Guide to the Carey McWilliams Papers, 1921-1980

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Carey McWilliams was born December 13, 1905, in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, to Jeremiah Newby and Harriet Casley McWilliams. Jeremiah McWilliams was elected to the State Legislature in 1910, and the family moved to Denver. Carey was enrolled in Wolfe Hall Military Academy, and graduated from there in 1921, three months after the death of his father. McWilliams arrived in California to join his mother and brother in the spring of 1922. He received his J.D. from the University of Southern California in 1927. He passed the California bar and joined the law firm of Black and Hammack, which became Black, Hammack and McWilliams before his departure.

In 1930, McWilliams married Dorothy Hedrick, daughter of an eminent mathematician and UCLA administrator. Their son, Wilson Carey McWilliams, is a professor of political science. In 1941, they were divorced, and he married Iris Dornfield, the author. Their son, Jerry is an authority on the technology of recording equipment.

In 1938, McWilliams was appointed California's Commissioner of Immigration and Housing by Governor Cuthbert Olson. Stunned by the living conditions of migrant workers and by their treatment when they tried to organize labor unions, he became an enemy of the Associated Farmers, the greatest single power bloc in California politics at the time. When Earl Warren was elected governor in 1942, with support of the Associated Farmers, McWilliams was dismissed as Commissioner. After leaving state government, McWilliams dedicated himself to social and political causes. Although primarily a writer and journalist, he applied his legal skills where he felt them to be appropriate. During the Zoot Suit riots of 1942 and 1943 in Los Angeles, he participated in the fight to free convicted teenagers in the Sleepy Lagoon case. He was also active with the Committee for the Foreign-Born to protect the rights of aliens during World War II.

McWilliams met Freda Kirchwey, editor of The Nation, in 1945. She appointed him contributing editor in 1948 and in 1951 asked him to come to New York to edit a special issue on civil liberties: he never left. After a year as associate editor and three years as editorial director, McWilliams became editor of the magazine in 1955 and retained that post until his retirement in 1975.

Author of more than 20 books, Carey McWilliams wrote in detail on the plight of migrant workers in California, Japanese-American internment during World War II, anti-Semitism and the status regarding several minority groups in America. He often mentioned that writing was his occupation, injustice his preoccupation. In his retirement, McWilliams continued to write and speak out against injustice. He died at University Hospital in Manhattan on June 27, 1980.

Additional Note

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Related Collections
Honorable in All Things: The Memoirs of Carey McWilliams [oral history transcript], BANC MSS 82/109 c Carey McWilliams.

Papers relating to the Western Writers Congress, 1936-1937, BANC MSS 81/100 c


Letters to Fulmer Mood: Sacramento, Calif.: 1941 June 18 and July 24, BANC MSS C-Z 13

Rowe, Frank A. The Levering oath: a memoir of McCarthyism: 1978, BANC MSS 78/157 c Carey McWilliams Papers (Collection 1319). Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Carey McWilliams Papers (Collection 1243). Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles. A collection of material about Carey McWilliams, 1925-1948 (Collection 2023). Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Scope and Content
The Carey McWilliams Papers, 1921-1980, provide a selective view of the writing and research gathering process of a prolific journalist and author of non-fiction works concerning racial minorities and migrant farm workers in the U.S., particularly in California and the West. The collection consists of manuscripts, notes, outlines, and related correspondence for a variety of McWilliams' books and other writings, along with extensive background research materials, including pamphlets, printed material, and clippings.

McWilliams' manuscripts for *Brothers Under the Skin* and *Factories in the Field* are included, along with several other titles. Other writings include articles, speeches, and contributions written before and after (but not during) his tenure as editor of *The Nation*, from 1955-1975. The bulk of materials date from the 1940s and early 1950s. The original manuscript for McWilliams' last article, "Los Angeles: A Very Special City," is also contained in the collection.

A significant number and variety of pamphlets were retained in McWilliams' Subject Files, which also include notes, correspondence, other printed materials, and clippings. Collected over a period of many years, these files illustrate his search for an understanding of issues from multiple perspectives and his need to re-evaluate and update his themes throughout his career. Many of these materials have been heavily annotated.

Finally, the collection also contains a small amount of correspondence and memorabilia from the 1970s. Researchers should be aware of the significant holdings of papers by and about Carey McWilliams at the University of California, Los Angeles.

1. Printed materials, other than McWilliams' extensive pamphlet collection, have been transferred to the book collection of The Bancroft Library.

2. Microfilm has been transferred to the Microforms Collection of The Bancroft Library.

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Subjects and Indexing Terms
McWilliams, Carey, 1905-

Detailed Listing of Pamphlets in Series 3
SERIES 1: BOOKS 1921-197

Physical Description: Cartons 1-2
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically, by title.
Scope and Contents
Contains only a selection of McWilliams' books, mainly relating to California and The West. Includes typescripts with corrections, outlines, notes and related correspondence.

BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN 1951-195

carton 1, folder 1
Title page and prefatory pages 195
Introduction and Chapters I-X 195

Book list 195

carton 1, folder 2-5
Introduction and Chapters I-X

carton 1, folder 6
Book list

THE CALIFORNIA REVOLUTION 1966-196

carton 1, folder 7-8
Outline and notes n.d

Introduction and Chapters 1-16 n.d

Related correspondence 1966-6

carton 1, folder 9-11
Introduction and Chapters 1-16 n.d

Related correspondence 1966-6

carton 1, folder 12-48
Introduction and outline 197
Preface; Book I, chapters I-VI n.d

General
1st drafts and revised typescripts

Book I, chapters IV-V 197

General
Typescript with editorial comments

Book II n.d

General
1st drafts, revised

Book II, chapters VI-IX 197

General
Typescript with editorial comments

Preface; Chapters I-III 197

General
Corrected typescript, publishers copy

Chapters IV-IX 197

General
Corrected typescript, publishers copy

Guide to the Carey McWilliams
Papers, 1921-1980

BANC MSS C-H 46
SERIES 1: BOOKS 1921-197

THE EDUCATION OF CAREY MCWILLIAMS 1975-197

carton 2, folder 5  
Notes and bibliography 197
  General
  Corrected typescript, publishers copy

FACTORIES IN THE FIELD 1937-1938

carton 2, folder 6  
Chapters I-IV n.d
  General
  Typescript

carton 2, folder 7-9  
Pages 62-298 n.d
  General
  Typescript

carton 2, folder 10-13  
Chapters VI-XII and XIV 1937-3
  General
  Typescript with corrections

carton 2, folder 14  
[Chapters 1-XIV] n.d
  General
  Typescript

carton 2, folder 15-18  
Chapters III-VIII, X-XII, and XIV 1937-3
  General
  Carbons

MASK FOR PRIVILEGE: ANIT-SEMITISM IN AMERICA n.d

carton 2, folder 19-24  
Pages 2-355 n.d
  General
  Typescript with corrections

NORTH FROM MEXICO 194

carton 2, folder 25-30  
Pages 1-463 194
  General
  Typescript with corrections

SHADOWS ON THE LAND: A BIBLIOGRAPHY 194

carton 2, folder 31  
Original typescript and carbon copy 194

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNTRY: AN ISLAND ON THE LAND 1921-197

carton 2, folder 32-37  
Chapters 1-XV n.d
  General
  Typescript with corrections

Guide to the Carey McWilliams
Papers, 1921-1980  
BANC MSS C-H 46  
5
Correspondence 1946, 197
Affidavits 194
Print materials 1921, 194

SERIES 2: OTHER WRITINGS 1931-1980

Physical Description: Cartons 3-4; Oversize Box 1, folder 1
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically, by title.
Scope and Contents
Divided into 3 sub-series: Articles, Speeches, and Contributions. All of the writings included here are from the periods before and after McWilliams 20-year tenure as editor of The Nation. While the earliest is an article on John Dos Passos written in 1931, the bulk of materials date from the 1940s and early 1950s. Most recent contributions include a speech written in 1979 and the original manuscript for McWilliams last article "Los Angeles: A Very Special City", published in 1980. Includes outlines, notes and related correspondence.

ARTICLES 1931-198

The American Burden
Typescript 1961 Marc

American Policy Vis A Vis Vietnam
Typescript and print copy n.d

The American Political Scene
Notes 1975, n.d

And The People Came
Notes, print copy, and clippings 1976-79, n.d

Battle for the Clergy
Notes and typescript n.d

Cotton, Cotton and More Cotton
Notes and typescript n.d

The Cult of Dianetics
Typescript n.d

Dianetics: Operation Penetration
Typescript n.d

Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1950-5

End of an Epoch?
Notes n.d

The Enemy in Pasadena
Typescript 195

Ethics in an Affluent Society
Print copy 1966 June 2

Equality or Fraternity
Related correspondence, print materials, and clippings 1948-5

The Folklore of Earthquakes
Photocopy of reprint 193

The Fraternity System

Typescript with corrections [1948

The Fruits of Smith-ism
Typescript n.d

Government by Whitaker and Baker
Typescript carbon and print copy 195
The Grape Jungle
Typescript n.d
Notes, correspondence, print materials and clippings 1948-5

The House on 92nd Street
Outlines and typescript with corrections 194
How to Make Strikes Inevitable and Interminable
Typescript with corrections n.d
How We Felt About Racial Minorities
Typescript n.d

The Ideology of the Bomb
Correspondence 195

Importation of Negro Labor to California
Print copy 194

The Intellectual As A Political Force
Photocopy of print article 196

The Intellectual as a Political Force: A Bibliography
Typescript with corrections and correspondence 196

The Intellectual in Politics
Typescript, notes and revision n.d

Correspondence and print materials 1949, 197

It Happened in Portland
Typescript n.d

Jack Tenney Rides Again
Typescript n.d

Japanese Evacuation: Policy and Perspectives
Typescript 194

John Dos Passos: An Essay
Typescript 193

Los Angeles: An Emerging Pattern
Print copy 194

Los Angeles: A Very Special City
Original manuscript, correspondence, and print materials 198

Los Angeles is an Event, Not a Mere City
Print copy 197

Massachusetts Pays Its Debt
Print copy, print materials, and clippings 197

The Mexican Problem
Print copy [in Spanish] 1968 June 2

Migrants: Inquiry or Inquest?
Typed manuscript with corrections n.d

Negro Migrants in the Northwest
Typescript n.d

Negro Migrants in the Northwest, II
Typescript n.d

North to Mexico: An Analysis
Typescript 197

Northwest's Officials Fail to Act on the Cause of Racial Trouble
Typescript 194

Organized Racism
Typescript n.d

Perspective on Politics
Outline and notes 1965-7
SERIES 2: OTHER WRITINGS 1931-1980
ARTICLES 1931-198

Prejudice; Japanese Americans
Notes n.d

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 3, folder 65-66

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 3, folder 67

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 3, folder 68

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 3, folder 69-70

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 3, folder 71

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 3, folder 72-73

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 1-2

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 3

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 6

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 7-8

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 9-11

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 12

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 13

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 14-15

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 16-17

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 18

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 19

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 20-24

Put This On The Air
Typescript and carbon with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 25

Put This On The Air
Typescript n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 26

Put This On The Air
Typescript n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 27

Put This On The Air
Typescript n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Print copy n.d

Racial Relationships in California and the West Coast
Outlines and notes n.d

carton 4, folder 28

Put This On The Air
Typescript with corrections n.d

Race Discrimination and the Law
Notes, correspondence and clippings 194

The West Coast: Our Racial Frontier
Typescript 1945 Sept

What About the KKK?
Typescript with corrections and notes n.d

Will the West Coast Join the United Nations?
Typescript n.d

Witch Hunt: The Revival of Heresy

Guide to the Carey McWilliams Papers, 1921-1980

BANC MSS C-H 46
ARTICLES 1931-198

carton 4, folder 34
Notes n.d
Witch Hunt: New Phase or Coordinating the Foundations
Typescript with corrections n.d

With Fair Employment Practices Committee Dead, Now What?
Typescript with corrections n.d

Writers of the Western Shore
Print copy 197

SPEECHES 1944-197

Can America Solve It’s Race Problems?
Print copy 1945 Jan. 3

Carter at the Half-way Mark
Notes and clippings 1978, n.d

Is California Still Exceptional?
Typed draft and correspondence 1975-7

Los Angeles: A New Kind of City
Typed drafts 1976, 197

Minorities in California
Print copy 1944 Oct. 2

Mobilization for Democracy
Typed draft 1945 Oct.

The Need for Dissent
Notes n.d

Speech written for Will Rogers, Jr.
Typescript n.d

CONTRIBUTIONS 1971-197

Introduction to America Is In The Heart by Carlos Bulosan
Typescripts with corrections 1973, n.d

Notes 197
Correspondence 1972-7

Print materials 197

Chapter in Censorship For Against by Harold H. Hart, editor
Print copy 197

Chapter in The Strike: For and Against by Harold H. Hart, editor
Print copy 197
SERIES 3: SUBJECT FILES 1922-1979

Physical Description: Cartons 5-27, folder 24; Oversize Box 1, folders 2-14, Volume 1

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically, by subject.

Scope and Contents
Includes notes, correspondence, print materials, clippings, and pamphlets. Topics such as "Agricultural Labor" and the "Viet Nam war" are covered extensively. "Capital Punishment" includes correspondence from Eleanor Roosevelt and Caryl Chessman, while "Race Relations" includes a scrapbook and loose pages created in 1944-45 to illustrate the role of African Americans during World War II.

Pamphlets collected by McWilliams are arranged by subject to mirror the organization of the series, and within each subject, arranged alphabetically by author. Rich with a variety of viewpoints and collected over a period of many years, the subject files illustrate McWilliams search for the understanding of issues from many perspectives and his need to re-evaluate and update his themes throughout his career. Many of the print materials are heavily annotated.

Please see Additional Collection Guides in this finding aid for a PDF that includes a detailed listing of pamphlets included in this series.

carton 5, folder 1
Notes and correspondence 1953-6
Print materials and clippings 1953-7

Pamphlets 1950-6

Academic Freedom

Agriculture
Correspondence 1944-7

Print materials and clippings 1943-7

Pamphlets 1952-7

Braceros
Print materials and clippings 1956-7

Caesar Chavez
Print materials and clippings 1970-7

Corporate Farming
Correspondence and notes 197
Print materials and clippings 1969-7

Farm Labor
Pamphlets 1947-7

Migratory Labor
Print materials and clippings 1967-7

Pamphlets 1945-6

United Farm Workers
Notes, print materials and clippings 197

Air Force
Correspondence and print materials 1958-6

American Committee on Cultural Freedom
carton 6,  
folder 12-13  
carton 6,  
folder 14-15  
carton 6,  
folder 16-17  
carton 6,  
folder 18-20  
carton 6,  
folder 21-30  
carton 6, folder 31  
carton 6,  
folder 32-34  
carton 6,  
folder 35-37  
carton 7,  
folder 1-2  
carton 7, folder 3  
carton 7,  
folder 4-11  
oversize-box 1,  
folder 2  
carton 7,  
folder 12-13  
carton 7,  
folder 14-17  
carton 7,  
folder 18-19  
carton 7,  
folder 20-22  
carton 7, folder 23  
carton 7,  
folder 24-27  
carton 7, folder 28  
carton 7,  
folder 29-30  
carton 7, folder 31  
carton 7,  
folder 32-35  
carton 7, folder 36  
carton 7,  
folder 37-39  
carton 7,  
folder 40-44  

Correspondence 1954-6  
Print materials and clippings 1952-6  
Americanism  
Notes and print materials 1936-7  
Anti-Semitism  
Notes and correspondence 1932-4  
Print materials and clippings 1922-5  
Pamphlets 1945-4  
Atomic Energy  
Print materials and clippings 1951-5  
Pamphlets 1945-6  
Big Bus Bill  
Correspondence and clippings 197  
Black Labor  
Notes 1941-4  
Black Panther Party  
Print materials and clippings 1969-7  
Clippings 196  
The Bomb  
Correspondence and notes 1940-6  
Print materials and clippings 1949-6  
Book Burning  
Print materials and clippings 1954-5  
Bowen, Robert O.  
Correspondence, print materials and clippings 195  
Brain Drain  
Correspondence 1964-6  
Print materials and clippings 1961-6  
Pamphlets 1951-6  
California  
Correspondence 1957-66, 197  
Notes 194  
Print materials and clippings 1979, n.d  
Farm Labor  
Correspondence and notes 1944-5  
Print materials and clippings 1950-5  
Capital Punishment  
Correspondence 1959-7
carton 7, folder 45-49
Print materials and clippings 1959-6

Chicanos
Correspondence and notes 1964-7
Print materials and clippings 1967-7

China and Taiwan
Pamphlets 1949-7

Chinese, Filipinos and Hindus
Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1940-4

Christianity
Clippings 197

Civil Liberties
Correspondence and notes 1950-6
Print materials and clippings 1951-6
Pamphlets 1937-6
Pamphlets 1960-7

Communism
Correspondence 1957-5
Print materials and clippings 1940-5
Pamphlets 1946-6
Pamphlet 195

Conformity
Notes n.d
Print materials and clippings 1954-6
Pamphlets 1961-6

Congressional Investigations
Pamphlets 1951-6

Conservative Politics
Print materials 1964-6
Clippings 197

Corporate America
Print materials and clippings 197

Cotton
Clippings 1949-5

Counter Culture
Clippings 1973-7

Crane, Clarkson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carton</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Correspondence 1928-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlets 1960-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-37</td>
<td>Desegregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Douglas, William O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence 1951-52, 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1950-52, 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlets 1948-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Ellisberg, Daniel and the Pentagon Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1971-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>Employee Federal Security Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>Fair Employment Practices Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1942-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Farm Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence and notes 1943-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-29</td>
<td>Print materials 1943-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-38</td>
<td>Clippings 1941-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Clippings 1951-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fascism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>Correspondence 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1970-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlets 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Filipino Culture in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence 1972-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Print materials 1942-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Clippings 1972-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>Flight of Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1955-58, 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1951-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>Franklin, Mrs. Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence and clippings 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free Speech and Religious Freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
carton 12, folder 29-31 Pamphlets 1942-6

Galindez, Jesus
Print materials and clippings 1957-5

Getting Busted Abroad
Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1972, n.d

Goldwater, Barry
Correspondence and notes 1963, n.d
Print materials and clippings 1963-6
Pamphlets 1963-6

Gun Control
Correspondence, notes, print materials and clippings 1974-75, n.d

Hawaii
Correspondence and notes 1937-5
Print materials and clippings 1940-5

Human Rights
Pamphlets 1950-7

Impeachment
Pamphlets 1973-7

Individual Freedom and National Security
Pamphlets 1951-7

Intellectualism
Correspondence and notes 1957-7
Print materials and clippings 1953-7
Pamphlets 1957-7

International Politics
Correspondence and print materials 196
Pamphlets 1952-7

Ku Klux Klan
Print materials and clippings 194

Labor Unions and Commerce
Pamphlets 1940-6

Law
Pamphlets 1927-6

Liberalism
Pamphlets 1953-7

Los Angeles
carton 16, folder 3-5
Print materials and clippings 1943-5

Loyalty Oath
Correspondence 1949-5

Print materials and clippings 1949-6
Pamphlets 1950-6

Mailer, Norman
Notes and clippings 1969, n.d

McCarthy, Eugene
Correspondence, notes, print materials and clippings 196

McCarthy, Joseph R.
Correspondence, notes, and print materials 1952-5
Clippings 1952-6
Pamphlets 1947-6

McGovern, George
Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1969-7

Media Violence
Print materials and clippings 1975, n.d

Mid-Century Conference for Peace
Print materials 195

Moral Re-Armament Movement
Print materials and clippings 1947-5

Muckraking
Notes n.d

National Broadcasting Company
Print materials 196

National Rifle Association
Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1963-6

National Security
Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1956-6

Natural Resources
Pamphlets 196

New Left
Correspondence and notes 1960, n.d
Print materials and clippings 1959-6

Nuclear Weapons
Clippings 195

Peace Candidates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carton and Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carton 17, folder 28-30</td>
<td>Correspondence and notes 1965-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 17, folder 31-35</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1960-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 17, folder 36-39</td>
<td>Peace Movement in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 17, folder 40</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1951-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 17, folder 41-45</td>
<td>Pentagon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 17, folder 31-35</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1953-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 1</td>
<td>Political Apathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 2-8</td>
<td>Correspondence, notes, print materials, and clippings 1955-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 9</td>
<td>Political Dissent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 10</td>
<td>Correspondence 1966-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 21-31</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1964-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 36-39</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1964-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 11-20</td>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 40</td>
<td>Correspondence and notes 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 11-20</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1951-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 18, folder 41-45</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1952-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 1-3</td>
<td>Politics in the West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 4-7</td>
<td>Correspondence, print materials, and clippings 1948-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 36-39</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1944-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 13-15</td>
<td>Public Schools and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 21-31</td>
<td>Print materials 1964, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 40</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1947-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 5-11</td>
<td>Race Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 16-29</td>
<td>Notes and correspondence 1942-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 19, folder 30-31</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1935-53, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 1-4</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1945-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 22</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1959-64, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 5</td>
<td>African Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 6-21</td>
<td>Notes 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 22</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1941-50, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume 1</td>
<td>Pamphlets 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversize-box 1</td>
<td>Scrapbook 1944-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 5-11</td>
<td>Loose scrapbook pages 1945 Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 23-29</td>
<td>Loose scrapbook pages 1945 Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 30-33</td>
<td>Inter-Racial Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carton 20, folder 30-33</td>
<td>Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1942-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Americans</td>
<td>Correspondence 1945-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Print materials 1941-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlets 1927-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Raza</td>
<td>Notes n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials 1945-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clippings 1948, 1970-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlets 1926-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlet 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>Correspondence 1944, 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and pamphlets 1935-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamphlets 1944-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Restrictive Covenants</td>
<td>Print materials and pamphlets 1943-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Riots</td>
<td>Notes and correspondence 1943-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1943-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Bombings</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1969-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan, Ronald</td>
<td>Print materials n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Baiting</td>
<td>Correspondence 1949-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1943-57, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Culture</td>
<td>Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1947-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Freedom</td>
<td>Notes, correspondence, print materials 1950, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolution</td>
<td>Notes, print materials and clippings 1968-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Correspondence 1954, 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1953-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sienkiewicz, Henryk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder</td>
<td>description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22, 33</td>
<td>Print materials n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22, 34-35</td>
<td>Smith, Gerald L. K. (Gerald Lyman Kenneth), 1898-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22, 36-40</td>
<td>Print materials 1938-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 1-2</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1970, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 3-7</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1950-69, n.d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 8-9</td>
<td>Labor Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 10</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1962-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 11-12</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 13</td>
<td>Pamphlets 1952-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 14-17</td>
<td>Subversive Organizations and Conspiracy Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 18-20</td>
<td>Southern California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 21-22</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1973-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 23-26</td>
<td>Spiritual Mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 27-29</td>
<td>Steinhem, Gloria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 30-31</td>
<td>Struij, Dirk Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 32-33</td>
<td>Teller, Dr. Edward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23, 34-36</td>
<td>Tenney, Jack B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24, 1-2</td>
<td>Third Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24, 3-7</td>
<td>Print materials and clippings 1968-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24, 8-9</td>
<td>Tramps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24, 10</td>
<td>Un-American Activities in California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
carton 24, folder 11
Print materials n.d
Pamphlets 1945-7

Central Intelligence Agency
Print materials and clippings 1965-7
Pamphlets 1968-7

House Committee on Un-American Activities
Print materials 1959, 196

Dept. of the Interior, War Relocation Authority
Pamphlets 1945-4

Labor Unions
Correspondence, print materials, clippings and pamphlets 1954-6

Utopian Society
Notes, correspondence, print materials and clippings 1934, n.d

Viet Nam War
Notes and correspondence 1965-7
Print materials and clippings 1965-7
Pamphlets 1963-6
Pamphlets 1965-7

American Issues
Clippings 196
Pamphlets 1964-7

Indochinese Issues
Pamphlets 1965-74, n.d

Wallace, George
Correspondence and print materials 1968-6
Clippings 1968-6

Water
Correspondence and clippings 196

Watergate
Correspondence, print materials and clippings 1973-7
Clippings 1972-7

Witch Hunts
Correspondence 1953-5
Print materials 1952-55, n.d
Clippings 1951-5
SERIES 4: PERSONAL PAPERS 1950-1976

Physical Description: Carton 27, folders 25-34; Oversize Box 1, folder 15

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically or chronologically, as appropriate.

Scope and Contents
Divided into 4 sub-series: Correspondence (arranged alphabetically), and Awards, Works About, and Miscellaneous (arranged chronologically). The bulk of materials date from the 1970s, but an interview on the House on Un-American Activities Committee given in 1962 and an open letter regarding the Communist party written in 1952, are included.

CORRESPONDENCE 1969-197

carton 27, folder 25-26
Miscellaneous, A-Z 1969-70, n.d

carton 27, folder 27
Correspondence with Donald S. Fryer 197

AWARDS 1975-197

carton 27, folder 28
In Honor of The Nation and The Progressive New York, New York 1975 Dec. 1

carton 27, folder 29
Clippings 1975 Nov.-Dec

carton 27, folder 30
Henry R. Wagner Memorial Award, Los Angeles, California 1976 May

WORKS ABOUT 1962-197

carton 27, folder 30
Inside the Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities: An Interview with Carey McWilliams, by Jack B. Tenney 1962 Marc

carton 27, folder 31
An Interview with Carey McWilliams, by Thomas J. Conway 1970 Jan.

carton 27, folder 32
The Contributions of Carey McWilliams to American Ethnic History, by Joseph P. Navarro 1971 Fal

MISCELLANEOUS 1950-197

carton 27, folder 33
Open Letter on the Trial of the Leaders of the Communist Party [signed by Carey McWilliams] 1950 April

carton 27, folder 34
Lecture schedule 1960-7