William A. Seligman Papers (United Shoeworkers of America - Los Angeles), 1928-1941

Processed by Julia Bazar
Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
6120 South Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90044
Phone: (323) 759-6063
Fax: (323) 759-2252
Email: archives@socallib.org
URL: http://www.socallib.org/
© 2001
Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research. All rights reserved.
Register of the William A. Seligman Papers (United Shoeworkers of America - Los Angeles), 1928-1941

Collection number: MSS 056

Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research

Los Angeles, California

Contact Information:

Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
6120 South Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA, 90044
Phone: (323) 759-6063
Fax: (323) 759-2252
Email: archives@socallib.org
URL: http://www.socallib.org/

Processed by:
Julia Bazar

Date Completed:
June 2001

Encoded by:
Julia Bazar

© 2001 Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: William A. Seligman Papers (United Shoeworkers of America - Los Angeles), 1928-1941

Date (inclusive): 1928-1941

Collection number: MSS 056

Creator: Seligman, William A.

Extent: 1 half-box
1/6 linear foot

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

Abstract: This small collection consists of the personal and business correspondence of William A. Seligman, organizer of the Los Angeles local of the United Shoeworkers of America C.I.O.

Language: English.

Provenance

Donated to the Library by Michael Furmanovsky in the mid 1980s.

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.

Publication Rights

Copyright has not been assigned to the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research. Researchers may make single copies of any portion of the collection, but publication from the collection will be allowed only with the express written permission of the Library’s director. It is not necessary to obtain written permission to quote from a collection. When the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research gives permission for publication, it is as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the reader.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], William A. Seligman Papers (United Shoeworkers of America - Los Angeles), Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, Los Angeles, California.

Biography
William A. Seligman came to Los Angeles from Boston in late 1934 or early 1935. Seligman had been involved with the Workers Education Council, and union activities on the East Coast. In Los Angeles, he taught classes at a labor school and eventually found work at a Los Angeles area shoe factory. Disappointed with the working conditions there, he spent several years attempting to start a Los Angeles local of the United Shoeworkers of America C.I.O. [Congress of Industrial Organizations] The Los Angeles local (Local 122) was finally formed in August 1937. After the formation, of the local he served as Secretary/Organizer until the end of 1940 when he left for a new position in San Francisco.

Seligman expresses a variety of observations and criticisms of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party Opposition (Lovestonites) and their interactions with the labor movement and the establishment of a Workers Party. Lovestonites were the followers of Jay Lovestone who started out on the left wing of the communist party and then worked his way right. He was a major proponent of the idea of American Exceptionalism (the idea that the U.S. had been corrupted by Capitalist success and therefore the communists in the U.S. should work closely with Trade unions and non-communist intellectuals). Lovestone and his followers became very critical of communist control of labor unions. Seligman appears to have identified as a Lovestoneite. His wife Rose, who he married on March 21, 1936, was a member of the Communist Party.

Scope and Content
The collection consists of correspondence, postcards, and Trade Reports. The material is divided into two folders each of General Correspondence and Trade Reports & Union Correspondence. General correspondence includes letters of a mostly personal nature with friends on the East Coast. These letters contain details about his move and adjustment to Los Angeles and include comments on unionism, socialism, communism and the various parties and divisions. The first folder contains letters received before his departure for California. The two Trade Reports & Union Correspondence folders contain official reports to the United Shoeworkers Union on the activities of the local, as well as less formal correspondence with union officials including letters concerning a dispute with Michael Padgett, a member of the union board who was applying for a paid position within the union. The last folder contains letters that refer to his leaving the union and a brief reference to his new job. Also included is a 1941 letter thanking him for taking interest in finding work for an Austrian refugee, Otto Heck. Other correspondents include: Alice L. Dodge, Mary Wright, M. Page, Dave Grodsky, Dave Price and James T. Mitchell.

Arrangement
The materials are arranged chronologically.