

Guide to the Brookwood Labor College Records LR000567_BLC

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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: Brookwood Labor College (Katonah, N.Y.)

Title: Brookwood Labor College Records

ID: LR000567_BLC

Date [inclusive]: 1921-1937

Physical Description: 49 Linear Feet (98 MB)

Physical Location: 4W-B-2(9), 4W-B-3(1-7)

Language of the

Material:

Material entirely in English.

Abstract: Brookwood Labor College was a co-educational, residential workers'

institution founded in 1921 in Katonah, New York. The curriculum focused on a progressive, non-factional education for workers, as the college sought to play an increasing role in the task of building a militant, intelligent, powerful labor movement. The records document the operation of the college during its sixteen years. Brookwood

the operation of the college during its sixteen years. Brookwood

College closed in 1937.

Citation Style

"Brookwood Labor College Records, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

History

The Brookwood Labor College was a co-educational, residential workers' institution situated at Katonah, New York, about forty-one miles from New York City. Founded in 1921, it was the outgrowth of a labor conference held March 31 and April 1 of that year. Its policies called for a progressive, non-factional education for workers, as it sought to play an increasing role in the task of building a militant, intelligent, powerful labor movement. Its curriculum focused on the study, analysis and discussion of the philosophy and policies of labor organizations in the United States and around the world, including the American Federation of Labor.

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Brookwood was founded by a group of several labor activists including William Mann Fincke, who donated his 53-acre property and large colonial farmhouse in Katonah, New York, for the college's location. Evelyn Preston, a philanthropist and head of the League of Women Shoppers, donated a large sum to finance a women's dormitory. The college's biggest supporter was the AFL (American Federation of Labor) unions. The survival of the college was reliant on union scholarships and donors or "angels," as Brookwood staff referred to them.

Within a few years after it was established, Brookwood was officially endorsed or financially supported by thirteen national and international unions, including the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the American Federation of Teachers and the United Textile Workers. In 1928 a rift between the AFL and Brookwood led to the withdrawal of support by the AFL-affiliated unions.

In 1930 Brookwood set up an Extension Department in response to an increasing demand for lectures and courses outside of Brookwood. Earlier, Brookwood had started a program of summer institutes dealing with various labor problems.

In 1933 Brookwood weathered a faculty conflict concerning its policy of non-factional labor education. After A.J. Muste left in 1933, the college slowly began to lose financial support. With a dwindling numbers of students and the effects of the Depression, Brookwood closed in 1937.

Among the many students at Brookwood were Merlin Bishop, Len De Caux, E.J. (Jack) Lever, John Martindale and Roy Reuther. The faculty included such leaders as Katherine Pollack Ellickson, J.C. Kennedy, A.J. Muste, David J. Saposs, Cara Cook, Tucker P. Smith, Mark Starr, Helen Norton Starr and Tom Tippett. Fannia M. Cohn, John Brophy, Abraham Lefkowitz and James H. Maurer were among members of the board of directors.

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Scope and Content

The records are arranged in 5 series that include administrative files. Series 1: School Files, 1921-1937, includes correspondence, memos, printed material and general school records concerning the Brookwood organization.

Series 2: Subject Files, 1921-1937, includes correspondence and memos concerning various organizations and individuals. Also included are some pamphlets, clippings and miscellaneous material.

Series 3: Extension School Files, 1928-1936, includes correspondence and memos relating to students in several eastern states, as well as reports, publicity material and other records related to Brookwood's Extension Department.

Series 4: Student Files, 1921-1937, is comprised of files on Brookwood students and student-related material consisting of correspondence, memos, questionnaires and some graduation and student election

material. This series is divided into 3 subseries: Accepted students, correspondence with former students, student-related material. Names of specific students appear on the labels.

Series 5: Chautauqua, 1933-1937, includes correspondence and other material related to the Chautauqua program put on by the Brookwood Labor Players.

Important subjects include: American Federation of Labor; Brookwood executive board; Chautauqua program; Conference of Progressive Labor Action (CPLA); Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers; Curricula; Extension school; Faculty; Ideological factionalism; Abraham Johannes (A.J.) Muste; Labor songs and plays; Student activities; Student files; Student newspapers; Union contributors; Worker education.

Correspondents include: Oscar Ameringer, Roger N. Baldwin, Mary C. Barker, Toscan Bennett, Merlin Bishop, Selma Borchardt, John Brophy, Jay G. Brown, Fannia M. Cohn, Josephine Colby, Cara Cook, Eugene V. Debs, Len De Caux, John Dewey, David Dubinsky, John Edelman, Katherine Pollack Ellickson, John Fitzpatrick, Elizabeth G. Flynn, Paul Fuller, Gustav Geiges, Clinton S. Golden, William Green, Carl Haessler, Florence C. Hansen, Sidney Hillman, Charles Evans Hughes, A.J. Kennedy, John C. Kennedy, Charles Kutz, W. Jett Lauck, Abraham Lefkowitz, E.J. (Jack) Lever, Homer Martin, John Martindale, James H. Maurer, A.J. Muste, Harry Nilsson, Jacob Potofsky, Roy Reuther, Victor Reuther, Lawrence Rogin, Florence Rood, David J. Saposs, Rose Schneiderman, Joel Seidman, Tucker Smith, Helen Norton Starr, Mark Starr, Tom Tippett, Mary Van Kleeck, H.G. Wells, Mathew Woll, Phil E. Ziegler.

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Arrangement

Arranged in 5 series: Series 1 (Boxes 1-14), Series 2 (Boxes 15-58), Series 3 (Boxes 58-60), Series 4 (Boxes 60-96), Series 5 (Boxes 96-98). Folders are arranged alphabetically.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue Detroit, MI 48202 URL: https://reuther.wayne.edu

Acquisition

The papers of the Brookwood Labor College were placed in the Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, in September 1972 by Mark and Helen Norton Starr.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Walter P. Reuther Library.

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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Related Materials

Transfers

A group of photographs and three scrapbooks relating to Brookwood have been placed in the Reuther Audiovisual Department: "Brookwood Labor College Photographs." Included are photographs of students, faculty, labor leaders, the buildings and grounds, as well as events, at Brookwood Labor College.

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Controlled Access Headings

Labor movement

- Labor education
- Blue collar workers--Education

General

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: School Files, 1921-1937

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Scope and Contents

Correspondence, memos, printed material, and school records, including minutes and financial records covering the period 1921 to 1937. These school files include material on the board of directors the curricula, the faculty, and other organization material. These files are arranged alphabetically by topic.

Fitle/Description	Instances	
Board of Directors, 1925-1938	Box 1	Folder 1-12
Scope and Contents		
Annual meeting correspondence, miscellaneous, and projected programs and budget.		
Brookwood Community Cooperative; constitution	Box 1	Folder 13
Brookwood, Inc.; by-laws	Box 1	Folder 14
Class Schedules; miscellaneous, 1926-1937	Box 1	Folder 15-16
Conference for Progressive Labor Action; controversy, 1932-1933	Box 1	Folder 17-20
Contributions, 1927-1937	Box 1	Folder 21-25
Copyrights, miscellaneous	Box 1	Folder 26
Corporation correspondence, 1925-1926	Box 1	Folder 27
Brookwood Curriculum, 1920-1934	Box 2	Folder 1-18
Scope and Contents		
American Labor History, British Labor History, Constitutions of miscellaneous unions, Detechnicolized Grammar, Economics lectures by Arthur Calhoun, Economics lectures by J.C. Kennedy, and Economic Geography.		
Bookwood Curriculum, 1920s-1930s	Box 3	Folder 1-20
Scope and Contents		
Economic Geography, First Aid and Grammar rules.		
Brookwood Curriculum, 1924-1931	Box 4	Folder 1-20
Scope and Contents		
History of Western Civilization, How to organize, Industrial and economic problems, International Labor History, Journalism, Labor Journalism, Labor Legislation, and "Labor Movement Today'! and other pamphlets.		
Brookwood Curricula	Box 5	Folder 1

Scope and Contents

Marxian economics and basic industries in U.S.S.R. and U.S., Modern Industry, Public speaking, School economic

atlas, Statistics, Strike relief, Suggested reading list, Trade union organization, and Unemployment.

Daily procedures and regulations, 1927-1928, 1932-1933	Box 6	Folder 1
Economy measures, 1927	Box 6	Folder 2
Evaluation of courses by credit, 1926-1935	Box 6	Folder 3
Executive Board Annual Report, 1926-1936	Box 6	Folder 4-12
Executive Board Coorespondence, 1923-1926	Box 6	Folder 13-23
Executive Board Minutes, 1922-1932	Box 7	Folder 1-3
Executive Board Committee, correspondence, 1932-1937	Box 7	Folder 4
Faculty, 1922-1935	Box 7	Folder 5-17
Scope and Contents		
Appointments, material regarding AFL controversy of 1928-1929, memoranda, and minutes.		
Faculty, 1924-1937	Box 8	Folder 1-4
Scope and Contents		
recommendations and miscellaneous, skits, and summer school.		
Financial Material, 1924-1937	Box 8	Folder 5-18
Scope and Contents		
correspondence, miscellaneous, notes payable, statements, and stddent payroll.		
Financial Reports, annual, 1922-1935	Box 9	Folder 1-14
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Various correspondence: "X, Y, Z," 1928-1929	Box 57	Folder 10
YWCA survey, 1930-1931	Box 57	Folder 11
"Your Job and Your Pay," orders, 1931	Box 57	Folder 12-17
Zeuch, W.E., correspondence, 1932-1933	Box 57	Folder 18
Ziegler, Phil, correspondence, 1928-1935	Box 57	Folder 19-21

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Series 3: Extension School Files, 1928-1936

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, memos, reports, and records of the Brookwood Extension School files 1928 to 1936. Included is material on workers education. These files are arranged alphabetically with the student correspondence filed by city and state.

Title/Description	Instances	
Craig, Leonard, correspondence, 1928-1930	Box 58	Folder 1-3
Extension correspondence, 1928-1936	Box 58	Folder 4-9
Extension reports, 1933-1936	Box 58	Folder 10-14
Extension teachers, correspondence, 1933-1935	Box 58	Folder 15
Frank, Walter, 1933-1935	Box 58	Folder 16
Gianasi, Dominick, correspondence, 1936	Box 58	Folder 17
Lever, E.J., correspondence, 1936	Box 58	Folder 18-23
Martindale, John, correspondence, 1934	Box 58	Folder 24
New Jersey: extension correspondence, several cities- Passaic, Patterson, Washington, 1933-1936	Box 59	Folder 1-9
New York: extension correspondence, 1934-1935	Box 59	Folder 10-14
Pennsylvania: extension correspondence to eastern region and several cities, 1932-1936	Box 59	Folder 15-17
Pennsylvania: extension correspondence, 1932-1935	Box 60	Folder 1-7

Publicity, various material, undated and 1934

	Box 60	Folder 8	
Records from field work, 1930-1933	Box 60	Folder 9	

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Series 4: Student Files, 1921-1937

Scope and Contents

This series consists of Brookwood's student files and student-related material. It is arranged in three subseries: accepted students, students, and student-related material. These files are arranged alphabetically and cover the period from 1921 to 1937.

Subseries A: Accepted Students, 1921-1937

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, memos and questionnaires of students while they were at Brookwood.

Title/Description	Instances	
Accepted Students-A, 1921-1934	Box 60	Folder 10-33
Accepted Students-A, 1934-1937	Box 61	Folder 1-7
Accepted Students-B, 1923-1936	Box 61	Folder 8-38
Accepted Students-B, 1922-1936	Box 62	Folder 1-29
Accepted Students-C, 1932-1934	Box 62	Folder 30-32
Accepted Students-C, 1923-1935	Box 63	Folder 1-34
Accepted Students-D, 1925-1930	Box 63	Folder 35-38
Accepted Students-D, 1923-1936	Box 64	Folder 1-27
Accepted Students-E, 1926-1932	Box 64	Folder 28-39
Accepted Students-F, 1921-1936	Box 65	Folder 1-44
Accepted Students-G, 1921-1935	Box 66	Folder 1-44
Accepted Students-G, 1924-1933	Box 67	Folder 1-9
Accepted Students-H, 1922-1936	Box 67	Folder 10-44
Accepted Students-H, 1923-1936	Box 68	Folder 1-18
Accepted Students-I, 1924	Box 68	Folder 19
Accepted Students-J, 1928-1935	Box 68	Folder 20-32
Accepted Students-K, 1922-1935	Box 68	Folder 33-41
Accepted Students-K, 1926-1936	Box 69	Folder 1-27

Accepted Students-L, 1921-1936

	Box 69	Folder 28-47
Accepted Students-M, 1922-1936	Box 70	Folder 1-39
Accepted Students-M, 1921-1937	Box 71	Folder 1-17
Accepted Students-N, 1925-1936	Box 72	Folder 18-28
Accepted Students-O, 1922-1935	Box 72	Folder 29-39
Accepted Students-P, 1924-1936	Box 72	Folder 1-42
Accepted Students-R, 1922-1935	Box 73	Folder 1-45
Accepted Students-S, 1923-1934	Box 74	Folder 1-38
Accepted Students-S, 1922-1934	Box 75	Folder 1-48
Accepted Students-S, 1929-1934	Box 76	Folder 1-10
Accepted Students-T, 1923-1936	Box 76	Folder 11-27
Accepted Students-V, 1930-1936	Box 76	Folder 28-33
Accepted Students-W, 1923-1936	Box 76	Folder 34-46
Accepted Students-W, 1923-1936	Box 77	Folder 1-34
Accepted Students-Y, 1923-1924	Box 77	Folder 35-38
Accepted Students-Z, 1923-1936	Box 77	Folder 39-50

Subseries B: Correspondence with Former Brookwood Students, 1923-1937 Title/Description Instances

Title/Description	instances	
Students-A, 1923-1935	Box 78	Folder 1-13
Students-B, 1923-1935	Box 78	Folder 14-30
Students-B, 1924-1936	Box 70	Folder 1-33
Students-C, 1924-1936	Box 80	Folder 1-35
Students-C, 1924-1936	Box 81	Folder 1-35
Students-D, 1925-1932	Box 82	Folder 1-32
Students-D, 1925-1936	Box 82	Folder 1-15
Students-E, 1928-1933	Box 82	Folder 16-23
Students-F, 1927-1936	Box 82	Folder 24-26
Students-F, 1923-1936	Box 83	Folder 1-17
Students-G, 1923-1933	Box 83	Folder 18-32
Students-G, 1923-1936	Box 84	Folder 1-33
Students-G, 1926-1935	Box 85	Folder 1-13
Students-H, 1923-1936	Box 85	Folder 14-35

Students-H, 1924-1935	Box 86	Folder 1-11
Students-I, 1925-1938	Box 86	Folder 12-14
Students-J, 1930-1936	Box 86	Folder 15-18
Students-K, 1926-1936	Box 86	Folder 19-35
Students-K, 1923-1928	Box 87	Folder 1-9
Students-L, 1923-1937	Box 87	Folder 10-29
Student-M, 1923-1931	Box 87	Folder 30-37
Students-M, 1923-1937	Box 88	Folder 1-33
Students-N, 1928-1936	Box 89	Folder 1-8
Students-O, 1924-1934	Box 89	Folder 9-16
Students-P, 1925-1936	Box 89	Folder 17-33
Students-R, 1924-1933	Box 89	Folder 34-43
Students-R, 1924-1937	Box 90	Folder 1-42
Students-S, 1924-1936	Box 91	Folder 1-34
Students-S, 1931-1936	Box 92	Folder 1-7
Students-T, 1923-1936	Box 92	Folder 8-18
Students-V, 1936	Box 92	Folder 19
Students-W, 1924-1936	Box 92	Folder 20-31
Students-Y, 1925-1936	Box 92	Folder 32
Students-Z, various years	Box 92	Folder 33

Subseries C: Student-related material, 1921-1937

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, memos records, and printed material from 1921 to 1937. It includes information on fellowships, graduation, student lists, and student body minutes.

Title/Description	Instances	
Autobiographies, students, undated and 1934	Box 93	Folder 1-2
Brookwood Fellowship Review, 1926-1928	Box 93	Folder 3-4
Graduate Fellowships: correspondence, 1924-1937	Box 93	Folder 5-21
Graduate Fellowships: correspondence, election ballots, various documents, 1924-1937	Box 94	Folder 1-21
Graduation: Addresses, various documents, 1929-1932	Box 94	Folder 22
Graduation: correspondence, programs, various documents, 1923-1937	Box 95	Folder 1-16

Lists of students, 1923-1934	Box 95	Folder 17-24
Memos and letters to student body, 1923-1924	Box 95	Folder 25
Minutes of student body, 1922-1925	Box 95	Folder 26-27
Minutes of student body, 1929-1930, 1932	Box 96	Folder 1-6
Newspapers: The Line, 1935-1936; Wildcat, 1929-1930	Box 96	Folder 7-9
Student material, various documents, 1926-1934	Box 96	Folder 10
Survey of students, 1921-1931	Box 96	Folder 11
Workers Education, bulletins, 1929-1937	Box 96	Folder 12

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Series 5: Chautauqua, 1933-1937

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, memos, clippings, lists, contracts, journals, and playbooks concerning the workers' education Chautauqua arranged and put on by the Brookwood labor players, 1933 to 1937.

Title/Description	Instances	
"Sit Down," clippings, 1937	Box 96	Folder 13-14
Contact Lists, 1937	Box 96	Folder 15-16
Continental Congress, 1933	Box 96	Folder 17
Contracts and Cards, 1937	Box 96	Folder 18
Correspondence: Connecticut, Chautauqua trope, general, 1934-1937	Box 96	Folder 19-30
Correspondence: various states, 1932-1937	Box 97	Folder 1-20
Cotton, Wooster and Company, ledger	Box 97	Folder 21
Journal, including Eastern troupe, Southern troupe, 1935-1936	Box 98	Folder 1-4
Leaflets, various dates	Box 98	Folder 5-7
Letters to be answered and those not replied to, 1937	Box 98	Folder 8
Plays, including "Mill Shadows": preparation lists, various documents, 1936	Box 98	Folder 9-21
Songbook	Box 98	Folder 22

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