Register of the Thomas Fagan Collection (Interviews): Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles, 1989-1990

Collection number: MSS 042

Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research

Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Thomas Fagan Collection (Interviews): Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles,

Date (inclusive): 1989-1990

Collection number: MSS 042

Creator: Fagan, Thomas

Extent: 3 folders, 5 audio cassettes

Repository: Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
Los Angeles, CA 90044

Abstract: Audio cassettes and documents from interviews with Blacklisted Teachers by Thomas Fagan.

Language: English.

Provenance
Tapes and documents donated to library by Thomas Fagan.

Access
The collection is available for research only at the Library’s facility in Los Angeles. The Library is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Researchers are encouraged to call or email the Library indicating the nature of their research query prior to making a visit.

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Preferred Citation
Historical Context: Blacklisting and the McCarthy Era

The individual collections within the Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles Collection share a common historical framework, the Anti-Communist fervor of the Cold War Period and what is commonly referred to as the McCarthy Era. After the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in the ideological battle known as the Cold War. The identification of communists and other radicals through the use of federal and state legislative investigative committees and the punishment of those identified through firing and blacklisting comprised a successful U.S. tactic. The investigations spread from federal and other government employees to the entertainment industry, the professions, labor unions, and the private sector. The major players in these campaigns included, on the Federal level, Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). In California major players included California State Assemblyman (later State Senator) Nelson S. Dilworth, and State Senators Jack B. Tenney and Hugh M. Burns. All three served on the Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California (1945) and first Tenney and later Burns chaired the [California] Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities. Of special note are the Levering (1952) and Dilworth (1953) Acts. The Levering Act made refusal to fully cooperate with any state committee grounds for firing a teacher and the Dilworth Act gave local school boards investigating authority and also required that all teachers sign an oath denying any Communist affiliation.

Collection

Thomas Fagan interviewed three prominent people involved with the McCarthy Era blacklisting of Los Angeles teachers for an Oral History class project at California State University Northridge in 1990.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the original interview tapes, deed of gift, description of interview, list of questions, and a detailed table of contents for each interview. There are no transcripts of these interviews. The three interviewees are blacklisted teachers Ruth Bishop and Florence Sloat, and attorney John McTernan.

Arrangement

Files are arranged alphabetically by interviewee.

Title: Frances Robman Eisenberg: Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles,
Date: 1928-1995
Physical Description: 4 boxes and 1 oversize box

Title: Abraham Minkus Papers: Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles,
Date: 1945-1983
Physical Description: 4 boxes

Title: Florence Sloat Papers: Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles,
Date: 1959-1991
Physical Description: 1 box

Title: Greg Goldin Collection (Interviews): Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles,
Date: 1977
Physical Description: 1 box, 15 audio cassettes

Title: Ellen Chase Verdries Collection (Interviews/Paper): Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles,
Date: 1992-1996
Physical Description: 1 (half) box

Title: Jean Benson Wilkinson Papers: Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles,
Date: 1953-1955
Physical Description: 1 folder

Title: Los Angeles Teachers Union Collection,
Date: 1933-1982
Physical Description: 2 boxes

Title: Dorothy Doyle Collection (Interviews): Blacklisted Teachers In Los Angeles,
Date: 1986
Physical Description: 1 audio tape
Title: Clipping Collection: Blacklisted Teachers in Los Angeles, 1967-1982
Date: 1967-1982
Physical Description: 1 folder

Box-folder 1/1  Ruth Bishop [two cassettes], 1990
Box-folder 1/2  John McTernan [two cassettes], 1989
Box-folder 1/3  Florence Sloat [one cassette], 1990