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Finding Aid to the Selden Osborne Papers, 1933-1988

Collection Number: BANC MSS 90/45 c

The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

Finding Aid Written By:
Crystal Miles
Date Completed:
April 2013

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Selden Osborne papers
Date (inclusive): 1933-1988
Collection Number: BANC MSS 90/45 c
Creators: Osborne, Selden
Extent: Number of containers: 1 carton, 1 box, 1 oversize box Linear feet: 2
Repository: The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California, 94720-6000
Phone: (510) 642-6481
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Abstract: The collection highlights Osborne's extensive involvement in labor organization and the attempt to reform and reveal what he saw as an undemocratic union structure. The collection consists of three series. Series 1 consists of various materials relating to labor organizations including meeting minutes, newsletters, newspaper clippings, election materials, correspondence and other miscellaneous items. The series also includes materials on the Socialist Party, Communist Party, and the Anti-War Movement. Series 2 consists of personal writings by Osborne, including typed manuscript drafts, handwritten notes and correspondence. The majority of Osborne's personal writings, located in focus on the history of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and its leader, Harry Bridges. Series 3 consists of materials pertaining specifically to Harry Bridges. These records include newspaper clippings pertaining to various court trials that involved Bridges, including a scrapbook, as well as other miscellaneous documents.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English and Spanish

Physical Location: Many of the Bancroft Library collections are stored offsite and advance notice may be required for use. For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Restrictions also apply to digital representations of the original materials. Use of digital files is restricted to research and educational purposes.

Preferred Citation
Alternate Forms Available
There are no alternate forms of this collection.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Osborne, Selden--Archives
International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union
International Longshore and Warehouse Union
Pacific Maritime Association
Bridges, Harry, 1901-1990
Congress of Industrial Organizations (U.S.)
International Longshoremen's Association
Labor unions--United States
Labor unions and communism--United States

Acquisition Information
The Selden Osborne Papers were given to The Bancroft Library by Selden Osborne on January 10, 1990.

Accruals
No additions are expected.

System of Arrangement
Arranged to the folder level.

Processing Information
Processed by Crystal Miles in 2013.

Biographical Information
Selden Osborne was a long-time member of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). He dedicated much of his adult life to labor reform through leadership in various labor organizations and by trying to reveal what he saw as hypocrisy in the upper ranks of union politics, particularly involving the co-founder and president of the ILWU for forty years, Harry Bridges. Osborne was a resident of San Francisco, California from 1934 and worked as a longshoreman beginning in 1943 until his retirement in the mid 1970s.

Born in Bisbee, Arizona in 1911 and raised in San Diego, California, Osborne excelled in academics and would eventually earn a college degree from Stanford University. While still in college he became very active in social reform, leading him to union organization. Shortly after graduation he became a union organizer of agricultural workers in the San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys of California. He then became a member of the Socialist Party, becoming president of their local Palo Alto, California chapter at the age of twenty-one in 1932. In 1935 Osborne left the Socialist Party with the Trotskyites and formed the Social Worker's Party, which would drive him towards working for issues of union democracy. He would go on to fight for union rights and against what he deemed injustices in the labor union system.

During World War II Osborne spent time in the army and worked as a merchant seaman. He went on to become a pacifist in the 1950s and protested against nuclear armament during the Cold War. Osborne also joined the War Resister's League in civil disobedience and completed the first coast-to-coast disarmament walk across the United States in 1976.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection highlights Osborne's extensive involvement in labor organization and the attempt to reform and reveal what he saw as an undemocratic union structure. The collection consists of three series. Series 1 consists of various materials relating to labor organizations including meeting minutes, newsletters, newspaper clippings, election materials, correspondence and other miscellaneous items. The series also includes materials on the Socialist Party, Communist Party, and the Anti-War Movement. Series 2 consists of personal writings by Osborne, including typed manuscript drafts, handwritten notes and correspondence. The majority of Osborne's personal writings, located in focus on the history of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and its leader, Harry Bridges. Series 3 consists of materials pertaining specifically to Harry Bridges. These records include newspaper clippings pertaining to various court trials that involved Bridges, including a scrapbook, as well as other miscellaneous documents.
Series 1 Labor Organization Materials 1933 - 1988

Physical Description: Carton 1; Box 1, folders 1 - 3; Oversize box, volume 1

Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically.

Scope and Content Note
Miscellaneous materials regarding various labor unions, organizations, and committees, including newsletters, administrative records, and correspondence. The bulk of materials relate to the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). The series also includes materials pertaining to the Anti-War Movement and various political parties.

Carton 1, Folder 1  ILWU Administrative Materials 1945 - 1963
Carton 1, Folder 2  ILWU Pension and Health Plans - Miscellaneous 1978 - 1979
Carton 1, Folder 3  ILWU Twelfth Biennial Convention - Reports and Pamphlets 1957
Carton 1, Folder 4  ILWU Election Materials and Letters of Recommendation [Pertaining to Osborne] 1943 - 1962
Carton 1, Folder 5  ILWU Elections - Miscellaneous Materials 1937 - 1978
Carton 1, Folder 6  ILWU Local 10 - Sample Voting Ballots 1966 - 1978
Carton 1, Folder 7  ILWU Local 10 - Miscellaneous Financial Documents 1962 - 1978
Carton 1, Folder 8  ILWU Local 10 "Longshore Bulletin" 1948 - 1979
Carton 1, Folder 9  ILWU Local 10 "Stewards Council" Bulletin 1970 - 1974
Carton 1, Folder 10  ILWU Local 10 - Miscellaneous Bulletins [Includes "Defend Your Union" and "Our Hiring Hall"] 1950 - 1964
Carton 1, Folder 11  ILWU Local 10 - Miscellaneous Bulletins 1949 - 1974
Carton 1, Folder 12  ILWU Local 6 and 8 - Miscellaneous Bulletins and Pamphlets 1947-1971
Carton 1, Folder 13  ILWU Local 34 "34 Digest" Bulletin 1970 - 1971
Carton 1, Folder 14  ILWU Houston Local 1273 - Notes and Correspondence Pertaining to Work Practices 1960
Carton 1, Folder 15  American Federation of Labor (AFL) Convention, San Diego - Miscellaneous Notes 1934
Carton 1, Folder 16 - 18  Bay Area Longshoremen's Memorial Association (BALMA) - Miscellaneous Documents 1954 - 1975
Carton 1, Folder 19 - 20  California State Industrial Union Convention - Pamphlets and Minutes 1941 - 1949
Carton 1, Folder 21  Committee for Maritime Unions - Correspondence, Pamphlets, and Bulletins 1946 - 1954
Carton 1, Folder 22  Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) - Newspaper Clippings circa 1949
Carton 1, Folder 23  International Hotel Strike, San Francisco - Bulletins 1977
Carton 1, Folder 24  International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) - Executive Announcements and Bulletins 1953 - 1954
Carton 1, Folder 25  Joint Maritime Committee - Unemployment Information 1950
Carton 1, Folder 26  Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA) - Newspaper Clippings and Bulletins 1946 - 1948
Carton 1, Folder 27  Masters, Mates and Pilots of America - Miscellaneous 1961
Carton 1, Folder 28  Miner's Union - Miscellaneous 1938 - 1948
Carton 1, Folder 29  Pacific Maritime Association - Miscellaneous Documents 1963 - 1972
Carton 1, Folder 30 - 31  Port of San Francisco Joint Action Committee - Miscellaneous 1948
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<td>San Francisco CIO Council - Miscellaneous [Includes meeting minutes and a strike welfare guide] 1942 - 1950</td>
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<td>San Francisco Port Labor Relations Committee - Rules and Regulations 1958</td>
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<td>Teamsters Local 70 and 85 - Bulletins and Election Materials 1959 - 1962</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 1</td>
<td>Austin, Kenneth C. - Miscellaneous correspondence and editorials 1947-1960</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hield, W. Wayne - Manuscript [&quot;Democracy in the ILWU&quot;] circa 1949</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 3</td>
<td>Kiernan, Owen (Jim) - Miscellaneous correspondence 1974-1981</td>
</tr>
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<td>Oversize Box 1, Volume 1</td>
<td>Scrapbook [Miscellaneous newspaper clippings pertaining to various unions] circa 1938 - 1940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Series 2: Personal Writings 1937 - 1981**

- **Physical Description:** Box 1, folders 4 - 10
- **Arrangement**
- **Scope and Content Note**
  - Includes miscellaneous manuscript drafts and notes, as well as correspondence and editorials.

| Box 1, Folder 4 | Manuscript Drafts [Includes "Survival on the Waterfront" and "The Rise of the Bridges' Government"] circa 1952 |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Unidentified Manuscript Notes and Outline undated |
| Box 1, Folder 6 - 8 | Miscellaneous Notes undated |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Editorials - "The Torrance Industrial Worker" 1937 - 1938 |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Personal Correspondence 1945 - 1973 |

**Series 3: Harry Bridges 1938 - 1977**

- **Physical Description:** Box 1, folders 11 - 15, Oversize box 1, volume 2
- **Arrangement**
- **Scope and Content Note**
  - Newspaper clippings pertaining to various court trials involving Bridges, as well as miscellaneous documents.

| Box 1, Folder 11 | Harry Bridges - Miscellaneous 1938 - 1977 |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Harry Bridges' 'Lay-off Plan' - Miscellaneous 1949 |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | Harry Bridges [Pertaining to Jimmy Hoffa] - Clippings 1957 - 1959 |
| Box 1, Folder 14 | Harry Bridges [Pertaining to trial for perjury and fraud] - Clippings 1952 - 1953 |
| Box 1, Folder 15 | Harry Bridges [Pertaining to trial for Communist Party membership and perjury] - Clippings 1940 - 1942 |
Oversize Box 1, Volume 2

**Scrapbook [Clippings pertaining to Harry Bridges] circa 1939 - 1940**