

THE ERNEST GOODMAN COLLECTION, Part I

Papers, 1952-1977  
(Predominantly, 1952-1972)

10 linear feet

Accession Number 1152  
L. C. Number MS

The papers of Ernest Goodman were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban affairs in November of 1983 by Mr. Goodman and were opened for research in May of 1985.

Ernest Goodman was born in Hemlock, Michigan on August 21, 1906. Mr. Goodman graduated from Wayne State College in 1928 with a L.L.B., and was admitted to the State Bar of Michigan that same year. During the decade of the 1930s, he was active in many labor cases, and became an associate of Maurice Sugar, general counsel of the UAW, in 1939. In 1950 Ernest Goodman and George Crockett, Jr. formed one of the first interracial law firms; Goodman, Crockett, Eden and Robb, specifically to handle civil rights, labor, and constitutional law cases.

Mr. Goodman is a member of the Detroit Bar Association and the National Lawyers Guild. A founding member of the Lawyers Guild, Mr. Goodman served as it's president from 1963 to 1966.

The papers of Mr. Goodman reflect his activities as counsel during three of his most important cases concerning civil rights and constitutional law: The Michigan Smith Act trial, the Sherrill School desegregation case, and the Black Panther trial.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Black Panther Party	Constitutional Law
Civil Rights	Detroit Public Schools Desegregation
Communist Party	Smith Act

Among the important correspondents are:

Bushell, George	Johnson, David
Crockett, George	Kaess, Fred W.
Garner, Thelma	Picard, Frank A.
Hall, Elliot S.	Wellman, Saul

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Series I.  
Michigan Smith Act Trial, 1952-58  
Boxes 1-5

Files relating to Goodman's activities as defense counsel for six Michigan residents charged with conspiracy to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the government thereby violating the Smith Act. The trial began with indictments on September 22, 1952 and ended with a dismissal on September 16, 1958.

This series is divided into the following four subseries:

Subseries A: Trial Records, 1952-1958, Boxes 1-3

Court records for the trial, appeal, reconsideration, and dismissal. Files are arranged chronologically.

Subseries B: Research Materials, 1952-58, Box 3-4

Research sources, memorandums, and notes for the preparation and the conduct of the defense. Files are arranged chronologically.

Subseries C: Correspondence, 1953-58, Box 5

Correspondence relating to the trial. There is also a large amount of Mr. George Crockett's correspondence. Files are arranged chronologically.

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This series is divided into the following four subseries:

Subseries A: Trial Records, 1962-68, Boxes 5-9

Court records and related documents for the pre-trial, the Amicus Curiae, and the final dismissal. Files are arranged chronologically.

Subseries B; Research, 1962-70, Box 9-11

Research sources, notes and related materials for the preparation and the conduct of the pre-trial. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Subseries C: Correspondence, 1961-68, Box 11

Correspondence relating to the Sherrill School case. Files are arranged chronologically.

Subseries D: Published Materials, 1962-68, Boxes 11-12

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Series III  
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Files relating to Goodman's activities as defense counsel for fifteen Black Panther Party members charged with murder and conspiracy to murder a Detroit Police officer. The trial began with grand jury indictments on November 4, 1970 and ended on June 31, 1971 with three defendants convicted of felonious assault and all other defendants acquitted.

This series is divided into the following four subseries:

Subseries A: Trial Records, 1970-72, Boxes 12-18

Court records for the trial and appeals. Files are arranged chronologically.

Subseries B: Research, 1970-72, Boxes 18-19

Research sources, notes, and memorandums for the preparation and the conduct of the defense during the trial. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Subseries C: Correspondence, 1970-77, Box 19

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**Ernest Goodman Papers**  
**Part II**  
40.5 linear feet  
1929-1997 (bulk 1940-1975)

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Finding aid written by Robbie Terman, 2010.

**Accession Number:** 1152

**Creator:** Ernest Goodman

**Acquisition:** After completion of part one of the Ernest Goodman papers in 1985, additional materials were donated by Mr. Goodman in 1992 and 1994. Supplementary materials were donated after Mr. Goodman's death by his son William in 1998. Materials donated subsequent to part one were merged to create part two of the Ernest Goodman collection.

**Language:** Materials in English and Spanish.

**Access:** Papers are open for research.

**Use:** **Researchers must sign a *Restricted Use Statement*, governing Series V, Subseries A.** For further details, refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library *Rules for Use of Archival Materials*.

**Notes:** Citation style: "Ernest Goodman Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

**Related Material:** Photographs and audio/video tapes were transferred to the Reuther's Audiovisual Department.

## **History**

Ernest Goodman was born in Hemlock, Michigan on August 21, 1906. In 1928, he graduated from the first law school class at Wayne State University. Upon graduation and passing the bar, Goodman opened a law practice in Detroit with a classmate. To make ends meet, he began taking collection cases on behalf of local merchants. As the city sank into poverty due to the depression, Goodman had an epiphany that would become a guiding force in his career and his life: he would "...use the law as an instrument to obtain justice for the common people."<sup>1</sup> This transformation was born both by his own professional frustration, and by his introduction to labor lawyer, Maurice Sugar.

Goodman spent the next twelve years, until 1947, deeply involved with the labor movement. He worked alongside Sugar, as Associate General Counsel of the United Auto Workers, fighting in some of Michigan's most bitter union organizing struggles.

In 1937 another event occurred that would influence Goodman's personal and professional life: he became executive secretary of the newly formed Detroit Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG). This association opened a new world of diversity for Goodman and would be a lifelong influence on Goodman's career. Many of his cases would come from the NLG; others would be tried with the same principles that formed its basis.

In 1950, Goodman joined with George Crockett, Mort Eden, and Dean Robb to form the first (known) interracial law partnership. Goodman continued his dedication to serve the common man by taking unpopular clients, including Communists, Black Panthers, prison inmates, and African Americans during the civil rights movement.

Ernest Goodman died in 1997 at the age of 90. He was survived by his wife of 65 years, Freda, and his sons, Richard and William.

## **Scope and Content:**

Part two of Mr. Goodman's papers reflect his activities as council in controversial cases, particularly first amendment and civil rights cases, court martials, deportation and denaturalization, and the 1971 Attica prison uprising. His personal and professional associations, which influenced a career spent seeking social justice, are included in Series VI. Series VII: Subject Files reflect the people, places, and events that not only influenced Goodman, but also prompted him to seek change in our society.

### **Important Subjects:**

Civil Rights – America – Cases  
Communist Party of America  
Constitutional Law  
Deportation – United States

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<sup>1</sup> 88:7 Commencement Address; Wayne State University Law School, May 1993

McCarthyism – 1950-1960  
Prison Riots – New York (State) – Attica  
Trials (Military Offenses)  
Trials (Obscenity)

**Important Names:**

Crockett, George  
Eden, Mort  
Gleicher, Morris  
Nowak, Stanley  
Robb, Dean  
Stroble, Bernard “Shango”  
Sugar, Maurice  
Wellman, Saul  
Wolfgang, Myra  
Young, Coleman A.

**Series IV: Bernard “Shango” Stroble and the Attica Uprising**

Bernard “Shango” Stroble fled to New York in 1966 to avoid charges of robbery/murder and the shooting of policemen in Michigan. While in New York City, he was arrested on unrelated charges of murder, kidnapping, robbery, and arson, and sent to Attica prison in 1968. On September 9, 1971, after demands for better living conditions were not met, prisoners took over Yard D of Attica for four days. The uprising ended on September 13, 1971, when New York governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered the prison to be taken back by force, causing the deaths of 43 people, including nine hostages. 62 prisoners were indicted for the incident, including Shango on the charges of felony murder in the deaths of Kenneth Hess and Barry Schwartz. Shango was acquitted of these charges on June 26, 1975.

The bulk of this series consists of court documents relating to the trial of Shango for the murders of Hess and Schwartz. After the Attica trial, Mr. Goodman represented Shango in appealing his sentence connected to the arrests in Michigan, which led to Shango’s release in 1979. Papers relating to the 1965 robbery/murder and 1966 policemen shooting are also included, as well as documents relating to Shango’s appeal.

**Subseries A: Trial Records, 1965-1979**

Court records for the Attica trial, as well as documents relating to Shango’s trial in Michigan in 1967 and the appeal that led to his release in 1979.

**Subseries B: Correspondence, 1968-1979**

Correspondence relating to all trials involving Shango, either as defendant or petitioner.

**Subseries C: Research, 1971-1975**

Research sources, notes and memorandums for the preparation of trial.

**Subseries D: Publicity, 1966-1980,**

Leaflets, newspaper clippings, articles, and other publications concerning Shango and the Attica Uprising. Also included are drafts and documents relating to a post-trial book compiled by Ernest Goodman.

**Series V: Litigation**

This series is comprised of other cases in which Goodman served as council or participated.

**Subseries A: Immigration – Denaturalization/Deportation Cases, 1949-1975**

This subseries consists of immigration cases as represented by Mr. Goodman and/or the firm of Goodman, Crockett, Eden, & Robb. In a majority of the cases, the client was targeted for denaturalization/deportation due to the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 (also known as the Walter-McCarran Immigration Law), which allowed the government to deport immigrants and naturalized citizens engaged in “subversive activities.” Those targeted under this act were overwhelmingly accused of being involved with the Communist party at the time of their naturalization.

**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.**

**Subseries B: Committee to Assist Southern Lawyers (CASL), 1962-1966**

Started by the National Lawyers Guild, under the direction of Goodman and partner George Crockett, the Committee to Assist Southern Lawyers (later called Committee for Legal Assistance in the South) sent attorneys to the Southern states to represent civil rights activists.

**Subseries C: General Litigation, 1941-1987**

Various cases represented or assisted by Goodman.

**Series VI: Professional and Personal Associations**

This series consists of materials relating to the organizations that influenced Goodman’s professional and personal life.

**Subseries A: National Lawyers Guild, 1937-1994**

The National Lawyers Guild (NLG) originated in 1936, when a group of lawyers met in New York to discuss the formation of an integrated liberal and progressive bar association. A call was issued to American lawyers to form chapters of the guild nationwide, and in 1937, the founding convention commenced in Washington, DC. The NLG often takes unpopular cases in the pursuit of social and economic justice, operating on the belief that human rights are more sacred than property rights. Mr. Goodman actively participated in the NLG and served as president from 1963 to 1966. This subseries is comprised of records from his involvement in the NLG, including conventions, committees, and the Detroit chapter of the NLG. Committee to Assist Southern Lawyers cases (which were under the auspices of the NLG) can be found in Series V: Subseries B.

**Subseries B: American Association of Jurists, 1970-1989**

In 1970, Ernest Goodman initiated the organization of an Inter-American conference of lawyers to discuss human rights and social change. After four years of correspondence and planning, the first conference took place in Lima, Peru on June 10, 1974. During the second Inter-American conference in 1975, the decision was made to set up a new international jurists' association to be called American Association of Jurists (AAJ). The guiding principles of the AAJ would be the defense and promotion of human rights and solidarity with jurists prosecuted due to their supporting these principles.

**Subseries C: Bucks Dinner, 1939-1994**

In 1929, labor lawyer and social justice advocate, Maurice Sugar, invited like-minded friends to join him for an evening of venison and song. He charged guests 50 cents and contributed the money to a fund for the unemployed. Thus began the Bucks Dinner. For more than fifty years, those dedicated to equality, peace, and justice, gathered annually to enjoy food, entertainment, and to raise money for the causes in which they believed. Ernest Goodman took an active role in the Bucks Dinner, acting as "Head Hunter" and taking part in the committee to distribute funds raised.

**Series VII: Subject Files, 1932-1995**

This series is comprised of materials on people, places and events that influenced Goodman's belief system and were driving forces in both his personal and professional life.

**Arrangement:**

Part two is arranged in four series – Series IV (Boxes 20-45), Series V (Boxes 45-72), Series VI (Boxes 72-86), and Series VII (Boxes 86-100). Folders are arranged alphabetically, unless otherwise noted.

Series IV: Bernard "Shango" Stroble and the Attica Uprising is further divided into four subseries:

Subseries A: Trial Records (Boxes 20-41)

Subseries B: Correspondence (Box 41). Folders are arranged chronologically.

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Series V: Litigation is further divided into three subseries:

Subseries A: Immigration – Denaturalization/Deportation Cases (Boxes 45-51). Folders are arranged by surname of individual, but are not listed on the guide. Contact the Reference Archivist for assistance.

Subseries B: Committee to Assist Southern Lawyers (Boxes 51-56)

Subseries C: General Litigation (Boxes 56-72)

Series VI: Professional and Personal Associations is further divided into three subseries:

Subseries A: National Lawyers Guild (Boxes 72-81)

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9. Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting; Committee, 1987
10. Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting; Correspondence, 1985-1987

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1. Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting; Publicity, Fliers and Pamphlets, 1987
2. Fund for Equal Justice (FFEJ); Atmore Holman Defense Fund, 1974-1975
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1. FFEJ; Los Angeles Chapter, 1970
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3. FFEJ; New York Prison Reform, 1971-1973
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7. FFEJ; Requests for Funds, 1966-1975
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10. FFEJ; Southern Legal Action Movement, 1969-1970
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13. Guild Notes, May 1988-Sep 1996
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1. Guild Practitioner, 1970-1986
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3. History; Clippings and Press Releases, 1939-1980s
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1. Correspondence, Dec 1977-May 1989
2. Letterhead, Application for Membership, undated
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5. Permanent Secretariat; Managua, Nicaragua, 1981-1983
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7. China's Legal System, 1978-1979
8. Chrysler Case; Clippings, 1939-1940
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1. Civil Rights Congress; Organization and Meeting Minutes, 1946
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6. Collier & Goodman, 1932-1939
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8. Committee on Economic Welfare of Profession, 1939
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11. Correspondence; Personal, 1928-1949
12. Crockett, George, Jr.; Biographical
13. Crockett, George, Jr.; Judicial Tenure Committee – New Bethel Affidavits, 1969
14. Crockett, George, Jr.; Judicial Tenure Committee – New Bethel Correspondence and Support, 1969
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9. Detroit Red Squad Files; Ernest Goodman, 1938-1971 (1 of 3)
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8. Goodman, Ernest; Campaign for Attorney General, 1948
9. Goodman, Ernest; History Tapes, Correspondence, 1988-1991
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3. Hill, Charles A. Jr.; Army Loyalty, 1951
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3. Japan
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7. Litigation of Political issues; Correspondence, Outline, 1966
8. Lown, Harold (Security Risk); Correspondence, 1954-1960
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3. Sugar, Maurice; Biography, Correspondence, 1974-1978
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