

William E. Trautmann Collecton

Papers, [c. 1938]-1939

**.25 linear feet
1/2 manuscript box**

Accession # 1660
DALNET #
OCLC #

William E. Trautmann was born in New Zealand of German-American parents in 1869 and emigrated to the United States from Germany in the late 1890s, eventually settling in Ohio, where he worked for the Brewery Workers Union (BWU) and served as a national committeeman to the Socialist Party of America. His association with the BWU ended, however, once he got involved with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), helping to found the radical union in 1905 and becoming its secretary-treasurer and a member of its first general executive board.

Replaced as secretary-treasurer by Vincent St. John in 1908, Trautmann was elected a general organizer and in 1909, led the Pressed Steel Car Company strike at McKees Rocks, Pa., the IWW's first successful effort among Eastern United States immigrant workers. Three years later he helped direct the famous Lawrence, Massachusetts textile strike, but becoming disillusioned with the IWW's preoccupation with direct action, joined Daniel DeLeon's Detroit IWW in 1913.

The William E. Trautmann Collection consists of the unpublished manuscript of the second volume of a projected three-volume autobiography, "Fifty Years of Warfare." Entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Workers of the World," Book 2 describes the author's experiences with the IWW, including his involvement in various factional disputes, during the period 1905 to 1920.

Important subjects in the collection:

American Federation of Labor
Brewery Workers National Union (BWU)
Daniel DeLeon
Industrial Workers of the World
Vincent St. John
Charles Sherman
Socialist Party (U.S.)
Steel Workers' Strike, McKees Rocks, Pa., 1909
Textile Workers' Strike, Lawrence, Mass., 1912
Western Federation of Miners

Box 1

1. Autobiography; correspondence regarding publication, 1938-39
2. Autobiography (Book 2); introduction
- 3-11. Autobiography (Book 2); chapters 1-20