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## J. William Belanger Papers

1932-1986

3 boxes (3 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 117



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Union activist and leader who was the first President of the Massachusetts State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and who also served on a number of governmental agencies, civic agencies, and commissions. Includes correspondence, biographical material, writings, scrapbooks, subject files, newsclippings; and pamphlets, manuals, and other printed materials. Scrapbooks comprise the bulk of the collection and include correspondence, news clippings, photographs, postcards, and various memorabilia.

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Labor  
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## Background on J. William Belanger

J. William Belanger was born in Newmarket, New Hampshire, in 1907 and began working in textile mills at the age of fourteen. By the time he was nineteen, he had worked in organized mills in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and in the early 1930's, had returned to New England to work as an organizer for the United Textile Workers of America. In 1934, he lead a 17-day general strike, acting as Assistant Director for New England.

In 1936 when the textile unions joined the CIO, Belanger served as Connecticut State Director of the Textile Workers Organizing Committee (TWOC-CIO), and later in Boston as the Assistant New England Regional Director of TWOC-CIO. In 1941, he was elected to the Executive Board of the Massachusetts State CIO, and made Secretary the following year. When the offices of Secretary and Treasurer were combined in 1946, Belanger was elected to the post. That same year he was chosen an International Vice President of the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA), and in 1948, became President of the Massachusetts State CIO Council.

Belanger worked with leaders in the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor (the state branch of the American Federation of Labor) to defeat the three anti-union referenda on the 1948 state ballot. The cooperation between the two state organizations led to their eventual merger in 1958. At the merger convention held in December of that year, Belanger was elected the first President of the Massachusetts State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. He held this post until 1964, when he was appointed Director of the Massachusetts Division of Employment Security.

In addition to his union activities, Belanger served on a number of governmental agencies, civic agencies and commissions. He died in Naples, Florida, in 1986.

## Scope of collection

Correspondence, biographical material, writings, scrapbooks, subject files, newsclippings; pamphlets, manuals, and other printed materials; and memorabilia related to Belanger's union and election activities, and his work with various government agencies and commissions. Scrapbooks comprise the bulk of the collection and include correspondence, news clippings, photographs, postcards, and various memorabilia. Correspondents include: the U.S. Conciliation Service of the U.S. Department of Labor; the National War Labor Board; the War Manpower Commission of the Office for Emergency Management; the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts; the Council for Constitutional Reform in Massachusetts, Inc.; and The White House.

## Arrangement

This collection is organized into five series:

Series 1. Biography, 1944-1986

Series 2. Subject Files, 1932-1964

Series 3. Printed Matter, 1948-1978

Series 4. Scrapbooks (oversize), 1934-1986

Series 5. Plaques and Memorabilia, 1934-1986

## Inventory

Series 1. Biography

1944-1986

Biographical material

1951-1986

Box 1: 1

Writings

1944-1968

Box 1: 2

Series 2. Subject Files

1932-1964

AFL Organizer's Commission

1932

Box 1: 3

Election Activities

1948

Box 1: 4

Election Activities

1958

Box 1: 5

Election Activities

1962

Box 1: 6

General Correspondence

1937-1964

Box 1: 7

Mass. AFL-CIO COPE

n.d.

Box 1: 8

New England Textile Study

1957-1959

Box 1: 9

Politics

1963

Box 1: 10

United Textile Workers Organizing

1933

Box 1: 11

University of Massachusetts

1964

Box 1: 12

Series 3. Printed Materials

1948-1978

AFL-CIO

1957-1958

Box 1: 13

Congress of Industrial Organizations

1953

Box 1: 14

Connecticut State Labor Council

1978

Box 1: 15

Industrial Union Dept., AFL-CIO

n.d.

Box 1: 16

Northern Textile Association

1973

Box 1: 17

Textile Workers Union of America

1943, n.d.

Box 1: 18

Union Manuals

1952-1962

Box 1: 19

United Labor Committee of Massachusetts

1948

Box 1: 20

Series 4. Scrapbooks (oversize)

1934-1986

Vol. 1

1934-1954

Box 1

Vol. 2

1955-1962

Box 1

Vol. 3

1962-1963

Box 1

Vol. 4

1964-1968

Box 1

Series 5. Plaques and Memorabilia

1934-1986

(oversize)

Box 2

Photos

1934-1986

Box 3

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from J. William Belanger, 1986

### Related Material

More information about Belanger, and his roles in various labor organizations, can be found in the following related collections:

**MS 134, Series 1** This consists of correspondence between Belanger and the Textile Worker's Union of America, New Bedford Joint Board, 1959-1964

**MS 369, Series 1, Subseries C** The correspondence, reports, and minutes in this subseries comprise the merger material between the Massachusetts State CIO and the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor, 1955-1958

**MS 369, Series 1, Subseries D** These are convention files of the Massachusetts State CIO and the Massachusetts State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. The years 1957-1964 include correspondence and speeches of Belanger.

### Processing Information

Processed by Ken Fones-Wolf, December 1987.

### Language:

English

### Acknowledgments

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### Copyright and Use (More information )

*Cite as:* J. William Belanger Papers (MS 117). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

### Subjects

Belanger, J. William, 1907-1986--Archives.

Elections--Massachusetts--History--20th century--Sources.

Labor leaders--New England--Biography.

Massachusetts--Politics and government--1865-1950--Sources.

New England--Economic conditions--20th century--Sources.

Textile Workers Organizing Committee--History--Sources.

Textile Workers Union of America--History--Sources.

Textile workers--Labor unions--New England--History--20th century--Sources.

United Textile Workers of America--History--Sources.

### Contributors

Belanger, J. William, 1907-1986 [main entry]

### Genres and formats

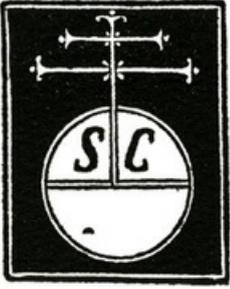
Photographs.

Scrapbooks.

## Link to similar SCUA collections

Labor

Massachusetts



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