mr. Panzarella’s perspective, the Local’s greatest success was “its creation.” Its most significant event (during his tenure) was its participation in the 1990 AFL-CIO Solidarity March in Washington, D.C. A bus load from the Local attended. “It was the first and fullest participation of the members in a quasi-political event,” he notes.

THE RECORDS

The Local 1990 records held at 267 Chapel Street were donated by Frank Panzarella, and they largely document the years between 1988-1992, although one internal company document— a notebook found in the basement after the demise of New England Die Casting—provides fascinating insights into management attitudes towards the Local, ca. 1982.

The following is a brief summary of the records:

- Minutes of Executive Board Meetings and semi-annual conferences of the Connecticut State Council of Machinists (1990-1994)
- Copy of Agreement (contract) between New England Die Casting located in West Haven Connecticut and Precision Mechanics Local Lodge No. 1990 of District 170 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers AFL-CIO, September 16, 1990- August 28, 1993; employee list including date of employment and job description
- 'TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF RELEASES" May 20, 1992—New England Die Casting
- By- Laws, of Connecticut State Council of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, approved 1990, and changes 1993
- Contents of Notebook distributed at Placid Harbor Machinists Leadership Training School, 1989, FP's copy, and his achievement certificate, photo of that year's class; also a note from a KY classmate w/ a photo
- File on the Labor – Management Adjustment Committee at New England Die Casting in 1992: member list (representatives from Department of Labor; Private Industry Council; Union, and Management); subcommittees; Employee Interest Survey Results; newsletters; New England Die Casting notice to place 51 employees "available for immediate work on or about Sept/1, 1992; "TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF RELEASES" May 20, 1992 (copy of above); LAYOFF STATUIS AS OF 5/22/92
- Folders from several labor related conferences attended by Mr. Panzarella
- FILE: January 1, 1993 IAM CONSTITUTION; several grievances of New England Die Casting employees
- NOTEBOOK: (an internal company document—name of F. Hubbell on the cover-- this was Frank W. Hubbell, Personnel Manager) entitled New England Die Casting, INC., West Haven, CT 1982 Negotiation Data—broken into parts:
 - UNION ORGANIZATION HISTORY
 - SUMMARY OF LABOR RELATIONS CLIMATE
 - BARGAINING HISTORY STRIKE HISTORY
 - PROFILE OF NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (lists members of negotiating team and positions)and includes their "biographical data sheets;" notes if there have been any warnings or disciplinary actions against them; makes "general comments" and also describes their "disposition" in psychological terms."
 - WORK FORCE ANALYSIS (by age group, length of service, job classification, rate ranges by job classification
 - COMPANY PROPOSALS FOR 1982 CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS (with notes);
 - Comparison of Previous Contracts 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980
 - SCHEDULE OF EXISTING BENEFITS
 - NEGOTIATED WAGE HISTORY SETTLEMENTS
 - SUMMARY OF PAY PRACTICES (LOCAL LODGE 1990 OF DISTRICT 170)
 - PROPOSED 1982-1983 CONTRACT SAFETY: Report on two OSHA inspections during previous contract term, with OSHA citations
 - CONFIDENTIAL STRIKE PLAN (written by F.W. Hubbell)

- WAGE AND FRINGE BENEFIT SURVEY HOLIDAY SURVEY (compares number of paid holidays given yearly with other New Haven area companies)
 - HOURLY COST OF LABOR AVERAGE RATES NEDC FRINGES
- Notebook containing jobs descriptions of various positions ca. early 80s