Finding Aid to the Archie Brown Collection, 1933-1978 larc.ms.0087

Finding aid prepared by Labor Archives and Research Center staff.
Labor Archives and Research Center
J. Paul Leonard Library, Room 460
San Francisco State University
1630 Holloway Ave
San Francisco, CA 94132-1722
(415) 405-5571
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1991, Revised 2012
**Title:** Archie Brown collection

**Date (bulk):** 1970-1978

**Date (inclusive):** 1933-1978

**Creator:** Brown, Archie, 1911-1990

**Collection number:** larc.ms.0087


**Repository:** Labor Archives and Research Center

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**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English.

**Extent:** 2.25 cubic ft. (5 boxes)

**Location:** Materials are available onsite.

**Access**

Collection is open for research.

**Publication Rights**

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**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Archie Brown Collection, larc.ms.0087, Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.

**Material Cataloged Separately**

The following materials have been removed from the files and are located in the Ephemera Collection of the Labor Archives.

- Union Printers College. San Francisco Typographical Union, No. 21. 1963
- How to Speak at Union Meetings. UAW Education Department. 1977?
- Effective Discussion Methods. UAW Education Department. 1976?
- Agenda from the First Constitutional Convention, United Farm Workers. 1973. (English and Spanish)
- Boycott Lettuce and Grapes. Political Education Project and UFW. 1973?
- "All Strikebreakers Must Go!" San Francisco Typographical Union No. 21. 1964.
- Port of San Francisco Ocean Shipping Handbook. Board of State Harbor Commissioners. undated

**Separated Material**

Numerous Communist Party books and pamphlets were removed and sent to the Niebyl-Proctor Library.

**Processing Information**

Processed by The Labor Archives and Research Center staff.
Acquisition

The collection consists of accessions from Archie Brown’s wife, Mrs. Esther "Hon" Brown. Materials include broadsides from leftist causes, pamphlets, and correspondence. The collection was received in the spring of 1995 and processed during the summers of 1995 and 1996; accession numbers 1991/079; 1992/005; 1995/011; 1995/067; 1997/066; and 1998/057

Biographical Notes

Archie Brown was born in Sioux City, Iowa in 1911. In his early teens he rode the rails to the Bay Area. At age 14, he lost his job as a newsboy for organizing a newsboys’ strike. During the 1930s, he belonged to the Young Communist League, helped organize California agricultural workers, and became a longshoreman, part of San Francisco’s thriving waterfront union movement.

In 1938, his convictions led him into the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to fight the Fascists in the Spanish Civil War. He also served in the U.S. Army in World War II, and fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

After his return from the war, Archie held a number of state and national Communist Party positions. He continued to work as a longshoreman, and served on the Executive Committee of International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, Local 10. He was arrested for violating the Landrum-Griffin Act, which stated that trade-union office holders could not be Communist Party members. He fought the guilty verdict up to the U.S. Supreme Court, which struck down the ban in 1965.

Archie remained an active longshoreman until 1977. After his retirement, he worked to promote numerous leftist causes. He died of cancer in November 1990. A partial record of his activities can be found in the Collection.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

The Archie Brown collection includes items from the 1930s and 1960s, but the majority of materials date from the 1970s, and document Brown’s active role in the ILWU, the Communist Party, and a host of progressive organizations. The many pamphlets and broadsides testify to his commitment to social justice and also give an idea about the issues of importance to San Francisco leftists in the 1970s. Other activities of which there is less documentation include economic issues, such as the Coalition to Fight the High Cost of Living. He also supported struggles of other unions and their strikes.

Of special interest in the collection are letters Brown received after the movie “Operation Abolition” was shown nationwide, a documentary about the fight to abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee; and materials related to U.S. labor union activities to support Chilean workers and the fight to free Angela Davis. The collection also includes two courtroom transcripts, of the Grand Jury hearing of October 1935, and murder trial, December 1935, defendants: Shipscalers F. Jimenez, J. Cavales, A. Brown and N. Villi; photocopies of letters Archie wrote to his wife while he was a member of the Spanish Civil War Abraham Lincoln Brigade (originals are held by Brandeis University in the Archie Brown Collection); print materials pertaining to the San Francisco waterfront, including the Waterfront Worker, May 1934—March 1936; materials on Archie Brown’s political campaigns for SF supervisor, California governor (write-in candidate) and congressman; and photographs of Archie Brown during 1961 trial challenging the Communist Control Act (successor act to Taft-Hartley Section 9) and at HUAC hearings in California, 1960.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

International Longshore and Warehouse Union.
Labor unions—Longshoremen—United States.
Political activists—California—San Francisco.

Waterfront Worker.

Box 1, Folder 1 Biography of Archie Brown 1990
Box 1, Folder 2 Biography undated
Box 1, Folder 3 Black Panthers 1971, undated
Box 1, Folder 4 Candidacies (of Archie Brown) 1959, undated
Box 1, Folder 5 Chile 1974-1976
Box 1, Folder 6 Correspondence, Incoming 1959-1977, undated
Box 1, Folder 7 Correspondence, Operation Abolition 1960
Box 1, Folder 8 Correspondence, Operation Abolition 1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 9 Correspondence, Operation Abolition 1960-1962
Box 1, Folder 10 Correspondence, Operation Abolition 1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 11 Correspondence, Outgoing 1961-1974
Box 1, Folder 12 Correspondence, Spanish Civil War (photocopy) 1938
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