

THE RHODE ISLAND FEDERATION OF TEACHERS COLLECTION

Papers, 1946-1982
(Predominantly, 1967-77)

9 linear feet

Accession number 1349
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The papers of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in November of 1987 and were opened for research in May of 1988.

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers headquarters are located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. This organization received its charter from the American Federation of Teachers on March 27, 1947. It was originally chartered as the Rhode Island Branch, American Federation of Teachers. In 1958 the organization voted to change its name to the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers. The original unions comprising the Rhode Island Branch, AFT, were: the Warwick Teachers' Union Local 915; the North Providence Federation of Teachers Local 920; the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance Local 930; the Woonsocket Teachers' Guild Local 251; and the Providence Teachers' Alliance Local 958. The first president of the Rhode Island Branch, AFT, was Edward M. J. Melucci.

The papers of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers reflect the activities of the federation in the areas of improving the status of their membership and public schools through participation in various labor, professional, educational programs, and through the support and sponsoring of political candidates and legislation. The papers also reflect to a lesser extent the activities of the American Federation of Teachers and the various Rhode Island Federation of Teachers Locals' activities in the same areas.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

AFT Administration
RIFT Administration
RIFT Arbitrations and Grievances
RIFT Political Action
School Construction

School Curriculum
Teacher Education
Teacher Salaries
Teacher Strikes
Union Mergers

Among the important correspondents are:

John M. Eklund
John M. Fewkes
Arthur J. Hartin
Irvin Kuenzli

Carl J. Megel
Sen. Claiborne Pell
Donald Porter
Albert Shanker

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Series II, Rhode Island Federation of Teachers Executive, 1947-1982, Boxes 3-9: Correspondence, minutes, reports, clippings, and other materials relating to the activities of RIFT's executive, executive board, and executive organizations in the fields of finance, labor, politics, and education.

Series III, General Files, 1946-1977, Boxes 9-18:
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Non-manuscript Material:

Approximately 27 photographs relating to RIFT's and its Locals' activities in the areas of strikes, politics, and charitable contributions have been placed in Archives Audio Visual Collection. Numerous labor and education related reports, pamphlets, newsletters, and newspapers received with this collection are available in the Archives Library.

Key to Abbreviations

AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
COPE	Committee on Political Education
IOTA	Instrument for the Observation of Teaching Activities
NEA	National Education Association
QUEST	Quality Educational Standards in Teaching
RI	Rhode Island
RIEA	Rhode Island Education Association
RIFT	Rhode Island Federation of Teachers
WEA	Warwick Education Association

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Series I
American Federation of Teachers, 1950-1977
Boxes 1-3

Correspondence, minutes, reports, and other items relating to AFT publications, financial assistance programs, charter applications, conventions, executive offices and political arm, COPE. Much of the material relates to the assistance offered RIFT by the AFT mainly through their Assistance Program and Commission on Service to Locals and State Federations. There is also material concerning AFT campaigns for educational renewal, teacher rights, and protests against proposed legislation. political candidates and appointments, especially the Sidney Marland Protest. Less extensive, but equally important is the AFT dismissal of Irvin Kuenzli as Secretary-Treasurer, which caused a wave of protest from most of the state federations throughout the country. In addition, it contains correspondence and reports on the unprecedented jailing of AFT president, David Selden, during the Newark Teacher Strike of 1970 and the subsequent "Bread and Water Receptions," held throughout the country to cover his legal costs, and in order to aid the Newark teachers. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material, and chronologically when there is more than one folder on any given subject. Gaps in the inclusive dates are indicated throughout.

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Correspondence, minutes of executive board meetings and conventions, reports and other items relating to the financial, political, and labor activities of RIFT executive offices and its political arm, COPE. Most noteworthy is the extensive documentation on RIFT COPE, and its sponsoring and fund raising activities for political candidates on the local, state, and national level, especially the Carter presidential campaign of 1976. There is also extensive documentation on Sen. Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, who was enthusiastically supported by RIFT because of his proeducation stand in the senate. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject or type of materials, and chronologically when more than one folder occurs within the same subject area. Gaps in inclusive dates are indicated throughout.

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