

THE JOHN WALSH COLLECTION

Papers, 1919-1936
(Predominantly, 1921-1926)

2 folders

Accession Number 1145
L.C. Number MS

The papers of John Walsh were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in June of 1982 by Fred Thompson, former General Secretary-Treasurer of the IWW and opened for research in January of 1984.

Born in New York City in 1880, John Walsh began working at age 12 as a newsboy and held a variety of jobs as a youth. He was a member of the International Longshoremen's Association, the Longshoremen's Protective Association, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance and the Hod Carriers and Building Laborers' Union before joining the IWW in 1905. In 1907, Mr. Walsh served as strike committee chairman when 60,000 I LA members walked off the job in New York Harbor. In 1917, Mr. Walsh was an organizer for the IWW. He was called to testify on his own behalf during the trial of Bill Haywood and other IWW members by the United States government on charges of being involved with criminal syndicalism in July of 1918.

Beginning in 1919, John Walsh corresponded regularly with his brother Joseph who was traveling throughout California and the southwestern United States in search of work, particularly in the silver and copper mines of that region. Joseph Walsh's letters to John comprise this collection. In these letters, Joseph describes the harsh working conditions the miners and other itinerants encountered and the attempts to unionize these workers. Others contain bitter denunciations of capitalism and discussions of the Depression and a possible second world war. The correspondence ceased in 1936 when it is believed that Joseph succumbed to respiratory illness.

The papers of John Walsh reflect not only the plight of the unemployed in the western United States but also to a considerable extent the philosophy and beliefs of the IWW.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Working conditions Views on religion

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Series I
Correspondence, 1919-1936
Folders 1-2

Correspondence of Joseph Walsh to his brother John. The letters reflect working conditions in the western United States and also contain political discussions and speculations on America's future. Files are arranged chronologically.

Folders 1 and 2

1-2. Correspondence, 1919-36

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