



Guide to the George Schermer Papers UP001228

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English

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Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Walter P. Reuther Library
Creator:	Schermer, George, 1919-1989
Title:	George Schermer Papers
ID:	UP001228
Date [inclusive]:	1939-1992
Physical Description:	23 Linear Feet (46 MB)
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	Material entirely in English.
Abstract:	<p>George Schermer worked to improve housing, human relations, and urban social problems throughout his career. First with the Chicago Housing Authority as a Supervisor of Tenant Selection and Tenant Services, before moving to Detroit where he worked with the Detroit Housing Commission as Assistant Director for Management. In 1945, Mayor Jeffries appointed Schermer as Director of the Detroit Mayor's Interracial Committee, which he created to help ease tension within the city, especially in the wake of the 1943 riot. Schermer left Detroit in 1953 to begin working as the Director of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations, where he worked for 10 years before resigning. Schermer opened a consulting firm, George Schermer and Associates, and worked with organizations like the Ford Foundation and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, around the country on urban social issues.</p> <p>In his spare time, Schermer helped initiate the creation of the National Association of Human Rights Workers. He also served as the first President of the Michigan Committee on Civil Rights, as well as being heavily involved in neighborhood communities where he lived, namely Boston-Edison in Detroit and West Mt. Airy in Philadelphia.</p> <p>The Schermer papers contain materials primarily from his career in Detroit, Philadelphia, and as a consultant. It also contains some personal material from his life outside of work including correspondence as well as his involvement in neighborhood associations and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.</p>

Citation Style

"George Schermer Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

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Biography

George Schermer was born June 26, 1910 in Wright County, Minnesota to Teunis and Alyda (Meintsma) Schermer and grew up on family's farm. He attended college part-time between 1928 and 1934 at three different institutions, beginning at the University of Minnesota, before moving to Illinois where he also attended North Central College and later George William College.

From 1935-1938 Schermer worked as Activities Director at Abraham Lincoln Center in the Southside of Chicago. This was a Unitarian based social settlement confederated with racial strife. Schermer then returned to college from 1935-1937 where he graduated from the University of Chicago with a B.A., majoring in Government. He continued at the University of Chicago completing coursework towards a masters degree.

In 1938, Schermer began working for the Chicago Housing Authority as a Supervisor of Tenant Selection and Tenant Services. He also married Bernice Augdahl and together they had four children: Judith, Philip, Wendy, and Vernon.

Schermer moved to Detroit and began working for Detroit Housing Commission as Assistant Director for Management in 1941 until 1944, when Schermer began working as the Federal Public Housing Authority Director of Detroit Area Offices. In 1945 Mayor Jeffries appointed Schermer as Director of the Detroit Mayor's Interracial Committee. This committee was formed as a direct response to the 1943 riot with the intention of easing racial tension in the city. Occasionally, during his years as Director of this Committee, Schermer took time to do some consulting projects with other cities including Fair Grounds Park in St. Louis (Missouri), swimming pool issues in Youngstown (Ohio), a housing development in Columbus (Ohio), and Frederick Douglas Community Center in Kalamazoo (Michigan).

He continued as Director of this Committee until 1953 when he accepted a position as Director of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations. While living in Philadelphia, Schermer became involved in the West Mt. Airy Neighbors group and served both as an organizer and Board member between 1958-1965. Schermer worked in his position as Director for 10 years, at which point Schermer resigned, blaming the Mayor for weakening the agency. After resigning, Schermer began his own consulting company, George Schermer Associates, and worked consulting on human relations and urban social problems for the rest of his career.

In addition to this work, Schermer also helped initiate a meeting of human rights groups and workers that led to the creation of the National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials. This group later became National Association of Human Rights Workers. He served as the first President of this organization and was on the Board for periods between 1950 and 1963.

Schermer served as the first President of Michigan Committee on Civil Rights from 1950-1951. This group aided in the passage of the Michigan Fair Employment Law and the Creation of the Michigan Commission on Civil Rights. Schermer also served as a Board Member of the Citizens Committee on Public Education in Philadelphia and of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee from 1967-1973, and as Director of the White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights" Task Force on Housing in 1966.

George Schermer passed away on June 3, 1989 at the age of 78.

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Scope and Content

This collection contains two series: **Career** and **Personal**. The **Career series** is divided into two subseries: **Work and projects** and **Writings and speeches**. The **Work and projects subseries** contains materials from the different organizations and agencies that Schermer worked with and for during his career. This includes his work as Director of the Mayor's Detroit Interracial Committee. Also, related to Detroit are documents related to issues of interracial housing, city planning, and training police in human relations. Schermer also spent many years working in Philadelphia working with the Philadelphia Commission on Human Rights. Many of the other files in this series are from Schermer's work as a consultant, both as side projects during his years in Detroit and Philadelphia, as well as later with his business George Schermer and Associates. Some of his biggest consulting work was done with the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The **Writings and Speeches subseries** contains Schermer's many speeches he gave through his career, but also papers and publications he published, and some reports on his consulting projects.

The **Personal series** contains some biographical information on Schermer, but also correspondence from all areas of his life, documents relating to his involvement in organizations outside of his work, and an award given in his honor after his death by the National Fair Housing Alliance. The organizations he participated in outside of work included two neighborhood groups, Boston-Edison in Detroit and West Mt. Airy in Philadelphia. Schermer was also a member of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, a non-profit in support of social justice and human rights.

Series 1: Career, 1939-1989 Series 2: Personal, 1950-1992

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Arrangement

The George Schermer Papers are arranged in two series. Series 1: Career, Subseries 1A: Work and projects, Subseries 1B: Writings and speeches; Series 2: Personal.

Schermer's papers are arranged in rough alphabetical order. In Subseries 1A: Work and projects, files corresponding to work done in a particular city are generally organized alphabetically by State to more easily find and locate projects geographically.

Series 1: Career [Boxes 1-43] Series 2: Personal [Boxes 44-46]

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

Acquisition

This collection was donated the Walter P. Reuther Library by George Schermer and family in 1985 and 1989.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Shae Rafferty on December 20, 2018.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Use

Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library "Rules for Use of Archival Materials." Restrictions: Researchers may encounter records of a sensitive nature – personnel files, case records and those involving investigations, legal and other private matters. Privacy laws and restrictions imposed by the

Library prohibit the use of names and other personal information which might identify an individual, except with written permission from the Director and/or the donor.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Civil rights
- Detroit (Mich.)--Race relations
- Discrimination in housing
- Minorities--Housing
- Race relations
- Urban development
- Detroit Housing Commission
- Detroit (Mich.). Mayor's Interracial Committee
- Philadelphia (Pa.). Commission on Human Relations

Collection Inventory

Series I: Career

Subseries A: Work and projects

Title/Description	Instances	
California: The Effect of Various Government Housing Programs on Communities, 1971	Box 1	Folder 1
Scope and Contents		
Inland Neighbors, Inc. San Bernardino, Rialto, Colton, Fontana		
California: San Francisco Bay area, 1971-1972	Box 1	Folder 2
Connecticut: Department of Community Affairs (DCA), 1970-1971	Box 1	Folder 3
Connecticut: Hartford I-84 Wilbur Smith Associates, 1968-1970	Box 2	Folder 1
Connecticut: Norwalk project files, 1974-1975	Box 2	Folder 2
Connecticut: Norwalk, 1974-1978	Box 2	Folder 3
Connecticut: Norwalk - Community Development and Housing Needs and Organizational Requirements, November 6, 1974	Box 2	Folder 4

Expert witness file, 1978-1982	Box 2	Folder 5
Scope and Contents		
Richmond, Virginia; Delaware County, Pennsylvania; Boston, Massachusetts		
Fair housing reference - Central, 1968-1971	Box 3	Folder 1
Fair housing reference - East, 1962-1971	Box 3	Folder 2
Fair housing reference - West, 1970-1971	Box 3	Folder 3-4
Fair housing - Education/Instrucion Inc., 1984	Box 3	Folder 5
Fair housing - Fair Housing Center, 1977, 1984	Box 3	Folder 6
Ford Foundation: California field trip, 1972	Box 4	Folder 1
Ford Foundation: Current 'fair share', 1971-1972	Box 4	Folder 2
Ford Foundation - National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NCDH), 1969-1973	Box 4	Folder 3-7
Ford Foundation - National Neighbors: Organizational effectiveness, April 1976	Box 5	Folder 1
Ford Foundation - National Neighbors, 1976	Box 5	Folder 2-4
Ford Foundation - National Neighbors: Background files, 1963-1974	Box 5	Folder 5
Ford Foundation - National Neighbors: Housing Opportunities Made Equal, 1975	Box 5	Folder 6
Ford Foundation: Neighborhood stabilization, 1975	Box 5	Folder 7
Scope and Contents		
Richmond, California - Crescent Park; Park Forest, Illinois; Oak Park, Illinois; Los Angeles, California - Homestead Computer Project; Grand Rapids, Michigan - Garfield Park		
Ford Foundation - Black Urban Politics and city profiles of Detroit, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, 1966-1969	Box 6	Folder 1
George Schermer Associates: ARA Services, Inc., 1970-1972	Box 6	Folder 2-3
George Schermer Associates: Business, 1970-1972	Box 6	Folder 4
George Schermer Associates: General conditions of employment, undated	Box 6	Folder 6
George Schermer Associates: Partnership papers, 1970	Box 6	Folder 7
George Schermer Associates: Related firms, circa 1973	Box 6	Folder 8
George Schermer Associates: Community Relations Services (CRS) final reports, 1965-1966	Box 6	Folder 9

Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA), 1963-1964	Box 6	Folder 10
Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - Housing Assistance Administration (HAA), 1967-1969	Box 7	Folder 1-3
HUD alternative analysis, 1979	Box 7	Folder 4
HUD: Fair Housing and Equal Opportunities program management, 1978	Box 7	Folder 5
HUD: Guidelines for Managing Non-profit Housing for Racially Inclusive Occupancy, January 11, 1968	Box 7	Folder 6
HUD: Measuring Racial Discrimination in American Markets survey, 1979	Box 7	Folder 7
HUD: National Commission on Discrimination in Housing (NCDH) - Fair Housing Enforcement Demonstration Project, 1978, 1982-1983	Box 7	Folder 8-9
HUD: National Commission on Discrimination in Housing (NCDH) - Fair Housing Enforcement Demonstration Project, circa 1976-1983	Box 8	Folder 1-8
HUD: National Commission on Discrimination in Housing (NCDH) - Fair Housing Enforcement Demonstration Project, 1978-1983	Box 9	Folder 1-4
Illinois: Leadership Council Chicago - Metro Housing Coalition proposal, 1971-1972	Box 9	Folder 5
Illinois: Chicago housing, 1939-1940	Box 9	Folder 6
Maryland: Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission, 1976	Box 10	Folder 1
Maryland: Montgomery - Proposed Application for Federal Assistance Community Development Block Program, December 1975	Box 10	Folder 2
Maryland: Montgomery - Housing Choices, July 1973	Box 10	Folder 3
Maryland: Seton Belt Village, 1973	Box 10	Folder 4-5
Maryland: Seton Belt Village, 1972-1973	Box 11	Folder 1-6
Maryland: Seton Belt Village, 1973-1974	Box 12	Folder 1-4
Maryland: Seton Belt Village, 1972-1973	Box 13	Folder 1-3
Massachusetts: Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA), 1965-1971	Box 14	Folder 1-7
Massachusetts: Boston Harvard convent - Building Services International, 1973	Box 15	Folder 1-2
Michigan: Reports and publications, 1944, 1964-1968	Box 15	Folder 3-4
Michigan: City of Detroit Interracial Committee (DIC), 1945-1953	Box 16	Folder 1-11

Michigan: Detroit Courville District Improvement Association and Seven Mile - Fenelon Improvement Association, 1947-1948	Box 17	Folder 1
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Detroit Interracial Committee (DIC)		
Michigan: Detroit City Plan Commission Vernor-McClellan-Van Dyke and Jefferson Ave. area rehabilitation study, February 1945	Box 17	Folder 2
Michigan: Detroit - Wayne State University, 1949	Box 17	Folder 3
Michigan: Detroit housing, 1941, 1949-1950	Box 17	Folder 4
Michigan: Detroit Housing Commission, 1942-1950	Box 17	Folder 5
Michigan: Detroit police - training program in human relations, April 1, 1952	Box 17	Folder 6
Michigan: Detroit police, 1968	Box 17	Folder 7
Michigan: Detroit Regional Planning Commission - projected population and industrial decentralization, December 1950, January 1951	Box 18	Folder 1
Michigan: Grand Rapids Human Relations Commission, 1954-1955	Box 18	Folder 2
Michigan: Jackson Community Renal Research Study, 1967	Box 18	Folder 3
Michigan: Jackson	Box 19	Folder 1
Michigan Real Estate Investment Trust, 1970-1973	Box 19	Folder 2-3
Miscellaneous correspondence and materials on housing, 1946-1950	Box 19	Folder 4
Miscellaneous housing projects, 1961-1971	Box 19	Folder 5
Miscellaneous case histories, 1972	Box 19	Folder 6
Mississippi Audiovisual Rural Information Center (MAVRIC), 1973	Box 19	Folder 7
Mississippi: Child Development Project - Klein and Saks, 1967-1968	Box 20	Folder 1
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Child Development Group of Mississippi		
Missouri: St. Louis - Fairgrounds Park report, July 27, 1949	Box 20	Folder 2
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO)	Box 20	Folder 3-7
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) publications, 1967, 1974, 1986	Box 21	Folder 1

National Association of Intergroup Relations, 1959-1960, 1970, 1986	Box 21	Folder 2
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later became National Association of Human Rights Workers		
National Commission on Urban Problems (NCUP) reports, 1968	Box 21	Folder 3-5
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Prepared by Schermer		
National Commission on Urban Problems (NCUP), permanent file and contract, 1967-1968	Box 21	Folder 6
National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing (NCADH) Trends in Housing, 1963-1973, 1987	Box 21	Folder 7
National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, 1971-1973, 1979-1982	Box 22	Folder 1-4
National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing: Conferences, 1971, 1973	Box 23	Folder 1
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National Council of Negro Women (NCNW): Turnkey III, 1968-1971	Box 23	Folder 3-6
New Jersey - Fair Housing Council of Bergen County, 1978	Box 24	Folder 1
New York: Genesee County - Finger Lakes, 1969-1970	Box 24	Folder 2
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New York: Genesee County - Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board study reports, 1970	Box 24	Folder 4-5
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News clippings - Detroit Housing Commission, 1941-1942	Box 25	Folder 6
News clippings: Race in the North, 1943-1957	Box 25	Folder 7
News clippings: Schermer, 1948-1956	Box 25	Folder 8
News clippings - Schermer, 1953-1956	Box 25	Folder 9
News clippings: St. Louis, Missouri, 1949-1950	Box 25	Folder 10
News clippings and notes, 1945-1956	Box 25	Folder 11

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Includes a transcript of NAACP radio membership campaign, writings of Schermer's on race, and an issue of the Roosevelt Tribune

North Carolina: Greensboro, 1971-1972	Box 26	Folder 1-2
Office of Economic Opportunity, questionnaire data, 1971	Box 26	Folder 3
Ohio housing, 1974-1976, 1989	Box 26	Folder 4
Ohio: Cleveland Welfare Federation, 1967	Box 26	Folder 5
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Housing development - Miami Valley, Ohio and San Bernardino, California, 1971-1972	Box 27	Folder 1-2
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Penjerdel publications and reports, 1962-1963	Box 27	Folder 4
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia area news clippings - race	Box 27	Folder 5
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia - Germantown news articles	Box 27	Folder 6
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia Commission on Human Rights (PCHR), 1954-1965	Box 28	Folder 1-5
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia Commission on Human Rights (PCHR), 1953-1963	Box 29	Folder 1-7
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia Housing Association (PHA), 1963-1967	Box 30	Folder 1-9
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia Housing Association (PHA), 1964-1967	Box 31	Folder 1-2
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia: RAB v Rizzo, 1975	Box 31	Folder 3
Pennsylvania: Philadelphia reference material, 1958-1966	Box 31	Folder 4
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Washington D.C.: National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), 1956, 1967-1970	Box 39	Folder 1-2
Washington D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA), 1953-1973	Box 40	Folder 1-4
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Subseries B: Writings and speeches

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Catholic University lecture notes, 1969, 1972	Box 41	Folder 5
Presentation: U.S. Conference of Mayors/National League of Cities - Changing Institution of Housing Management, 1971	Box 41	Folder 6
Scope and Contents		
Los Angeles Police Department; Safe Streets Act reports and criticism; contract; 30 cities data; Cleveland		
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Papers and writings, 1960-1968	Box 42	Folder 5
Paper: Realtors as Gatekeepers, 1980	Box 43	Folder 1
Writings and correspondence with Tyrone Tillery, 1984, 1988	Box 43	Folder 2
Reports from short term consultations, 1962-1966	Box 43	Folder 3
U.S. Civil Rights Commission Canton, Ohio community survey, May 18, 1964	Box 43	Folder 4
U.S. Civil Rights Commission Savannah, Georgia community survey, May 21, 1964	Box 43	Folder 5
U.S. Civil Rights Commission Chester, Pennsylvania community survey, July 15, 1964	Box 43	Folder 6
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Philadelphia: West Mt. Airy Neighbors, 1959-1965	Box 45	Folder 9
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