The papers of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in November of 1987 and were opened for research in May of 1988.

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers headquarters are located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. This organization received its charter from the American Federation of Teachers on March 27, 1947. It was originally chartered as the Rhode Island Branch, American Federation of Teachers. In 1958 the organization voted to change its name to the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers. The original unions comprising the Rhode Island Branch, AFT, were: the Warwick Teachers' Union Local 915; the North Providence Federation of Teachers Local 920; the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance Local 930; the Woonsocket Teachers' Guild Local 251; and the Providence Teachers' Alliance Local 958. The first president of the Rhode Island Branch, AFT, was Edward M. J. Melucci.

The papers of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers reflect the activities of the federation in the areas of improving the status of their membership and public schools through participation in various labor, professional, educational programs, and through the support and sponsoring of political candidates and legislation. The papers also reflect to a lesser extent the activities of the American Federation of Teachers and the various Rhode Island Federation of Teachers Locals' activities in the same areas.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

- AFT Administration
- School Curriculum
- RIFT Administration
- Teacher Education
- RIFT Arbitrations and Grievances
- Teacher Salaries
- RIFT Political Action
- Teacher Strikes
- School Construction
- Union Mergers

Among the important correspondents are:

- John M. Eklund
- Carl J. Megel
- John M. Fewkes
- Sen. Claiborne Pell
- Arthur J. Hartin
- Donald Porter
- Irvin Kuenzli
- Albert Shanker

An index to subjects and correspondents will be found on p.14

A key to abbreviations used will be found or
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Series I, American Federation of Teachers, 1950-1977, Boxes 1-3:
Correspondence, notices, convention minutes, reports and other materials relating to the parent organization's activities, administration, and its financial and organizational support of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers.

Series II, Rhode Island Federation of Teachers Executive, 1947-1982, Boxes 3-9: Correspondence, minutes, reports, clippings, and other materials relating to the activities of RIFT's executive, executive board, and executive organizations in the fields of finance, labor, politics, and education.

Series III, General Files, 1946-1977, Boxes 9-18:
Correspondence, clippings, reports and other materials relating to RIFT's and individual Locals' financial status, educational, labor, charitable programs, arbitrations, grievances, and support of education related legislation.

Non-manuscript Material:
Approximately 27 photographs relating to RIFT's and its Locals' activities in the areas of strikes, politics, and charitable contributions have been placed in Archives Audio Visual Collection. Numerous labor and education related reports, pamphlets, newsletters, and newspapers received with this collection are available in the Archives Library.
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Key to Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AFL-CIO</td>
<td>American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
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<td>AFT</td>
<td>American Federation of Teachers</td>
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<td>COPE</td>
<td>Committee on Political Education</td>
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<td>IOTA</td>
<td>Instrument for the Observation of Teaching Activities</td>
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<td>NEA</td>
<td>National Education Association</td>
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<td>QUEST</td>
<td>Quality Educational Standards in Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIEA</td>
<td>Rhode Island Education Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIFT</td>
<td>Rhode Island Federation of Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEA</td>
<td>Warwick Education Association</td>
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</table>
Correspondence, minutes, reports, and other items relating to AFT publications, financial assistance programs, charter applications, conventions, executive offices and political arm, COPE. Much of the material relates to the assistance offered RIFT by the AFT mainly through their Assistance Program and Commission on Service to Locals and State Federations. There is also material concerning AFT campaigns for educational renewal, teacher rights, and protests against proposed legislation, political candidates and appointments, especially the Sidney Markets Protest. Less extensive, but equally important is the AFT dismissal of Irvin Kuenzli as Secretary-Treasurer, which caused a wave of protest from most of the state federations throughout the country. In addition, it contains correspondence and reports on the unprecedented jailing of AFT president, David Selden, during the Newark Teacher Strike of 1970 and the subsequent "Bread and Water Receptions," held throughout the country to cover his legal costs, and in order to aid the Newark teachers. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material, and chronologically when there is more than one folder on any given subject. Gaps in the inclusive dates are indicated throughout.

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7-8. COPE, 1973-1976
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20. Executive Office; Secretary-Treasurer Irvin Kuenzli's dismissal and protest, 1953-1954
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12. Protest of Dr. Sidney Mann Appointment, Sep-Dec 1970

Box 3

3. National Office Transfer Announcement, 15 Sep 1953
5. "Quest" Consortiums, Sep 1970-Apr 1974
Correspondence, minutes of executive board meetings and conventions, reports and other items relating to the financial, political, and labor activities of RIFT executive offices and its political arm, COPE. Most noteworthy is the extensive documentation on RIFT COPE, and its sponsoring and fund raising activities for political candidates on the local, state, and national level, especially the Carter presidential campaign of 1976. There is also extensive documentation on Sen. Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, who was enthusiastically supported by RIFT because of his proeducation stand in the senate. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or type of materials, and chronologically when more than one folder occurs within the same subject area. Gaps in inclusive dates are indicated throughout.

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Series III

General Files, 1946-1977
Boxes 9-18

Correspondence, reports, and other items relating to RIFT's participation and relationship with the RI AFL-CIO, RI legislature, various committees, commissions, educational-school programs, and charitable organizations, especially the United Way Drives. There is also extensive documentation on Rhode Island teacher salaries, school construction, and on the Management and Manpower programs. In addition, there is extensive correspondence, reports, and other materials relating to the individual Locals' arbitrations, grievances, finance, strikes, and general correspondence, with emphasis on the 1951 Pawtucket Strike, which defied an AFT ban on teacher strikes. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material, and chronologically within subject areas that have more than one folder. Gaps in inclusive dates are indicated throughout.

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