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Bertha Strong Cooley Scrapbooks

1901-1949

2 scrapbooks (0.5 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 506

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An educator, farmer's wife, and resident of South Deerfield, Massachusetts, Bertha Strong Cooley was an ardent Socialist who published regularly in local newspapers on topics ranging from anti-imperialism, democracy, capitalism, Communism, Russia, World War II, and civil rights.

The Cooley scrapbooks reflect the views of a teacher and farmer's wife who used the newspapers to express her passion for social justice. Cooley ranged widely in responding to the news of the day, espousing Socialism and opposing racial injustice, war, imperialism, economic oppression, and Capitalism. One scrapbook contains writings by Cooley, the other clippings of articles dealing with topics of interest.

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Civil rights
Communism and Socialism
Massachusetts (West)
Peace
Social change
Social justice

Background on Bertha Strong Cooley

Bertha Strong Cooley was born on July 31, 1862, the fifth of six children of Ellen (Humphrey) and David Almerin Strong, the pastor of the Monument Congregational Church in South Deerfield, Mass., and later state representative for the towns of Deerfield and Whately. Educated in the local public schools, Cooley worked as a teacher in South Carolina and Georgia and, less certainly, as a language teacher at the Deerfield Academy, and during the academic year 1897-1898, she was enrolled as an unclassified student at the University of Chicago.

Cooley's life took a turn in the years after 1900. A Socialist with a strong social conscience and equally strong opinions, she began publishing short stories, poetry, essays, and letters to the editor in the Springfield newspapers by 1901, and after marrying a Deerfield farmer, Edwin Almerin Cooley (1852-1933) on July 27, 1905, she dramatically expanded the scope of her writing. From the 1920s through 1940s, she was a regular presence in more than a half dozen newspapers, expressing her views on topics ranging from racial justice to Sacco and Vanzetti, the Depression, the failures of Capitalism, world peace, and the promise of Socialism and Communism. Cooley died on July 12, 1950 and is buried in Brookside Cemetery in Deerfield.

Scope of collection

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Inventory

Cooley, Bertha Strong: Scrapbook 1
1901-1942

The scrapbook includes clipped copies of short stories, poems, essays, and letters to the editor written by Cooley and published in a variety of newspapers from Boston to the Berkshires. Of special note are a series of handwritten, retained copies of letters to the editor, including a wonderful, though sadly incomplete letter containing a first-hand account from a friend of Cooley's who marched in a procession commemorating Sacco and Vanzetti.

Cooley, Bertha Strong: Scrapbook 2
1939-1949

Includes copies of articles and letters to the editor on topics of interest to Cooley, including anti-imperialism, democracy, Capitalism, Communism, Russia, World War II, and civil rights. Laid into the volume, but not pasted in, are a large number of published letters by Cooley.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Wilma Zapka, 1996 (1996-074) and Sara Woodbury, Tilton Library, July 2016 (2016-153).

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Aug. 2015.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

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Search terms

Subjects

Pacifists--Massachusetts
Race relations--United States
Socialists--Massachusetts
World War, 1939-1945

Genres and formats

Letters to the editor
Scrapbooks

Link to similar SCUA collections

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