The papers of the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan/Metropolitan Detroit Branch were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in May of 1967 by Ernest Mazey.

The Metropolitan Detroit Branch of the American Civil Liberties Union was chartered in 1952 as an affiliate of the national ACLU, founded in 1920 to protect the civil liberties of citizens expressing unpopular views during World War I. In the 1930s, a group of Detroit civil libertarians -- Walter Nelson, G. Leslie Field, James Ellmann and others -- joined under the leadership of Reverend Henry Hitt Crane to establish an ACLU committee in Detroit, but it disbanded with the national's adoption of an anti-Communist internal security program in 1940.

In 1961, the Lansing, Ann Arbor and Detroit area chapters joined together to form the ACLU of Michigan, which coordinates civil liberties activities for these and several other chapters that formed over the next decades. Ernest Mazey, a metro Detroit branch executive board member since 1954, became its first executive director, succeeded in 1974 by Howard L. Simon. Both the Metropolitan Detroit and Michigan ACLU are headquartered in the same Detroit office.

The papers of the ACLU of Michigan/Metropolitan Detroit Branch consist of minutes, correspondence, reports, clippings, case files, press releases, newsletters and other material relating primarily to the activities of the Detroit branch and to a lesser extent the activities of the state organization and regional branches.

A list of files, closed because they contain sensitive information involving investigations, legal and other private matters, appears at the end of this finding aid. To use these files, the researcher must obtain permission in writing from the executive director of the ACLU of Michigan or his/her designee and sign a restricted use statement, which prohibits the citing of names or other information that might identify an individual.

Important subjects in the collection are:

Academic freedom-Michigan
Censorship-Michigan
Church and state-United States
Civil rights-Michigan
Legal assistance to prisoners-Michigan
Police-Complaints against-Michigan
Police brutality
United States-Congress-House-Committee on Un-American Activities
Important correspondents in the collection are:

G. Leslie Field        Patrick Malin
Jeff Fuller           Ernest Mazey
Leanne Golden         Harold Norris
Josephine Gomon       Rolland O'Hare
Charles Lockwood      John J. Pemberton
                       Alan Reitman
Series I - Regional Unit Files

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  Flint, 1957-62
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  Saginaw Valley, Spenser Sam case
  Saginaw meeting - "Free Press v. Fair Trial"
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Washington State
Washington State-ACLU newspaper 1964
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American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born
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Box 7, General File

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Apportionment - clippings

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Borowey, W.S. 1955
Braden, Carl
Bricher Amendment
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Clamor - Flint J.C. Newspaper
Cleveland, Ohio - Taft-Hartley conspiracy

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