

Finding Aid for the SCRTD files on Blue and White Bus Company of Watts, 1952-1974

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LACMTA Research Library and Archive

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Title: SCRTD files on Blue and White Bus Company of Watts

Collection number: 45-DPGTL

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 3 boxes (1.25 linear ft.)

Date (inclusive): 1952-1974

Date (bulk): 1970-1971

Repository: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) Research Library and Archive

Abstract: On November 26, 1967, Dr. Thomas William Matthew of the National Economic Growth and Reconstruction Organization (NEGRO) acquired two South Los Angeles bus companies from Frank and Herbert Atkinson. Atkinson Transportation Company (ATCO) and the South Los Angeles Transportation Company originally began in the 1920s as extensions of streetcar lines. They were merged to create the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts (Blue & White). The Blue and White Bus Company was an African-American owned company created out of a merger of two local bus companies and operated from 1967 to 1971. After much hardship, the bus company was taken over by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) in September of 1971. The collection consists of materials related to the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts collected by Rapid Transit District including correspondence, Public Utilities Commission hearings, financial and service studies, and newspaper clippings.

Physical Location: LACMTA Research Library and Archive

Creator (collection): Southern California Rapid Transit District

Access

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], SCRTD files on Blue and White Bus Company of Watts, 45. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Research Library and Archive

Acquisition Information

This collection was assembled by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) and then passed to the LACMTA after its creation in 1993 by the California State Legislature through a merger of SCRTD and the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission.

Biography/History

On November 26, 1967, Dr. Thomas William Matthew of the National Economic Growth and Reconstruction Organization (NEGRO) acquired two South Los Angeles bus companies from Frank and Herbert Atkinson. Atkinson Transportation Company (ATCO) and the South Los Angeles Transportation Company originally began in the 1920s as extensions of streetcar lines and were merged to create the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts. This new bus company was African-American owned and ran from 1967-1971.

Blue & White's Route #1 was abandoned in 1968 and shortly after another route, #6, was discontinued resulting in SCRTD enacting emergency services in 1970. At one point in 1969, SCRTD did have interest in acquiring the bus company, but did not carry through with the acquisition. On February 8, 1971 SCRTD created a new route, #123, that crossed four of the Blue & White routes. In response, Dr. Matthew had Blue & White operating along SCRTD's route #3 giving passenger free rides while informing passengers of the conflict between the two companies. In May 24, 1971, Dr. Matthew created a new route, Route #9, without gaining permission first from the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC). One month later the PUC suspended Blue & White's operating certificate after finding out the company failed to pay insurance premiums resulting in a loss of coverage. Ignoring the suspension, Blue & White continued to run, but on July 17th Blue & White employees went on strike when the bus company held insufficient funds to pay them. The buses were impounded by county marshals on August 10th for two days until drivers were paid. A month following this, the buses were impounded again but this time by the Internal Revenue Service when Blue & White failed to pay federal taxes. SCRTD immediately took over Blue & White's routes and hired their bus drivers and mechanics. Dr. Matthew attempted to reestablish Blue & White only this time providing services in downtown Los Angeles and to Disneyland, but in 1972 the bus company officially went out of business.

Collection Scope and Content

The collection consists of materials related to the Blue and White Bus Company of Watts collected by the Southern California Rapid Transit District including correspondence, Public Utilities Commission hearings, financial and service studies, and newspaper clippings. Most of the correspondence is from Howard Beardsley, Assistant Manager of Rapid Transit and Surface Planning as well as Jack Gilstrap, the General Manager of SCRTD. The majority of materials are correspondence and studies related to PUC hearings, SCRTD's interest to acquire Blue & White in 1969, conflict between SCRTD and Blue & White in 1971, and SCRTD's takeover of Blue & White in September 1971.

Organization and Arrangement of Material (if applicable)

There appears to be no intended order; materials seem have been placed together arbitrarily. Original order was not maintained for this collection. The collection is arranged in the following Series (and subseries when necessary):

Series 1: Legal Proceedings

Series 2: Cessation and Acquisition

Series 3: General Operations

Series 4: Diversion Contract

Series 5: Public Relations

Related Material

[Hidden History of Transportation in Los Angeles](#) by Charles P. Hobbs
[Collection of Kenneth Hahn](#). Huntington Library. Manuscripts Department
[The Struggle for Transit Justice: Race, Space, and Social Equity in Los Angeles](#) by Mark Evan Garrett

Indexing Terms/Subjects

Transportation --California --Los Angeles
 Southern California Rapid Transit District Local transit--California--Los Angeles
 Minority business enterprises-- California-- Los Angeles Region.
 Local transit—social aspects—California—Los Angeles
 California Public Utilities Commission

Container List

Series 1: Legal Proceedings, 1969 July-1971 September	
Scope and Contents note The series contains PUC hearing, applications, decisions, and a resolution; legal advice, reports, and studies about conflict with Blue & White; and materials from meeting of representatives on March 10, 1971.	
	Subseries 1.1: Public Utilities Commission hearings, 1969-1971
Box 1, Folder 1	PUC Application No. 51244, 1969 July 14 Decision No. 76167 "...for an order granting permission to abandon certain portions of its passenger stage lines..."
Box 1, Folder 2	PUC Application No. 51777, 1970 March 18 Decision No. 77328 "...for an order granting permission to re-route and extend certain portions of its passenger stage lines..."
Box 1, Folder 3	PUC Application No. 52218, 1970 October 1 Decision No. 77867 "...for an order authorizing issuance of a Note and Security Agreement in connection therewith, and for a permit to issue and sell capital stock and for a permit to issue warrant for capital stock."
Box 1, Folder 4	Cal. PUC No. 3, 1971 February 3 In compliance with Decision No. 78274, issued by Mayme G. Davies, Blue & White Project Administrator, "...local passenger tariff naming passenger fares and rules and regulations governing the same..."
Box 1, Folder 5	PUC Application No. 52311, 1970 November 13; 1971 April 23 Amendment to application "...for an order granting permission to increase fares." and a "report on results of operations of Blue & White Bus Company of Watts..."
Box 1, Folder 6	PUC Resolution No. PE-102, 1971 June 29 "Resolution ordering suspension of authority to operate as a passenger stage corporation."
Box 1, Folder 7	PUC Case No. 9261, 1971 August-September

	Decision No. 79147 "Report on order instituting investigation of Blue & White..."
	Subseries 1.2: Conflict between SCRTD and Blue & White, 1971
Box 1, Folder 8	Materials regarding conflict, 1971 February Correspondence, reports on Blue & White activities on February 8th, 9th, 10th and 16th, origin & destination checks, copy of newspaper articles, legal advice, as well as other materials
Box 1, Folder 9	Meeting with Blue & White Representatives, 1971 March 8-10 Materials regarding March 10, 1971 of representatives from Blue & White, SCRTD, PUC, and the Transportation Employment Project, includes correspondence, notes, attendance, and meeting minutes.
Box 1, Folder 10	Letter from Rev. Jesse L. Boyd Jr. to Wilson Kline, 1971 August 30 Letter from Reverend Jesse L. Boyd Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference sharing his concerns with Wilson Kline of PUC about Blue & White being a victim of discrimination on the part of SCRTD.
Series 2: Cessation and Acquisition, 1965-1974 Scope and Contents note The series contains materials related to Blue & White's cessation, SCRTD's emergency services, and subsequent takeover of Blue & White.	
	Subseries 2.1: Blue & White Cessation, 1965-1971
Box 2, Folder 1	Blue & White activities and related materials, 1965, 1971, undated Route descriptions, headways, Blue & White line descriptions, fact sheets, trouble report forms, copies of timetables, copies of newspaper articles, correspondence, handwritten notes, and excerpts from "Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?" in a report by John A. McCone.
Box 2, Folder 2	SCRTD emergency services, 1970-1971 Materials regarding SCRTD emergency services to provide transportation in the wake of Blue & White cessation. Folder includes correspondence, passenger checks, route maps, bulletins, handwritten notes, clippings. Also included are copies of letters from and to Augustus F. Hawkins and Carlos C. Villarreal regarding Blue & White discontinuation of Line No. 6 in November 1970.
	Subseries 2.2: SCRTD Acquisition of Blue & White, 1971-1974
Box 2, Folder 3	Service and financial studies (1 of 2), 1971-1972 Origin and Destination report, line descriptions including route maps, passenger checks, proposal for fare increase, and a call for a turn-around study. Materials mostly handwritten and mostly undated.
Box 2, Folder 4	Service and financial studies (2 of 2), 1971-1972 Survey of passenger opinion regarding SCRTD and its acquisition of former Blue

	&White lines, proposed establishment of combined routes, run-time formulas, and passenger check lists. Mostly handwritten.
Box 2, Folder 5	SCRTD Interim Study, 1973 December 10 The study's purpose is to "advise and inform District's management and Board of Directors of the status of the former Blue & White..."
Box 2, Folder 6	Post-cessation of Blue & White, 1971-1974 Included is a study of former Blue & White lines, one-way operation proposal, copy of interim study, operating costs, study of revenues, passenger checks, origin and des report and analysis, correspondence regarding bus improvement plan, and clipping. Materials mostly handwritten.
Box 2, Folder 7	SCRTD's hiring of former Blue & White employees, 1971-1972 Handwritten memos and notes regarding hiring of former B&W employees, seniority rosters, payroll adjustment, and an agreement between SCRTD and Amalgamated Transit Union.
Series 3: General Operations, 1952-1971 Scope and Contents note The series contains materials related prior to the merger of Atkinson Transportation Company and South Los Angeles Transportation Company and the subsequent establishment of Blue & White. It also includes correspondence, studies, and reports related to SCRTD's interest in acquiring the Blue and White Bus Company in 1969.	
	Subseries 3.1: Atkinson Transportation Company (ATCO) and South Los Angeles Transportation Company, 1952-1968
Box 3, Folder 1	ATCO service, financial, and PUC hearing materials (1 of 2), 1952-1966 Includes correspondence regarding routes and changes, school service operation, passenger checks, financial reports, route maps.
Box 3, Folder 2	ATCO service, financial, and PUC hearing materials (2 of 2), 1952-1966 Includes route maps, timetables, transcript of PUC hearing for application No. 35299, PUC Application No.35189, PUC Application No. 48302 (Decision No. 70747), and correspondence related to PUC.
Box 3, Folder 3	ATCO services and SCRTD acquisition interest (1 of 3), 1954-1968 Includes recommendations from the transportation employment project, correspondence regarding PUC applications and hearings, timetables, materials related to connection adjustments.
Box 3, Folder 4	ATCO services and SCRTD acquisition interest (3 of 3), 1954-1968 Includes line schedules.
Box 3, Folder 5	ATCO services and SCRTD acquisition interest (3 of 3), 1954-1968 Includes route maps, timetables, and materials regarding RTD interest in acquisition

	of ATCO and South LA Trans. Co: correspondence, and financial records.
	Subseries 3.2: SCRTD Interest in acquiring Blue & White. 1969-1971
Box 3, Folder 6	SCRTD interest in Blue & White acquisition, 1969-1971 Includes study of Blue & White services, revenues, and expenses, lists of Blue & White employees and equipment, and passenger checks.
Box 3, Folder 7	SCRTD interest in Blue & White acquisition, 1969-1971 Includes correspondence regarding acquisition interest and Blue & White review materials, proposed purchase agreement, copies of Blue & White study.
Box 3, Folder 8	Eminent Domain Valuation Law, 1970 September-October Includes a legal memorandum and a complaint in Eminent Domain of SCRTD vs. Blue & White.
Series 4: Diversion Contract, 1970-1971 Scope and Contents note Negotiations began in 1966 to permit establishment of SCRTD line 100. Payments payable under an Urban Mass Transportation grant to the District, Blue & White, and Inglewood lines. In 1969 federal funds were withdrawn and SCRTD and Blue & White and to create their own contract with one another.	
Box 3, Folder 9	Materials regarding diversion contract, 1970-1971 Includes correspondence regarding diversion billing and contract renewal, summary of diversion payments, copy of SCRTD Line 100 contract, passenger checks, legal opinion, Notice of Levy from the IRS, and handwritten notes.
Series 5: Public Relations, 1970-1971 Scope and Contents note The series contains public relations materials created by the Blue and White Bus Company including timetables, flyers, and press releases.	
Box 3, Folder 10	Blue & White publicity materials, 1970-1971 Includes a timetable, a bulletin, press releases, and a flyer.
Box 3, Folder 11	Blue & White press releases, 1970 July-1971 October Press releases and newspaper clippings.

