

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA BUILDING

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: United Mine Workers of America Building

Other Name/Site Number: University Club, Summit Grand Parc

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 900-910 Fifteenth Street, N.W.

Not for publication: __

City/Town: Washington

Vicinity: __

State: District of Columbia

County:

Code: 001

Zip Code: 20005

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: __

Public-State: __

Public-Federal: __

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: __

Site: __

Structure: __

Object: __

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

0

0

0

1

Noncontributing

0 buildings

0 sites

0 structures

0 objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Commerce/Trade Sub: Organizational

Current: Domestic Commerce/Trade Sub: Multiple Dwelling Business

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Italian Renaissance Revival/Commercial Style

Materials:

- Foundation: Concrete and Brick
- Walls: Stone (Limestone and Bluestone) and Brick
- Roof: Concrete and Brick/Slag/Tile
- Other: Steel, Terra-cotta

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**Summary Description**

The United Mine Workers of America Building stands at 900 Fifteenth Street, N.W., in Washington, D.C., at the intersection of Fifteenth and I streets and Vermont Avenue. It faces the southwest corner of McPherson Square, one of Washington's many small, urban parks. In the building's design, George Oakley Totten, Jr., a highly regarded Washington architect with numerous residences and embassies to his credit, combined Italian Renaissance Revival detailing with aspects of American commercial architecture to create a five-story building (plus basement and mezzanine) that was completed in 1912.¹ Totten was commissioned by the University Club, a social organization for the city's political, intellectual, and business leaders, which occupied the premises until 1936. The group sold its clubhouse that year to John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers (UMW). The UMW added a sixth story and remodeled the building's interior in 1937. The addition and the remodeling were undertaken by the Washington architecture firm of Porter and Lockie.² The mine workers' union maintained its international headquarters in this building until 1999. Summit Properties renovated the building beginning in 2001, maintaining its first and second floors as offices and converting the upper floors to apartments. Washington architects Martinez & Johnson designed the renovation, called the Summit Grand Parc, which included connecting the United Mine Workers Building to new construction on its north and west sides. The renovated building and addition, opened in the spring of 2003.³

Totten clad a steel and hollow terra-cotta tile structure with limestone and bluestone on the first two floors and buff-colored brick above. The architect capped the U-shaped building with a strongly projecting limestone cornice and balustrade, which was removed during the 1937 renovation. Compared to the exuberance of Totten's original structure, Porter and Lockie's sixth-floor addition is restrained and recalls medieval, rather than Renaissance, forms. During the two year renovation project between 2001-03, Martinez & Johnson made few changes to the exterior of Porter and Lockie's renovation, other than to clean and restore it to its 1937 appearance. The architects roughly matched the exterior surface colors of their addition to Totten's original. The two towers of the new construction, however, rise four stories higher than the UMW Building, and the north tower projects over the northwest corner of the union headquarters and is structurally supported by enhancements to the original building's historic fabric. The main entrance as designed by Totten faces Fifteenth Street and now serves the Dana

¹ Information on the initial state of the building and use by the University Club comes from the club's *Seventh Year Book*, July 1, 1913, 43-45 (quoted in EHT Traceries, "900 Fifteenth Street, N.W.: A History and Evaluation," 50-52), as well as plans and photographs published in *American Architect* 103 (June 18, 1913).

² Information on the 1937 remodeling comes from Porter and Lockie, Architects, "Remodeling, University Club Building for the United Mine Workers" (drawings), April 23, 1937, photocopies of original drawings held by Martinez and Johnson, Architects, Washington, D.C., and from three articles in the *United Mine Worker's Journal*: "International Union, U.M.W.A., Now Owns Home of Its Own," 47, no. 23 (December 1, 1936): 5; "Work Starts on Remodeling Future Home of Union," 48, no. 12 (June 15, 1937): 5; "International Union Now Located in Our New Headquarters Building," 49:1 (January 1, 1938), 9.

³ Information on the renovation of the building by Summit Properties comes from Martinez & Johnson Architecture, "Summit Grand Parc," restoration drawings, November 27, 2001, Martinez & Johnson Architecture, Washington, D.C.

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Center, a private philanthropic organization that occupies the first and second floors of the building. The entrance to the Summit Grand Parc residences, at 910 Fifteenth Street, N.W., is recessed from the street in what had formerly been a passage running between the UMW Building and its neighbor on the north, the Southern Railway Building. The other buildings that ring McPherson Square contain business, financial, and retail functions.

Exterior Description**A. Form, Massing, and Materials**

The United Mine Workers Building features elements of classical architecture with a rusticated limestone base surmounted by a cubically massed brick shaft. Classical elements include a Doric entrance portico on the first floor and arched windows with volute keystones on the second floor. As has been noted, a projecting limestone cornice and balustrade capped Totten's original design. This balustrade was removed, interrupting the building at the original cornice height, when Porter and Lockie added the sixth floor in 1937.

B. The South and East Elevations

The east and south elevations, facing Fifteenth and I streets, respectively, form the principal sides of the building. These two elevations are described together in this section due to the consistent elements of their design and their similar materials.

The east basement elevation contains four bays of window openings set in light wells, two on either side of the Fifteenth Street entrance. Three of these four bays consist of paired, one-over-one windows set in lightwells directly beneath the paired openings of the ground floor. The fourth bay, immediately north of the entrance, contains a single one-over-one window. The south elevation consists of five bays. The two easternmost bays contain pairs of one-over-one windows, while the central bay contains a single one-over-one window. All these windows are set in lightwells. A stairwell containing two windows descends across the next bay. The stairwell windows are of different types: The larger is two-over-two, the smaller is two side-by-side vertical panes. The westernmost bay of the south basement elevation contains a door with four lights (two-over-two) above a solid panel.

Vermiculated rustication differentiates the first floor of these two elevations from the floors above, as do the powerful Roman Doric portico of the main entrance on the east elevation and the paneled doorway of the secondary I Street entrance on the south side. Totten designated the I Street opening, near the western end of the south elevation, as the University Club's "Ladies Entrance." Square Doric piers and unfluted columns support the reduced entablature (architrave and cornice only) of the east portico, and pilasters flank the doorway. Both the paneled door on I Street and the white bronze double door on Fifteenth Street were designed by Porter and Lockie.⁴

Four pairs of rectangular, one-over-one windows perforate the east elevation, two pairs on each side of the main entrance. A black metal fence and gate was installed immediately north of the

⁴ A drawing of the remodeling by Porter and Lockie (no. 11) describes the door as white bronze, a variety of the metal containing a high tin content. Martinez & Johnson's drawings of the remodeling call the metal "Monel," an alloy of nickel and copper.

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east elevation during the 2001-03 renovation to mark the entrance to the Summit Grand Parc residences at 910 Fifteenth Street. Two sets of paired windows also puncture the eastern end of the south elevation, and another flanks the Ladies Entrance on its east side. A single window of this form marks the center of the south elevation. To the west of the Ladies Entrance is a lone, much narrower window.

A belt course divides the ground floor from the second floor. This story's tall, arched openings, standing directly above corresponding ones on the first floor, mark it as the building's piano nobile (main floor). The relationship between the openings is maintained throughout the five floors of Totten's composition. Both the east and south elevations contain five bays at the second-floor level with windows paired on either side of central French doors. On the east elevation, the French doors open onto a balustraded balcony supported by the portico of the main entrance. On the south elevation, volutes support the balcony.

The windows of the second floor illustrate the changes that have occurred since the building was constructed for the University Club. A photograph published in the June 18, 1913, issue of *American Architect* shows that the second-story windows consisted of a fanlight, a two-light transom, and two casement sashes, each containing three stacked pairs of panes. Two such window configurations remain on the south elevation. The other two windows on the south and all four on the east now consist of a fanlight and two casement sashes, each containing four stacked pairs of panes. A photograph published in the *United Mine Workers Journal* shortly after the union moved in indicates that this window configuration was part of Porter and Lockie's renovation of the property. The French doors also show the differences between the designs of Totten and Porter and Lockie. The French doors on the south side illustrate the University Club arrangement of fanlight, two-light transom, and casement sashes, while those on the east contain the fanlight and casement sashes of eight panes that characterized the UMW renovation.

Ornament at this level includes smooth rustication, volute keystones in the arches, balustrades across the window openings, and roundels set in square frames. On the south elevation, two of these decorative devices, which held university seals when the University Club occupied the building, flank the French doors. On the east side, Totten placed the framed roundels between each of the arched openings. The UMW removed the university seals when it renovated the building. A reduced classical entablature divides the second from the third floor. The architrave, now plain, originally bore Latin names for some of the universities represented in the club.

The third floor begins the three-story shaft of the building, and the brick patterns of this section emphasize horizontality through the use of recessed courses (one in every seven) outlined with a course of lighter brick. All brickwork is laid in running bond.

The smaller, arched casement windows of the third floor follow the fenestration rhythm established on the first two floors. On the south side, the windows consist of fanlights above two six-light casements. On the east elevation, however, two-over-two rectangular windows flank the arched openings, creating five serliana windows (window with three openings) on the building's principal front. Historic photographs indicate that the UMW did not change any of the windows on this floor when it took over the building. After that time, however, changes did occur due to the use of window air-conditioning units and replacement of window sash.

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Photographs taken while the building was being renovated show a variety of sash types. The 2001-03 renovation, however, returned all the third-floor windows to the Totten design.

Plain square and rectangular stone panels mark the spaces between the windows on the third floor, and carved keystones grace the arches. The panels were decorated with university seals during the University Club period, but these seals were removed when the UMW purchased the building. Brick hood moldings surround the window arches on this floor and are connected with a horizontal brick pattern on both the south and east elevations.

Both the fourth and fifth floors of the United Mine Workers Building have rectangular, four-over-one windows matching the rhythm of the windows below. On the south elevation, two sets of paired windows flank the single window in the center. A smaller, narrower opening containing a casement sash of three stacked panes pierces the wall on either side of the central window on both floors. On the east, five pairs of rectangular, four-over-one windows are arrayed across the elevation. The forms of the current windows match those seen in historic photographs from both the University Club and UMW eras. Photographs taken during the 2001-03 renovation show that beneath seven of the fifteen fourth-floor windows, horizontal openings, perhaps employed in a later heating and air-conditioning system, pierced the walls. These openings do not appear in photographs of the building taken either during the occupancy of the University Club nor when it was first occupied by the UMW. These gaps were closed during the renovation.

In addition to the recessed patterns emphasizing the horizontality of the building, the brickwork of the fourth and fifth floors forms flat arches over the window openings. Painted metal balconets, shared by the paired openings, ornament the windows of the fourth floor. The fifth floor is crowned—and Totten's shaft divided from Porter and Lockie's addition—by the remnants of the original limestone cornice, now consisting of a plain architrave and a modillion cornice. The UMW removed the wreaths and medallions that had further embellished the University Club cornice.

On the south elevation of Porter and Lockie's sixth floor, rectangular, four-over-one windows of slightly squatter proportions than Totten's are aligned above the windows below. On the east elevation, however, a pair of widely spaced, rectangular, four-over-one windows light each wing, while three much taller openings perforate the walls of a central pavilion. Each of the windows in these openings consists of a four-pane transom above two casement sashes (four pairs of panes stacked vertically in each sash). Photographic research reveals that air-conditioning units replaced the two panes on the lower left sash of each of the central windows at some point during the UMW tenure. The renovation in 2001-03 returned the windows to the form they took in 1937.

Quoins in the same yellow brick as the rest of the addition distinguish the corners of the south and east elevations of the sixth floor. The central pavilion advances slightly from the plane of the wings on the east elevation and is taller than the wings. The arched corbel table of the center section recalls medieval construction techniques, and a hipped, tile roof covers the central pavilion. A concrete border stands in for a cornice on both the wings and the central section, but the pavilion cornice has a slightly more complex profile.

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C. The North Elevation

Porter and Lockie's north elevation consisted of five bays on each of seven floors (including the mezzanine). New construction that is part of the Summit Grand Parc residences now obscures the westernmost three bays on the ground floor and the westernmost two bays above that level. This elevation is built of red brick in five-course American bond on all seven floors. The limestone of the first two stories and the remnants of Totten's original cornice, as well as the yellow brickwork of both the shaft and the 1937 addition, turn the corner of the building to form quoins on the north elevation's east end. A drawing of Porter and Lockie's renovation of the building shows that the architects added some openings and enlarged others on this elevation to admit more light into UMW offices. Except for the windows blocked by new construction, window openings retain the forms they took in Porter and Lockie's remodeling. Most of the windows blocked by the new construction also remain in place and retain their 1937 form, although they are no longer functional.

A segmentally arched opening filled with a rectangular, two-over-two window with a two-light transom above pierces each of the two easternmost bays of the north elevation's second floor. Between the two, a blind arch continues the pattern of arched openings on the east and south sides of the building. The third bay includes a pair of segmentally arched openings containing rectangular, four-over-one windows. Another pair of windows of the same design sits above this pair to light the second-floor mezzanine. The basic profile of the cornice that divides the second floor from the third on the east and south elevations continues in red brick on the north elevation.

Third-floor windows on the north elevation match those on the south side: arched openings with fanlights above paired casements. Linked hood moldings in red brick mimic those found on the east and south elevations.

The arrangement of the openings of both the fourth and fifth floors on the north side are the same for both floors: the eastern bay contains a segmentally arched opening, glazed with a rectangular, four-over-one window, while the next bay contains a pair of these windows. The third bay consists of a pair of rectangular, four-over-one windows embraced by a single wood frame and separated by a wood mullion. Horizontal, rectangular openings in the wall below one of each of the fourth-floor pairs (like those on the east and south elevations) existed when renovation of the building began. These openings were filled with matching red brick during the renovation.

Sixth-floor openings and windows on the north elevation follow the rhythm established on the fourth and fifth floors except that none of the openings has segmental arches as the other floors do, and the second window of the second bay is narrower than the others. A yellow brick chimney stands between the two eastern bays at roof level, and the concrete cornice gives way to metal flashing next to the chimney. A four-story block of new construction projects over the northwestern corner of the historic building and now forms a part of its north elevation. The lowest story of the addition is faced with beige brick corresponding with the east and west elevations of the UMW Building. The upper three stories are faced with a lighter stone. The fenestration does not correspond with the fenestration of the rest of this elevation.

D. The West Elevation

Martinez & Johnson's new construction also has a U-shaped plan, the open end of which meets

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the open end of Totten's original U-shaped design. The juncture of the two plans thereby creates a small courtyard on the west side of the historic building, which originally faced an alley. The new construction blocks the view of the west elevation of the entire south leg of the U and of what was generally a two-window bay on the north leg. The remaining bays—at the center of the building and immediately north—and the elevations facing Totten's light court retain the window forms dating from Porter and Lockie's remodeling. For the most part, segmentally arched openings perforate the six floors of the original building, while rectangular openings admit light into the added seventh floor. The segmentally arched openings are filled with two-over-two sashes, while the rectangular windows contain four-over-one windows. Porter and Lockie's drawing of this elevation indicates that the architects changed some window openings, as they did on the north elevation, and closed others. Porter and Lockie also replaced Totten's wood sashes with metal ones containing wire glass. Martinez & Johnson's restoration retained Porter and Lockie's windows where they were salvageable.

Interior Description

A. Summary of Interior Alterations

In addition to the six floors visible on the exterior of the structure, the United Mine Workers Building includes a basement and a mezzanine between the second and third floors.⁵ Porter and Lockie's remodeling of the building's interior followed its change in use. The large open spaces that supported the University Club's social functions were divided into smaller spaces to accommodate the numerous officers of the international union, and the residential units on the upper floors were reconfigured to create office suites. The UMW architects also sought to confer a simple dignity appropriate to the workers' union on the new spaces they created. Drawings for the remodeling indicate that Porter and Lockie removed much of the interior trim of Totten's building from the rooms, such as paneling and cornices, and designed new doors. The ceilings and cornices were removed in order to install suspended ceilings. In place of the club's ornament, Porter and Lockie designed simple chestnut or oak wainscoting, combined either with plaster walls or wood paneling and cornices. Paneling was installed above the wainscoting in the offices of the more prominent union officials. The southeast offices on the second, third, fourth, and fifth floors were all paneled in wood from floor to ceiling and were occupied by top union officials. Porter and Lockie also removed most of the University Club floors and installed oak parquet floors. The architects did, however, retain Totten's window and door surrounds. Porter and Lockie also modernized the building's elevators, electrical system, and heating and air-conditioning, including—appropriately for the mine workers building—an updated coal furnace in the basement. Grilles for the new heating system were incorporated into the wood paneling of the offices. New fire stairs were also erected on the west side of the building to comply with District of Columbia codes, and a variety of new metal, wood, or wood and glass doors were designed.⁶

In their renovation of the building, Martinez & Johnson generally retained the significant features of the UMW Building—the University Club windows and surrounds, Porter and Lockie's

⁵ In order to reconcile the floor numbering system of the historic building to their new construction, Martinez & Johnson renumbered the UMW building's floors. This documentation, however, will follow Porter and Lockie's floor numbering system throughout.

⁶ Porter and Lockie, drawing nos. 8, 9, 11, 13, 15; *United Mine Workers Journal* 48, no. 12: 7.

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floor surfaces, doors and doorways, wainscoting, paneling, and cornices—while reconfiguring the rooms to a certain extent for residential use and adding kitchen and bathroom facilities. Most of the kitchens are freestanding, thereby minimizing the repartitioning of the floor plans. Martinez & Johnson made the greatest changes in the northwest corner of the UMW building, over which the north tower of the new construction extends. Structural enhancements in the northwest corner to support this tower, as well as the need for access to the apartments in the historic building from the new construction, where the residential entrance is located, resulted in the reconfiguration of the rooms. On each floor, an opening was cut in the north end of the west wall to provide access to elevators in the new construction. A corridor, ramped to accommodate the difference in floor levels between the old and new buildings, leads from this opening to the building's historic corridors. The elevators from the UMW occupation, originally in this area, were also removed above the second floor. Martinez & Johnson concentrated their major changes to the historic building in this corner, allowing the rest of the interior to retain a large percentage of its historic features.

B. Floor-by-Floor Description

Totten placed a billiards room and a wine room in the basement, as well as the University Club's heating plant. Porter and Lockie removed the ornament from this room, as well as several partitions, and planned a large assembly room to replace the billiards area. The assembly room, however, appears never to have been constructed and remained minimally finished throughout the UMW occupation. Porter and Lockie did replace the original coal heating system with a new one.⁷ Currently, the basement remains unfinished and consists of a concrete floor and plastered or bare brick walls. Stained wood frames surround the windows.

On the first floor, Porter and Lockie's white bronze double doors open onto the vestibule and entrance hall of the historic building; this area is largely intact to Totten's original design and now functions as the office portion of Summit's redevelopment of the property. The hall is decorated in the Greek Doric order and floored with red-brown English tile bordered in green. The classical ornament of the entrance area is made of painted wood and plaster. At the end of this hall, a spacious marble staircase with bronze banisters leads to the upper floors. All these features date from Totten's original design for the University Club, as does the brick fireplace decorated with English tiles in the first floor's north office. As they did throughout the building's interior, however, Porter and Lockie removed much of the decoration in the offices adjacent to the entrance area, replacing it on this floor with stained chestnut framing plaster panels. They also replaced the original floor material with oak parquet. Martinez & Johnson's renovation of the building retained these interior features. The architects did remove several partitions in the first floor office spaces, including those constructed in the later years of union occupation of the building. Partitions erected by Martinez & Johnson in these spaces consist of pale wood frames and frosted glass to contrast with the historic fabric.

The second floor housed the principal social rooms of the University Club, with a "Lounging Room" running the length of the Fifteenth Street side. This room featured a 21-foot-high vaulted ceiling, murals at either end, and a stone fireplace. Porter and Lockie partitioned the Lounging

⁷ *United Mine Workers Journal* 47, no. 23 (December 1, 1936): 5; Adrienne Teleki, Development Manager, Summit Properties, conversation with Robinson & Associates, March 14, 2003.

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Room and turned the second floor into offices for John L. Lewis and his private secretary, a conference room, and a reception room. Lewis's office was located on the southeast corner of the second floor. Although the stone fireplace and the murals were removed, much of the University Club ornament of the second floor was maintained in the UMW remodeling, including its chestnut wainscot and window trim, plaster decoration on arch soffits, archivolt, and along the cornices. Porter and Lockie's drawings show that the partitions they employed to divide this space were to be decorated with the same features that existed on the original walls. Martinez & Johnson removed some partitions that created smaller offices on the west side of the building, but their renovation maintained the room division of the spaces along the east side, as well as these rooms' paneling, windows, and plaster decoration, which dated from Totten's design, and the radiator grilles Porter and Lockie created for their new heating system. Lighting this floor are two chandeliers, one probably dating from the University Club period, one from the UMW tenure. The UMW-era chandelier consists of mineworkers' tools crossed on a wheel, from which hang mineshaft lamps.

The mezzanine contained a card room, an office, and a board room when it was owned by the University Club. Porter and Lockie removed some partitions on this level and added others to create offices. They also constructed two small, enclosed lobbies off the stair landing in what had been double-height spaces flanking the main stairs at the first-floor level. To reach these lobbies, the architects added quarter-circle platforms. The iron balustrade and birch rail accompanying the new platforms matched the original in Totten's design. Also on the mezzanine level, the architects erected a new wall on the west side of the stair landing, eliminating a passage Totten had created. The mezzanine level is the lowest level of the Martinez & Johnson renovation to contain apartments, one on each side of the central stairs. These apartments are not entered through the lobbies Porter and Lockie had created. One is entered from a doorway opened in the west wall of the original building, the other from a small staircase immediately south of the central marble staircase. In addition to the usual interior features retained in Martinez and Johnson's renovation, the south apartment contains a fireplace and is lit by semicircular windows at floor level—two features that date from its original design by Totten.⁸ Except for the addition of one partition, the south apartment retains the essential configuration as designed by Porter and Lockie. The firm divided the northern portion of the mezzanine into three small offices, a corridor, and the lobby; Martinez and Johnson reconfigured this space into a bedroom, living room, kitchen, and bathroom. To create residential units, Martinez & Johnson installed new kitchens and bathrooms.

Dining rooms and the kitchen occupied the third floor of the building during the University Club's tenure. The main dining room, facing McPherson Square, featured chestnut paneling, a cornice, and a beamed ceiling. Porter and Lockie removed the paneling, the cornice, and the ceiling. The architects created a row of five offices on the north side of the building and a suite containing three rooms on the south. The southeast corner office, to be occupied by UMW vice president Philip Murray, received new oak paneling. Between the two rows of offices was a large conference room lit by serliana windows facing Fifteenth Street, which was subdivided during the union's tenure. Martinez & Johnson retained the floor's decorative details during their renovation, although they moved partitions (except for those in Murray's office). To control access to these residences, while retaining the design of the central marble staircase, the

⁸ The tiles decorating the fireplace were installed during the Martinez & Johnson renovation.

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landing at the top of the stair is divided from the corridor by a clear glass wall. Residents reach this corridor, which remains from Porter and Lockie's remodeling, from the new corridor leading from the opening cut by Martinez & Johnson into the historic building's north wall.

The fourth and fifth floors of the University Club each contained fifteen bedrooms, some with private bathrooms, and a public bathroom. Porter and Lockie converted the floor to offices, once again removing Totten-era ornament. They surfaced the walls of the southeast corner room of the fourth floor with oak paneling and installed a black marble fireplace there for the office's occupant, UMW Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Kennedy. These features remain in place today. Porter and Lockie removed a fireplace from the northeast corner room. The layout of the fifth floor was much the same as the fourth. The union's legal department used the sixteen rooms of the fifth floor for its offices, and the southeast corner room was paneled with oak for the head of the legal department. Martinez and Johnson maintained the plans of these two floors very much as they found them. As in the mine workers' tenure, doors open off the U-shaped corridor in the center of the building. As on the third floor, these corridors are reached by a corridor constructed by Martinez & Lockie from the opening in the west wall of the historic building. The parquet floors, oak doors, chestnut trim, and plastered walls retain their Porter and Lockie forms. Several of the interior partitions dating from the union occupancy also remain in place, as do windows and surrounds.

Porter and Lockie's sixth floor featured a suite of rooms, all but one identified on their plans as offices. The central pavilion visible on the outside of the building from Fifteenth Street contained a single, high-ceilinged room, which was flanked by a row of offices on each side, except for a kitchenette in the south row of rooms. The rough architectural characteristics of this central space, called an assembly room in one newspaper description, varies distinctly from the lower floors.⁹ It featured wainscoting of broad, horizontal fir boards, plastered and half-timbered walls, and a beam ceiling. A large brick fireplace occupied the center of this room's west wall. As elsewhere in Porter and Lockie's remodeling, the addition was floored with oak in a parquet pattern. The doors in this room consist of stacked fir chevrons and open on the west onto a corridor detailed in the same way as the large, central room. A brick fireplace, smaller than the one in the central room, was located in the office on the northeast corner of the sixth floor. Union tradition holds that the three rooms on the east side of the building and their associated kitchenette were used by union president John L. Lewis for private, after-hours meetings with his closest associates. Lewis used the northeast corner room, according to union lore, as private quarters when late-night negotiations and strategy sessions kept him in the building overnight.¹⁰ Martinez & Johnson slightly reconfigured the rooms on the west side of the building in their renovation, but kept eastern rooms associated with Lewis essentially unchanged. Also unchanged are the floors, doors, and window sashes and frames.

C. Integrity

⁹ "University Club Being Altered for John L. Lewis and U.M.W.," *Washington Evening Star*, July 19, 1937, B1.

¹⁰ Summit Properties, Historic Preservation Certification Application—United Mine Workers Headquarters, part 2, Description of Rehabilitation, January 6, 2000, Historic Preservation Division, Office of Planning, Washington, D.C., photocopy, 14; Michael Buckner, United Mine Workers of America, telephone conversation with the author, July 31, 2002.

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Porter and Lockie's work on the United Mine Workers Building in 1937 accomplished two tasks: it transformed the residential and social club designed in 1912 by George Oakley Totten, Jr., into a modern office building, and it removed University Club ornament in favor of detailing more appropriate to an international organization of mine workers. The restoration of the building in 2001-03 by Martinez & Johnson, carried out for Summit Properties, changed the function of the building's upper floors from offices to apartments and linked it to new construction on the west and north. Martinez & Johnson made the greatest number of changes in the northwest corner of the building where a rooftop addition, structural enhancements, and access requirements changed room configurations and removed some original material. The architects concentrated the major changes to the historic building in this area, allowing the rest of the building to retain a large percentage of its historic features. Martinez & Johnson added some new partitions, most often to create new bathrooms, but minimized repartitioning by creating freestanding kitchens.

The United Mine Workers of America Building retains a high degree of integrity relative to its period of significance, exemplifying the seven National Historic Landmark aspects of this quality. The building's location at 900 Fifteenth Street, N.W., and its setting among the financial and commercial institutions surrounding McPherson Square remains unchanged. Martinez & Johnson based their restoration on Porter and Lockie's 1937 plans for the building, retaining the building's important design characteristics and materials. The Italian Renaissance Revival forms that characterized Totten's University Club, such as the limestone base, Roman Doric portico, brick shaft, piano nobile, floor detailing, and window patterns, remain unchanged, except for the few occasions when restoration required new materials. The yellow brick and medieval forms of Porter and Lockie's sixth floor are also unchanged. New construction of the Summit Grand Parc obscures portions of the minor north elevation of the historic building, and a new four-story addition is connected structurally to and projects onto the northwest corner of the building. This new construction can be seen from the street, but it reads as a separate building and does not interfere with the perception of the UMW Building as a complete entity.

The construction of the new tower changed the interior arrangements of the spaces below it in the historic building. On most floors in Porter and Lockie's design, the northwest corner consisted of two offices at the end of a U-shaped corridor. Martinez & Johnson shifted a portion of the corridor to the north wall so as to provide access to and from their new construction. The two UMW-era offices then became a single apartment. Except for this corner of the building, however, the renovation remains generally faithful to Porter and Lockie's floor plans. This can be seen in the entrance hall flanked by offices on the first floor, the marble staircase leading to the vaulted ceilings of the second floor offices and conference rooms, the U-shaped, corridor-and-office arrangement of the upper floors, and the large, half-timbered room centered between rows of offices on the top floor. The architects also retained essential details such as wood paneling, wood and plaster ornamentation, window frames and sashes, doors and doorways, fireplaces, and parquet floors. All these original features display the workmanship of the periods in which they were created. As a result of the restoration, the building's significant spaces retain the feeling and association of the mine workers' occupation. The entrance lobby and main staircase, the wood-paneled southeast corner rooms where UMW executives had their offices, the conference rooms where John L. Lewis spoke to union members and the press, and the added sixth floor, which became known as the "John L. Lewis suite" for its association with the union

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president—in all these spaces, the United Mine Workers of America Building continues to convey its historical associations with Lewis and his union.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National
Register Criteria:

A X B X C X D

Criteria Considerations
(Exceptions):

A B C D E F G X

NHL Criteria:

1 and 2

NHL Theme(s):

V. Developing the American Economy
5. Labor Organizations and Protests

Areas of Significance:

Social History
Politics/Government

Period(s) of Significance:

1936-60

Significant Dates:

1937-40, 1941, 1943, 1945-50, 1952

Significant Person(s):

Lewis, John Llewellyn (1880-1969)

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Totten, George Oakley, Jr. (1912)
Porter, Irwin Stevens and Lockie, Joseph A. (1937)
Martinez, Gary, and Johnson, Tom (2001-03)

Historic Contexts:

American Labor History

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**Summary of Significance**

The United Mine Workers of America Building has exceptional national significance under Criterion 1 as a property which is “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and [is] identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained,” and under Criterion 2 as a property that is “associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States.” Each is addressed separately below. The property’s period of national significance, identified as 1936-1960, is also addressed below, and Criteria Exception 8 is applied to justify a closing date of less than 50 years in the past.

The United Mine Workers Building is intimately associated with a pattern of events that defined the American labor movement as it reached the height of its influence in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The UMW headquarters is therefore significant as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 1 for the association of this building with the rise of organized labor during the late 1930s. The building’s quarter-century period of significance coincides with an era when organized labor moved “from the background to the forefront of national political and economic struggle.”¹¹ UMW president John L. Lewis and his chief advisor W. Jett Lauck, had helped spark labor’s climb to a position of national influence by shaping a key section of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933, which federally enforced workers’ right to organize and bargain collectively. This right was later secured by the Wagner Act of 1935, which Lewis ardently supported. The union subsequently organized an overwhelming majority of mine workers to negotiate for higher wages, safer working conditions, and the creation of industry-funded health and retirement benefits. Once the UMW had shown the way, these goals became standard in contract negotiations between unions and management and served to lift millions of blue collar workers into the middle class.¹² Another important development during these years was the founding by Lewis of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and its funding by the UMW during its formative years. This federation of unions, which gained its independence from the American Federation of Labor in 1938, (beginning as the Committee of Industrial Organizations in 1935) represented mass-production workers, a previously unrepresented segment of the work force that became the labor movement’s most important constituency during the 1950s and 1960s when working-class Americans made their largest economic gains.

Spearheading the UMW’s nationwide efforts was the formidable labor organizer John L. Lewis, and the United Mine Workers Building served as his command post for more than two decades. The building therefore also achieves significance under Criterion 2 due to its association with a figure of exceptional national importance. Lewis presided over the union for 40 years. During

¹¹ Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis, A Biography* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1986), ix.

¹² Robert H. Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions, 1920-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 137.

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his presidency, he helped increase union membership across the nation through his support of New Deal legislation and determined both the goals and the tactics of the UMW's contract negotiations. It was Lewis who founded the Committee for Industrial Organization, the forerunner of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, thereby creating a voice for labor in the mass-production industries, such as steel production and automobile manufacturing, during the United States' post-World War II economic boom. Lewis was named to the Labor Advisory Board by Roosevelt and served as vice president of the American Federation of Labor. The increase in union membership that Lewis promoted, his leadership in charting the paths of contract negotiation, and his presence in Washington influenced relations between labor, capital, and government during a crucial stage of the nation's continued industrialization.

The period of significance for the United Mine Workers of America Building (1936-1960) falls under exception 8, which covers a property that achieves significance more than fifty years in the past but continues its significance into a period less than fifty years in the past. The period begins with the United Mine Workers' purchase of the building from its previous owner, the University Club, and it ends with John L. Lewis's retirement as UMW president. The period was chosen due to the identification of the union and its accomplishments with its longtime leader. Serving in the UMW during this time were several outstanding labor activists. Philip Murray, for instance, who was vice president of the mine workers union from 1919 to 1942, organized steel workers in 1936 and became president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1940. Thomas Kennedy, a former lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, participated in the passage of labor relations legislation in the 1930s and in contract negotiations with coal operators as secretary-treasurer and vice president of the UMW for 35 years. He succeeded Lewis as president of the union. Both Murray and Kennedy operated out of union headquarters at 900 Fifteenth Street, N.W. Murray's differences with Lewis, however, led to his expulsion from the United Mine Workers union in 1942, and Kennedy's effectiveness dwindled in his later years. Neither had the lasting impact on the union, organized labor, or the nation that Lewis did. It is appropriate, then, for his association with the UMW Building to frame its period of significance.

The UMW moved its headquarters from Indianapolis to Washington in 1934 due to the increasing involvement of the federal government in the nation's industries that accompanied New Deal legislative initiatives. Except for the Washington row house of Frances Perkins, Roosevelt's secretary of labor, no sites specifically associated with this pivotal period in American labor history have been designated as National Historic Landmarks.¹³ Not only then is the United Mine Workers Building associated with both a significant pattern of events in the nation's history and with an individual of national significance, it also exemplifies an aspect of the country's history heretofore under represented within the National Historic Landmarks Survey.

¹³ The American Federation of Labor Building, also in Washington, has been designated as a National Historic Landmark for its importance as a "Temple of Labor" from 1916 to 1956, but it was the AFL's reluctance to organize mass production workers that led Lewis to create the Committee for Industrial Organization. The AFL Building therefore represents a previous era in labor history when craft boundaries guided union interests. See Historical Context, below.

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Building History

The University Club, organized in 1904 to provide a social outlet for city and national leaders, numbered Supreme Court justices, congressmen, and cabinet officers among its members.¹⁴ The club began planning to construct its own home in 1909 and, after considering several sites, purchased land on the southwest side of McPherson Square at 900 Fifteenth Street, N.W.¹⁵ The club's building committee chose as its designer George Oakley Totten, Jr., a founding member of the club and a noted architect.¹⁶ Born in New York City in 1866, Totten received two degrees from Columbia University before studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris on a McKim Traveling Scholarship. In 1899, he formed a partnership with his college roommate, Laussat R. Rogers, with whom he designed several embassy buildings before starting his own practice in 1907.

Known for these embassies and also for residences in the District, Totten modeled the clubhouse after similar structures in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, using the Italian Renaissance Revival details common among these buildings.¹⁷ The building committee asked Totten to revise his original plans for an eight-story structure several times before construction began on a five-story building (plus basement and mezzanine), the cornerstone of which was laid by President William Howard Taft, a longtime club member, on April 10, 1912. The building opened on New Year's Eve that same year.¹⁸

Italian Renaissance Revival forms had been used for clubhouses since Charles Barry modeled his Travellers' Club in London (1829-31) after Raphael's Palazzo Pandolfini in Florence.¹⁹ These revival elements included architectural differentiation of the various stories and strong belt courses to reinforce the distinctions, a massive cornice resting directly on the architrave at roof level and a balustrade above, arched windows on the principal floor, and balustraded balconies.²⁰

The clubhouses of McKim, Mead & White, such as the University Club in New York (1896-1900), influenced Totten's design, but the Washington architect also incorporated aspects of

¹⁴ Cecil J. Wilkinson, *The University Club of Washington: The First Fifty Years, 1904-1954* (Washington, D.C.: The University Club, 1954), 45-47; Laura H. Hughes and Simone M. Moffett (E.H.T. Tracerics Inc.), "United Mine Workers of America," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, September 13, 2000), 8.

¹⁵ E.H.T. Tracerics, "900 Fifteenth Street, N.W.: A History and Evaluation," March 22, 1999 (photocopy), Division of Historic Preservation, Office of Planning, Washington, D.C., 29.

¹⁶ Wilkinson, *The University Club of Washington*, 47.

¹⁷ Wilkinson, *The University Club of Washington*, 47; Hughes and Moffett, "United Mine Workers of America," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 5.

¹⁸ Wilkinson, *The University Club of Washington*, 45; Hughes and Moffett, "United Mine Workers of America," 8; E.H.T. Tracerics, "900 Fifteenth Street, N.W.: A History and Evaluation," 26-49.

¹⁹ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 115-116.

²⁰ Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 186-187.

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American commercial architecture into his scheme. Real estate values, commercial pressure, and the use of steel skeletons pushed nineteenth-century architects to stretch their designs beyond the three stories typically allotted Renaissance palazzi, resulting in buildings that incorporated the base, body, and cap of the palazzo form into buildings as tall as the ten-story Wainwright Building in St. Louis (1890-91), designed by Dankmar Adler and Louis H. Sullivan.²¹ Totten created a steel structure for the University Club that could support several more stories, and club archives show that expansion was always considered an option. The use of the commercial manner was appropriate, given that part of the clubhouse's purpose was to raise revenue through the rental of some of the fourth- and fifth-floor bedrooms to nonresident members and their guests.²²

The commercial aspect of the building also fit the neighborhood in which it was built. McPherson Square, one of the parcels of District land designated as open space on the plans of both Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the city's original surveyor, and his successor Andrew Ellicott, had been a residential area during the nineteenth century. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, however, banks, investment groups, and financiers demolished mansions and row houses as business activity migrated north from the Treasury Building to K Street. The area has remained an important part of the city's business district ever since.²³

The University Club took steps to enlarge its building in July 1929. The Great Depression of the 1930s and a suit by a club shareholder to stop expansion, however, combined to thwart those plans. By 1936, financial difficulties forced the University Club to merge with Washington's Racquet Club and sell the clubhouse. Lewis offered \$275,000 for the property in October 1936, and the club accepted his offer on November 16. Building permits indicate that only one change was made by the club during its tenure when an unused elevator shaft was refitted to be used as storage space in 1926.²⁴

As has been noted, the UMW had shifted its operations to Washington from Indianapolis in 1934 in response to the involvement of the federal government in the nation's industries during the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt. According to a report issued at the mine workers' convention in 1934, "[f]or the past year, the executive officers and other representatives of the International Union have been almost continuously in Washington. It is apparent that governmental regulation of the mining industry for the future is an assured fact and it would seem to be a logical consideration for the headquarters of the United Mine Workers of America to be located in Washington, D.C."²⁵ Before purchasing the University Club, the UMW

²¹ Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 327-345; Leland M. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 143-145, 219-220.

²² Hughes and Moffett, "United Mine Workers of America," 10.

²³ James A. Goode, *Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 154-155; "K Street Office Building Planned," *Washington Evening Star*, August 20, 1921, 2:2; Hughes and Moffett, "United Mine Workers of America," 5-6.

²⁴ Wilkinson, 72-79; Hughes and Moffett, "United Mine Workers of America," 19-20.

²⁵ "Joint Report of International Officers to 33rd Constitutional Convention of U.M.W. of A.," *United Mine Workers Journal* 45 (February 1, 1934): 14.

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occupied offices on the seventh floor of the Tower Building (1928) at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and Fourteenth and K streets, N.W.²⁶

The mine workers' chosen architects for the renovation of the University Club, Irwin S. Porter and Joseph A. Lockie, both graduated from George Washington University, and both worked for Waddy B. Wood, a Washington designer with many public and private buildings to his credit. Porter and Lockie's partnership lasted 27 years and resulted in residences, commercial structures, and public buildings.²⁷ Their work for the UMW consisted of remodeling the interior of the building, adding a sixth floor, and modernizing the building's utilities.²⁸ Some of the choices made by the architects followed from the change in the building's use. The large open spaces that supported the University Club's social functions were divided into smaller spaces to accommodate the numerous officers of the international union. The architects also sought to maintain the impressiveness of the spaces Totten created, even as they divided some of the larger ones, while conferring on them a dignity appropriate to the workers' union. Much of the interior trim of Totten's building was removed from the public spaces. In place of the club's ornament, Porter and Lockie designed simple chestnut or oak wainscoting, combined either with plaster walls or wood paneling and cornices. The southeast offices on the second, third, fourth, and fifth floors, which looked out onto McPherson Square, were all paneled in wood from floor to ceiling and were occupied by top union leaders. President Lewis took his office on the second floor, vice president Murray occupied the third-floor southeast office, and secretary-treasurer Kennedy made his office on the fourth floor.

Porter and Lockie did, however, maintain Totten's classically influenced main entrance and marble stairway in the center of the building, as well as the first floor's English tile floors. Much of the ornament of the second-floor lounging room was also maintained in the remodeling, including the paneling and plaster decoration on beam and arch soffits, around window vaults, and along the cornices.

The exterior of Porter and Lockie's brick and concrete sixth-floor addition for the UMW has a slightly yellower hue than the buff brick and limestone of Totten's original design, and the ornamentation is more severe. The added floor resulted in the removal of Totten's heavy stone cornice, and Porter and Lockie also erased university names, seals, and mottoes from panels and friezes to diminish the building's clubhouse associations. On the interior, the most salient feature of the sixth floor was a large, double-height room in the center of the east side. This half-timbered room contained a large brick fireplace, tall windows, an oak floor, and fir paneling. Union tradition holds that the three rooms along the east side of the sixth floor and their associated kitchenette were used by John L. Lewis and his inner circle of advisors as a

²⁶ "Union Seeks Home of Club at \$275,000," *Washington Evening Star*, November 13, 1936, A1.

²⁷ Mary Carolyn Brown, "Porter and Lockie, Washington Architects" (master's thesis, George Washington University, 1990), 1-10.

²⁸ Information on the 1937 remodeling comes from Porter and Lockie, Architects, "Remodeling, University Club Building for the United Mine Workers" (drawings), April 23, 1937, photocopies of original drawings held by Martinez and Johnson Architecture, Washington, D.C., and from three articles in the *United Mine Worker's Journal*: "International Union, U.M.W.A., Now Owns Home of Its Own," 47, no. 23 (December 1, 1936): 5; "Work Starts on Remodeling Future Home of Union," 48, no. 12 (June 15, 1937): 5; "International Union Now Located in Our New Headquarters Building," 49, no. 1 (January 1, 1938): 9. See Section 7 for a full description of Porter and Lockie's alterations to the building.

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retreat from the formal offices downstairs and that Lewis slept in a smaller room that also had a fireplace when late-night negotiations and strategy sessions kept him in the building overnight.²⁹

According to building permit records, the mine workers made only minor changes and repairs after moving into the building in December 1937.³⁰ Later drawings and photographs, however, show that numerous smaller changes were made in the building. Some new partitions were added to further divide the building's large spaces, for instance, and window air-conditioning units and fluorescent lighting were added.³¹ The UMW contemplated further renovation in 1980, but plans fell through three years later due to a lack of financing. The union put the property up for sale in 1998. It was purchased by Summit Properties, Inc., of Bethesda, Maryland, in 1999 for conversion to residential and office use.³²

The renovation, called the Summit Grand Parc and undertaken by the Washington architectural firm of Martinez & Johnson, opened in spring 2003 and included new construction in narrow lots on the north and west sides of the building. The first two floors of the Mine Workers Building were restored as office space and are now occupied by the Dana Center, a philanthropic organization. The top five floors of the historic building (including the mezzanine) contain 20 apartments, while the new building comprises 85 apartments. Entrance is gained to the residential units through the new construction immediately north of the Mine Workers Building at 910 Fifteenth Street.³³ Martinez & Johnson removed many of the later partitions that subdivided the larger offices in the Mine Workers Building and created one opening in the north end of the historic building's west wall on each of the residential floors to provide access to the apartments from the new construction. A two-bay, four-story block of new construction sits atop the northwest corner of the former union headquarters. The restoration removed all additions to the building since Porter and Lockie's renovation and restored, cleaned, and repaired historic elements such as exterior masonry and trim, windows and doors, interior walls, paneling, floors, fireplaces, marble stairs and iron banisters, and remaining fixtures. The basic arrangement of the floors and the historically significant spaces within the building remain faithful to Porter and Lockie's remodeling.³⁴

²⁹ Summit Properties, Historic Preservation Certification Application—United Mine Workers Headquarters, part 2, Description of Rehabilitation, January 6, 2000, Historic Preservation Division, Office of Planning, Washington, D.C., photocopy, 14; Michael Buckner, United Mine Workers of America, telephone conversation with Robinson & Associates, July 31, 2002.

³⁰ Hughes and Moffett, "United Mine Workers of America," 24-26; *United Mine Workers Journal* 49:1, 7.

³¹ Martinez & Johnson, restoration drawings; United Mine Workers Building – Photo Binder, April 1999, Summit Properties, Inc., Bethesda, Md.

³² Margaret Smith Ford, Summit Properties, to Blaine Cliver, Cultural Resources, National Park Service, November 1, 2000, letter and enclosure entitled "The United Mine Workers Building and Summit Properties," Historic Preservation Division, Office of Planning, Washington, D.C.

³³ "Summit Grand Parc," brochure published by Summit Properties, Inc., and adapted from James M. Goode, *Best Addresses* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2003).

³⁴ Martinez & Johnson, restoration drawings; United Mine Workers Building – Photo Binder.

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The original building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites. The National Park Service awarded historic preservation tax certification to the building on December 11, 2000.³⁵

Historic Context: John L. Lewis, the United Mine Workers of America, and the CIO

The UMW's acquisition of the University Club announced the growing influence of the union and its leader, John L. Lewis (1880-1969). Lewis was elected president of the union in 1920 and held the post until 1960.³⁶ During this time, trade union representation of non-agricultural workers grew from 10 percent of the work force to 25 percent, and as Lewis biographers Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine have noted, "[i]n the events and developments that propelled the labor movement from the fringes of the economy to its core, that built the movement's membership from just over one million to more than 15 million, and that transformed it from political impotency to unprecedented power, Lewis could claim preeminence."³⁷ In addition, the Lewis-founded Committee for Industrial Organization "stands at the center of the history of twentieth-century America" for its organization of mass-production workers into a potent economic and political constituency.³⁸ For almost 25 years, according to labor historian Robert H. Zieger, "the planning center and meeting place for some of Lewis's boldest initiatives was the general headquarters of the union in Washington, D.C."³⁹

A native of Iowa, Lewis worked in coal and metal mines for 10 years before beginning his career as a union administrator. He first influenced the mine industry nationally in 1917 when, as vice president of the UMW, he negotiated a wartime contract between the union and coal operators that gained workers a 14 percent increase in wages. Lewis also presided over a precipitous decline in UMW membership and influence during the 1920s when coal prices fell due to overproduction. Many jobs in the coal industry were lost between 1919 and 1933, but for those who retained their positions, wages increased 27 percent under Lewis's leadership. The drive for a stable industry and higher wages for mine workers—often resulting in more mechanization and fewer jobs—characterized Lewis's presidency and became a hallmark of "market unionism" throughout American industrial production. Known for the power of his rhetoric in public statements and private audiences alike, Lewis retained control over the union by ruthlessly centralizing its power in the national headquarters and by autocratically dismissing rivals from their posts. Through tactics such as patronage, control of convention voting processes, and

³⁵ Ford to Blaine Cliver, letter and enclosure; Blaine Cliver to Thomas A. Baum, Summit Properties, December 11, 2000, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Historic Preservation Certification files—United Mine Workers Headquarters, Technical Preservation Services, Washington, D.C.

³⁶ John Hevener, *Biographical Dictionary of American Labor*, Gary Fink, editor-in-chief, s.v. "Lewis, John Llewellyn," (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), 353-354.

³⁷ Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*, ix.

³⁸ Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

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banishment of opponents, Lewis and his followers were in firm control of the union when the Depression began.⁴⁰

Paradoxically, perhaps, the Depression gave Lewis and other union leaders the opportunity to create the institutions, legal framework, and strategies that ultimately increased wages and benefits for a large percentage of American workers. A body of thought had been built up during the 1920s that linked economic prosperity to a standard of living based on mass consumption. The Depression was caused, according to those who subscribed to this theory, by the great disparity of income between the wealthy and wage earners. In 1929, one-tenth of one percent of the population earned as much as all of the lowest 42 percent combined. As a result of their low incomes, the vast majority of workers could not purchase the goods being produced in America's factories, causing the country's economic collapse. In addition, the Depression brought to a crisis the concern over job security felt by workers in American mass production industries. Without widespread unionization, the power of hiring, firing, and promotions lay almost entirely in the hands of the employers. Also except for some benefits accorded workers in the garment industry, few American workers received health or retirement benefits. Some employers on occasion offered "employee welfare" programs to induce loyalty and resist unionization, but whatever benefits might have been conferred in these programs ended when the employee left the company. When the Depression struck, those benefits disappeared immediately.⁴¹

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President of the United States in 1932 by campaigning to pull the United States out of the Depression and advocating the right of workers to make a living, but he had no specific plans by which to turn those promises into reality.⁴² John L. Lewis and his advisors in the UMW, however, had already formulated ideas that would involve the federal government in the nation's industries and reduce the power of big business over workers. Lewis's testimony before the Senate Finance Committee on February 17, 1933, prefigured much of what Roosevelt would later say in his inaugural address of March 4. Among other measures he discussed before Congress, Lewis sought legal establishment of collective bargaining—the right of unions to negotiate contracts for all represented workers. On March 27, Lewis, Philip Murray, Thomas Kennedy, and other UMW leaders met with the president, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to discuss their ideas. According to Dubofsky and Van Tine, the meeting "laid the foundation for a reorganization of the economy along the lines suggested by Lewis in February."⁴³ Passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in June 1933 guaranteed for the first time workers' right to organize and bargain

⁴⁰ Hevener, "Lewis, John Llewellyn," 353-354; Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*, 39-117; David Brody, "Market Unionism in America: The Case of Coal," In *In Labor's Cause: Main Themes on the History of the American Worker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 153-165; Robert H. Zieger, *John L. Lewis, Labor Leader* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 37-44.

⁴¹ Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions*, 149-150; Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 199-200.

⁴² Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, 200-201.

⁴³ Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis, a Biography* (New York: Quadrangle, 1977), 181-182.

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collectively. Lewis and his economic advisor W. Jett Lauck helped craft Section 7(a) of the act which addressed this right.⁴⁴

The law's passage reaped immediate benefits for labor organizations. By the end of June, Lewis's UMW gained 128,000 new members in Pennsylvania alone, more than doubling its national membership. Garment workers, steel and iron workers, pulp and paper workers, fruit pickers, newspaper employees, auto and rubber workers, and actors all joined unions in unprecedented numbers as a result of the adoption of Section 7(a).⁴⁵ Lewis's influence in creating this section of the NIRA illustrates his understanding of the importance of the central government in twentieth-century labor relations. Logically following this understanding, the UMW was therefore much more politically active than other unions had been in order to keep sympathetic politicians in office and the union's views represented. Lewis's commitment to Roosevelt and his campaigning for him in the 1936 election thus stemmed from his basic concept of industrial unionism.⁴⁶ The labor movement's involvement in national political campaigns eventually forged a long-standing relationship between labor and the Democratic Party, a relationship embedded in Lewis's union strategy and prefigured in his support for Roosevelt.⁴⁷

President Roosevelt named Lewis to the Labor Advisory Board, an organization created by the NIRA to oversee labor-capital relations, on August 5, 1933. One early result of Lewis's influence on the board was the Bituminous Coal Code, approved by the president on September 21, 1933. Roosevelt intervened directly in the dispute between coal operators and labor due to the perceived necessity of resolving the conflict in order to maintain the New Deal's vitality. Armed with the right to bargain collectively and a president sympathetic to labor's position, Lewis established in the coal code an agreement that mandated, and federally enforced, the creation of an eight-hour day and a five-day week, outlawed child labor, and granted workers an impartial grievance procedure—labor practices that are now standard and that would later be incorporated into the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. The Bituminous Coal Code is one example of changes in the relations between labor and capital resulting from the right to collective bargaining, a right embedded in the legal code as crafted in part by Lewis and Lauck.⁴⁸

Although Section 7(a) guaranteed collective bargaining, its powers of enforcement were minimal, and employers soon learned a number of methods of avoiding its implications. The Labor Advisory Board, intended to act as watchdog overseeing violations of the act, was grossly understaffed and unable to follow up on most alleged offenses. In addition, the compliance authorities created by the NIRA were often unsympathetic to union interests, despite Roosevelt's support for labor and Lewis's presence on the board. New York Democratic Senator Robert F. Wagner therefore introduced a bill, subsequently known as the Wagner Act, in the spring of 1935 that guaranteed American workers the right to negotiate with employers and join the labor

⁴⁴ Brody, "Market Unionism in America," 154.

⁴⁵ Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions*, 29-31.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

⁴⁷ Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, 201.

⁴⁸ Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*, 126-138; Zieger, *John L. Lewis*, 105.

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union of their choice. The act also included a list of unfair labor practices that were specifically proscribed and established a National Labor Relations Board to enforce labor's right to bargain collectively. When the United States Supreme Court found the National Industrial Recovery Act unconstitutional, Wagner's proposal quickly became the means favored by organized labor as the best way to handle disputes between capital and labor. Roosevelt included it as part of his "second New Deal," a package of initiatives advocated late in his first term of office when earlier measures failed to strengthen the economy. Congress passed the Wagner Act on July 5, 1935, establishing collective bargaining as the foundation for labor relations as they exist to this day. With the passage of the Wagner Act, which Lewis supported and lobbied for, conflict between labor and capital veered away from bloody confrontations on the shop floor toward legal discussions in the courtroom.⁴⁹

Collective bargaining became especially important as a result of Lewis's creation of the Committee of Industrial Organization (CIO), which also showed his foresight and understanding of twentieth-century production methods. The largest and most influential federation of labor unions as the decade of the 1930s dawned was the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Founded in 1886 and presided over almost continuously until his death in 1924 by Samuel Gompers, whose Washington home is designated as a National Historic Landmark, the AFL was organized according to craft boundaries, maintaining divisions between craft unions whether or not they operated within the same industry.⁵⁰ Semiskilled labor, however, had begun to replace skilled craftsmen in modern industrial production. Much of this labor force received lower wages and was transient, moving from place to place as jobs became available. Due to their structure, craft unions, like the AFL could not represent these semi-skilled workers effectively. Lewis saw the possibilities for creating negotiating power by organizing along industry, rather than craft lines. His UMW, for instance, represented electricians, carpenters, transport workers, and laborers along with the miners who worked for coal operators.⁵¹

After the AFL voted against issuing industrial union charters in mass-production industries at its 1935 convention, Lewis and ten other union leaders met at UMW headquarters in the Tower Building to create the CIO within the AFL. The CIO began organizing mass production workers on its own and in two years claimed more members than its putative parent organization. Using collective bargaining as a tool, the CIO scored major labor victories by securing contracts with fiercely anti-union companies such as General Motors, Goodyear, and United States Steel even though the AFL refused to acknowledge the CIO's authority or to fund its activities. These contracts specified compensation for all employees in an industry, regardless of the kind of work the employees performed or their level of skill. If the employees had been represented by the craft union structure, numerous separate contracts would have had to have been negotiated to

⁴⁹ Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions*, 35-41; Foner, *Story of American Freedom*, 201.

⁵⁰ Merl E. Reed, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Institutions: Labor Unions*, Gary M. Fink, editor-in-chief, s.v. "American Federation of Labor," (Westport: Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), 11-13; S. Allen Chambers, Jr., *National Landmarks, America's Treasures: The National Park Foundation's Complete Guide to National Historic Landmarks* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2000), 76, 81.

⁵¹ Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions*, 42-54.

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achieve the same result.⁵² The contracts also implemented impartial grievance procedures for employees and seniority systems governing hiring, firing, and promotions, thereby helping establish the kind of work place security that employees had been seeking for decades.⁵³

The importance of the CIO was recognized at the time of its creation. “In a little over a year, the C.I.O. has changed significantly the relation of social forces in American industry,” wrote Benjamin Stolberg in the *Nation* on February 20, 1937. “It is changing both the structure and orientation of American labor....It is profoundly affecting our two major political parties. It is transforming the relationship of government to industry.”⁵⁴ The significance of the organization has not diminished with time. A poll of labor historians by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees called the creation of the CIO the single greatest achievement of the labor movement in twentieth-century America due to the collective bargaining leverage that resulted from the CIO’s mobilization of millions of workers.⁵⁵ The creation of mass production industry unions and their federation in the CIO profoundly affected the nation’s politics and economics. “Throughout the nation’s industrial heartland,” writes historian Eric Foner, “the labor upsurge altered the balance of political and economic power and propelled to the forefront of politics labor’s grievances—economic insecurity and pervasive inequality—and its goal of a fairer, freer, more egalitarian America.”⁵⁶ The effect of collective bargaining on the lives of mass production workers was decisive. Real weekly earnings for production workers rose 70 percent between 1950 and 1970, and so quickly had working class wages risen that in 1954 *Fortune* magazine described the typical member of the middle class as a “machinist from Detroit” rather than a businessman or shop owner.⁵⁷

The majority of the funding for the CIO came from UMW’s coffers, and the committee rented its first offices in the Rust Building across K Street from the Tower Building.⁵⁸ So closely connected in the public mind were the committee and the union that the purchase of the University Club strengthened the belief that the CIO would be established on a permanent basis independent of the AFL and that its headquarters would be created within the UMW’s new home.⁵⁹ Although never officially housed within the University Club building, the semiannual meetings of the committee took place there from the time the union began its residence in

⁵² Dubofsky and Van Tine, 153-164; Zieger, *The CIO*, 22-24; Hevener, *Biographical Dictionary of American Labor*, 353-354.

⁵³ Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, 200.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*, 279.

⁵⁵ Frank Swoboda, “Organizing Labor’s Greatest Achievements,” *Washington Post*, September 7, 1999, E1; “Labor’s Top 10 Accomplishments,” *Public Employee*, November/December 1999, http://www.afscme.org/publications/public_employee.

⁵⁶ Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, 200.

⁵⁷ Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions*, 137-138.

⁵⁸ According to Zieger, in the 1930s the UMWA contributed “\$7 million in loans, gifts, and services into the CIO” that made up 70% of its financial resources,” Robert H. Zieger, *American National Biography*, John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., s.v. “Lewis, John L.” (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 588.

⁵⁹ “Union Seeks Home of Club at \$275,000,” *Washington Evening Star*, November 13, 1936, A1.

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December 1937 until Lewis resigned as CIO president after the 1940 presidential election.⁶⁰ Representatives of the 39 unions making up the committee voted to call a constitutional convention to formalize its independence from the AFL at a conference held at the UMW Building on April 12-13, 1938. The CIO was renamed the Congress of Industrial Organizations at that convention in Pittsburgh on November 15. Lewis almost never appeared at CIO headquarters, directing the organization's affairs from his office in the United Mine Workers Building until his resignation.⁶¹ UMW vice president Philip Murray succeeded Lewis as president of the CIO. He, too, directed the federation from his office on the third floor of the UMW Building until his departure from the union in 1942.⁶² Neither of the other two buildings occupied by the CIO before its merger with the American Federation of Labor still exists.⁶³

The purchase of the University Club illustrates the increasing influence of the UMW, as well as a consciousness of its position as an important player in national politics. The union's awareness of its role is made clear in a caption to a photograph of the refurbished headquarters, published on January 1, 1938, in the *United Mine Workers Journal*: "Our new home stands as everlasting evidence of the steady, remarkable progress and advancement of the good old United Mine Workers of America. It is a tribute to the courage, the ambition, the loyalty and the determination of the entire membership of the union throughout the land, whose tireless zeal and efforts have made the United Mine Workers of America the world's most powerful and influential labor organization."⁶⁴ Dubofsky and Van Tine point out that the purchase of this particular building, previously the home away from home for some of the most powerful leaders in the nation, might be seen as a way of showing "that those born to wealth and power now had to share it with those who had thrust themselves up from the bottom."⁶⁵

Scholars have also noted the appropriateness of the building at 900 Fifteenth Street, N.W., for Lewis and his union. A Republican until he supported Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936, Lewis never held progressive values. He established the goals of industrial stability and high wages in contract negotiations, not changes in the capitalist system, and he fought socialist and communist influences within the labor movement. Lewis himself lived the life of an affluent businessman, socializing with government and business executives rather than his miners or union colleagues. His Alexandria house had been owned by several generations of Virginia's influential Lee family between 1785 and 1903. Lewis's purchase of the historically important house and his move of the union from the art moderne Tower Building to the Renaissance Revival University

⁶⁰ Minutes, Executive Board of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, 1935-1955 (microfilm), Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Washington, D.C.

⁶¹ Zieger, *The CIO*, 81-110; photo caption, *The CIO News* 1 (April 16, 1938), 5.

⁶² Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*, 297.

⁶³ In addition to the quarters in the Rust Building, the CIO occupied offices at 1106 Connecticut Avenue. (John Brophy, CIO Director, to Edward J. Taylor, House of Representatives, May 11, 1939, Minutes, Executive Board of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, 1935-1955.)

⁶⁴ *United Mine Workers Journal* 49:1, January 1, 1938, 7.

⁶⁵ Dubofsky and Van Tine, *John L. Lewis*, 269.

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Club can be seen as another expression of his essentially haut bourgeois values.⁶⁶ “By all appearances a conventional urban office building, the structure conveys the cultural conservatism of its principal inhabitant,” writes labor historian Alan Derickson. “Lewis, who wore three-piece suits and drove a Cadillac, projected a respectable image of business unionism. Indeed, eagerness to conform to norms of businesslike behavior reflected a deeper acceptance by Lewis and a large share of miners of the capitalist system. In this regard, the UMW president personified a widespread tendency within the national leadership of American unions and within the working class as a whole in the mid-twentieth century.”⁶⁷

Despite his apparent identification with the values of the coal operators who resisted union demands, Lewis continually fought for the improvement of mine workers’ living and working conditions throughout his tenure as union president. Lewis’s tactics often included strikes or the threat of strikes that could have crippled the nation’s economy, as well as fiery rhetoric delivered in press conferences held at the UMW building or in the pages of the *United Mine Workers Journal*, which was edited and printed there. In 1939, a six-week strike enabled Lewis to obtain a contract between his union and operators for the entire soft coal industry, eliminating “captive mines” run by the steel industry and therefore resistant to unionization. The contract meant that no pocket of the coal industry escaped union influence.⁶⁸

Since the work of the unions was undone through inflation during the First World War, Lewis was weary of the effects World War II could have upon the work of the unions. The Roosevelt administration placed a cap on prices in 1942 in an effort to control inflation. Subsequently, the smaller steel mills negotiated wage increases of 15 percent, which more or less correspond to increases in the cost of living between January 1941 and May 1942. Lewis felt that this negotiation, known as the “Little Steel Formula,” which hampered the power of unions to negotiate wages, was unfair. In addition, increased patriotism aided management in the curtailment of the AFL’s highly successful membership drives. Along with a no-strike pledge negotiated by the National War Labor Board in July 1942, the stage was set for the UMW strikes in 1943 that earned Lewis intense criticism from many quarters for lack of patriotism during World War II, but increased mine workers’ wages.⁶⁹

The four UMW sponsored strikes in 1943, involving 500,000 miners, successfully challenged federal wage controls. In response, Congress passed the Smith-Connally War Labor Disputes Act that same year. The act furnished the President with the power to confiscate mines and factories that were closed by labor strikes. Under the stipulations of the act, the encouragement of work stoppages and contributions to electoral campaigns by labor unions was made a federal

⁶⁶ Ibid., 85, 219.

⁶⁷ Alan Derickson, “Extractive Labor in the United States,” *American Labor History*, National Historic Landmarks Theme Study (draft), January 2003, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., 39.

⁶⁸ Zieger, *John L. Lewis*, 132-150.

⁶⁹David M. Kennedy, *Freedom for Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 639. Nelson Lichtenstein, “Labor and the Working Class in World War II,” in *World War II and the American Home Front*, National Historic Landmarks Theme Study, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., draft, February 2004, 117. Information contributed to the nomination by Caridad de la Vega, National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Survey.

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offense. Passed over FDR's veto, this was the first anti-union legislation passed since the early 1930s.⁷⁰

Lewis also directed the drive for health and retirement benefits from his offices in the UMW Building. Few American workers received such benefits and those that did lost them in the Depression. A particularly important series of strikes by the UMW five years immediately following the war, created industry-wide health and retirement benefits and forever changed employer-employee compensation arrangements. By the 1940s, studies had proven conclusively that coal mining significantly increased the risk of respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia—a fact that mine workers and their families knew from experience. At the same time, health coverage for miners through their employers was almost nonexistent. Lewis first advanced the notion of industry-funded health and retirement benefits in 1945, but only through these series of strikes were these goals reached. The agreement finally implemented in 1948, but made more generous in 1949-50, created benefits funded by the industry based on the tonnage of coal produced.⁷¹ In 1949, the Supreme Court ruled that these non-wage benefits were legitimately covered by collective bargaining.⁷² Historian Zieger has written that the strikes were “among the most significant in the history of American industrial relations” in that they “did much to establish new goals for the industrial union movement that had arisen in the 1930s and thus to set the pattern of collective bargaining generally for the next generation, not only in mining, but in American industry overall.”⁷³ Two CIO unions, the United Auto Workers and the United Steel Workers, followed the UMW's lead in seeking health and retirement benefits, and as a result “[I]t was during this postwar period that American workers did begin to achieve pension and medical insurance rights through the collective bargaining system.”⁷⁴

Even though the fund was one of the “most generous benefit programs in basic industry,”⁷⁵ in an ironic turn of events Lewis negated the effort expended in securing a generous health program for the coal miners. The mechanization championed by Lewis, which increased job security and decreased production costs, among other benefits, was what made the fund financially feasible in the first place. However, the increased mechanization that took effect in the early 1950s caused an increase in coal dust, the culprit in a noticeable increase of Black Lung disease among coal miners. By the early 1960s due to production shortfalls, a steady decline in benefits for coal miners commenced and by 1964 the fund's hospitals and clinics were sold. Recessions, an increase in the number of beneficiaries, and walkouts that lead to the perception that the union

⁷⁰ Lichtenstein, “Labor and the Working Class in World War II,” 135-136. Contributed by Caridad de la Vega.

⁷¹ Zieger, *John L. Lewis*, 151-156.

⁷² Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions*, 150.

⁷³ Zieger, *John L. Lewis*, 156.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁵ Richard P. Mulcahy, *A Social Contract for the Coal Fields: The Rise and Fall of the United Mine Workers of America Welfare and Retirement Fund* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 128.

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had lost control over its membership, all contributed to the collapse of health benefits in 1978.⁷⁶ “With the demise of the Fund’s medical program, a thirty-year period of American Labor relations had ended. A new one was just beginning.”⁷⁷

Another area in which Lewis and the UMW showed leadership was mine safety. American mining was well known for its poor record on safety issues. Between 1935 and 1945, nearly 13,000 workers died in the mines and more than 600,000 suffered disabling accidents.⁷⁸ In reaction to these statistics, the UMW negotiated the organization of safety committees in 1941. These committees have been called “an unprecedented institutionalization of rank-and-file activism for self-protection.” They sought mine safety codes and legislation that would help prevent occupational illnesses.⁷⁹ The effort was eventually rewarded with the Federal Mine Safety Act of 1952.⁸⁰

Conclusion

For four decades, John L. Lewis built the UMW from an important regional organization to one of the most powerful unions in the United States. During the 1930s, he influenced the creation of legislation and contract goals that spurred an increase in the political and economic power of organized labor. For well over half of his tenure as union president, Lewis’s office was located in the United Mine Workers of America Building at 900 Fifteenth Street, N.W., in Washington, D.C. From his oak-paneled office on the southeast corner of the second floor of this building, Lewis and his union pointed the American labor movement in the direction it would take in the middle of the twentieth century, a path toward higher wages, health and retirement benefits, and stable industries. He championed and effectively utilized collective bargaining—a tool he helped establish—to achieve secure contracts throughout the mining industry, helped create the Congress of Industrial Organizations in order to represent the interests of the nation’s increasing numbers of mass production workers, and fixed health benefits as an important goal in contract negotiations. With his founding of the CIO, Lewis showed an understanding of both the direction of industrial manufacture in the United States and of the ways labor leaders could organize to maintain their leverage in decisions affecting American workers. For five years Lewis and UMW vice president Philip Murray also planned strategy for and established the power of the CIO at the mine workers headquarters, and the federation’s regular meetings took place there. The CIO’s mass production workers became organized labor’s core constituency for much of the rest of the century, a period during which wages and benefits rose to unprecedented levels and organized labor exercised heretofore unrealized political and economic clout. Although his tactics for maintaining power could be ruthless, the direction taken by the UMW

⁷⁶ Ibid., 129, 135, 141, 176-178.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 181. Contributed by Caridad de la Vega.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁷⁹ Derickson, “Extractive Labor in the United States,” 30.

⁸⁰ Hevener, “Lewis, John Llewellyn,” 353.

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through Lewis's leadership pulled millions of American laborers into the middle class who would otherwise have had little chance to reach it and helped establish labor relations as they are practiced to the present day.⁸¹ The UMW's advances in on-the-job safety for its workers and in industry-funded benefits paved the way for other unions to seek the same goals.

The UMW occupied 900 Fifteenth Street, N.W., during the most significant period of its history. In its adaptive reuse by Martinez & Johnson, the building retains the essential features of George Oakley Totten, Jr.'s, commercially influenced Italian Renaissance Revival design, as well as those of Porter and Lockie's 1937 remodeling. The United Mine Workers of America Building, where important decisions of Lewis's career were made, where he used his evocative rhetoric in press conferences and meetings, and where he convinced his colleagues, through coercion as well as persuasion, to implement his ideas, therefore stands as a monument to both an important chapter in American labor history and to one of its most forceful protagonists.

⁸¹ Swoboda, "Organizing Labor's Greatest Achievements," E2.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency – U.S. Department of the Interior. National Park Service. Historic Preservation Certification files.
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	118	323360	4307680

Verbal Boundary Description:

Property is located at 900-910 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., which occupies Square 199, Lot 800.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the original lot on which the building has historically stood and the addition.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Name/Title: Judith H. Robinson/Tim Kerr

Address: Robinson & Associates, Inc.
1909 Q Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Telephone: (202) 234-2333

Date: April 30, 2003

Edited by: Susan Cianci Salvatore
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Survey
1849 C St., N.W. (2280)
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (202) 354-2210

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