

## Robert and Waldemar Schultze Papers

1941-1950

1 box (0.5 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 528

[About SCUA](#)[SCUA home](#)[Credo digital](#)[Scope](#)[Inventory](#)[Admin info](#)[Download](#)[xml version](#)[print version \(pdf\)](#)[Read collection overview](#)

Brothers from Buffalo, New York, Robert and Waldemar Schultze were held in disciplinary army barracks as conscientious objectors during the Second World War. Both Robert and Waldemar wrote to their mother, Jennie Schultze, frequently, and she to them. The collection contains roughly 120 letters, almost all of them dated, spanning mainly from 1943 to 1944. Robert, the younger of the two Schultze boys, also wrote to his fiancée Helen Anne Rosen.

The letters concern everything from the family dog to the family business. Due to strictly enforced censorship, the brother's were cautious in the official letters home to their mother. Waldemar and Robert were able to sneak a handful of letters out of prison to

their mother, however, and in those letters they wrote honestly about the conditions they encountered. In one such letter, Waldemar wrote his mother and told her about the threat of postponing his good behavior release date if he should slip up and write something that had to be censored, or even if she wrote something to him that needed to be censored. A small amount of correspondence exists that is addressed to Jennie from Attorneys J. Barnsdall and J. Cornell, regarding Robert and Waldemar's case.

See similar SCUA collections:

Peace

Prison issues

Spiritual change

## Background on Robert and Waldemar Schultze

Waldemar J. Schultze and Robert R. Schultze were born to parents Jennie and Waldemar Schultze. During the early 1940s, both brothers still resided with their mother at 875 Richmond Avenue in Buffalo, New York. Unmarried, Waldemar owned the Buffalo Radio Supply store and was employed by the University of Buffalo, although it is unclear what he did at the University. He was disengaged by the University in January of 1943. Robert was employed as a truck driver, and was engaged to Helen Anne Rosen, also of Buffalo.

The papers of Waldemar and Robert Schultze chronicle the two brothers' internment as conscientious objectors during the Second World War. Waldemar was the first to be inducted, on October 29th, 1942 at the age of 33. On February 5th, 1943, while being held at the Disciplinary Barracks of Fort Niagara, he refused to wear the military uniform, citing religious beliefs that prevented him from participating in any activity that would aid the military. On March 15th, 1943, Waldemar was tried and found guilty of violating the 64th Article of War, which is disobeying a superior officer's command. Initially, his sentence was 10 years in Disciplinary Army Barracks, but was reduced to 5 years. His "good behavior" release date was September 20, 1946.

Robert's induction is not as well documented. Through correspondence between Waldemar and his mother Jennie, it is clear that Robert, age 31, was inducted before February 25, 1943, and that by March 4th he had joined his brother in the military discipline barracks of Fort Niagara. He was first called for induction months prior but was deemed unfit for service due to dark spots on his lungs, which were considered possible signs of tuberculosis. The second induction and following physical found the same dark spots, but Robert was called for duty regardless. At the beginning of May, the brothers were transferred to Fort Jay on Governor's Island, located in the New York Harbor between Brooklyn and Manhattan, where they stayed until a transfer to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in late June. In mid-December, the brothers were again transferred, this time to Stormville, New York.

In a July 8, 1942 letter from Waldemar to Colonel Boughton, he identifies himself as a conscientious objector due to his religious beliefs. In it, Waldemar further states that he is a Jehovah's Witness and claims interest in the religion since 1940. He lists his status as a publisher in the church (a follower without superior status) rather than a Pioneer (a follower with significant status in the church, such as an Elder). The letter was not sent or signed and, in addition, Waldemar does not seem to be a practicing Jehovah's Witness. Throughout their correspondence, he extends the fondest well wishes to his mother on Easter, Mother's Day, Christmas, and New Years and laments the idea of having to spend two birthdays in the barracks, while Jehovah's Witnesses only celebrate the holiday "Memorial of Christ's Death," and do not recognize birthdays under the belief that such practices are pagan in nature.

Regardless, both Waldemar and Robert rejected the idea of war based on their beliefs, and held fast to their ideals despite their treatment in the disciplinary barracks. At Fort Niagara, the brothers were met with intense dislike and cruel treatment from the guards. In the letter dated February 25th addressed to Jennie, Waldemar writes about a handful of instances in which he refuses to do work that would be helpful to the military and suffers the consequences. On one particular occasion, he is taken with the other prisoners to shovel coal: "...when we arrived at the coal yard and the others received coal shovels to load coal trucks, I refused to do the work, whereupon I was told to stand against the far edge of one of the coal trucks being loaded by three prisoners with shovels...Fortunately, due to the sympathy of the other prisoners for me...no large pieces of coal, or at least no pieces large enough to injure me, landed on me, despite the constant urging of the guard who kept telling the other prisoners he'd like to see them shovel coal right at me ..." Jennie responds to accounts of mistreatment with her belief that the Army is in the hands of Satan, and she offers Bible passages as a way to cope with the difficulties.

While Waldemar corresponded mainly with Jennie, Robert wrote to both his mother and his fiancée, Helen. He used the letters as an opportunity to ask her for money, cigarettes, a picture, more letters, as well as to tell her that he loved her dearly and hoped that she would wait for him. In a letter dated August 29th, 1943, Robert writes that he is "...not counting on the war ending, as I think it will last at least 10 or 15 more years." They wrote to each other until October of 1943, when Helen stopped responding to Robert's letters. He continued to write her often, asking if she was alright or if she had had a change of heart. His letters went unanswered, and Robert remained unmarried.

Through their internment, the brothers kept vigilant correspondence, both to fight off the inevitable boredom and to stay

informed on the legal matters of their imprisonment. Mainly, they were concerned that their attorney, Jay Barnsdall, had not contacted them about filing a writ of habeas corpus, nor had he taken any legal action thus far. In a letter to Jennie dated May 16th, Robert writes "I cannot be convinced that a person can legally be confined because his beliefs conflict with the beliefs of others." Regardless, the slow pace of the legal proceedings seemed to weaken their spirits about a possible release. If being paroled to go back to Buffalo was not an option, the brothers hoped they would be able to finish their sentences at a Civilian Public Service camp. As their internment continued, Waldemar seemed to become less confident of a favorable finding in their case. He expressed feeling embittered about both the status of his case and the effect that his situation was having on his mother. He wrote to Jennie of his feelings: "Where I formerly believed justice would ultimately result in our case, I no longer believe we shall ever receive it...It isn't even the prospect of the bleak and empty years ahead [that embitters] me. It is because you have been exposed to the blows of adversity and misfortune at a time in your life when you could expect I would be your shield."

Jennie Schultze was also told by the brothers, mainly Waldemar as his correspondence is more numerous, to keep in touch with the American Friends Service Committee and inform them about their mistreatment, the slow pace of legal issues, as well as Jennie's worsening financial instability. In a letter addressed to Waldemar, Jennie expressed her feelings of hopelessness: "I don't know what to do, since they took you away, with no support at all. I suppose I am to live in the street and beg my meals from door to door. Surely such things are not supposed to happen here in our own country." This letter was never received by Waldemar, as it was sent back to Jenny with the post-censorship comment: "Letters to inmates should be as cheerful in nature as possible. Your son receives all of your letters except the ones which may be returned to you. He is acting in this matter and this letter will not help him."

Another major point of interest for Waldemar was his shop, Buffalo Radio Supply. He told his mother what actions to take with the business, what to buy for the store, how to track sales, as well as where all the original lighting was located in case the store had to be closed. On February 28th, 1944, the store's ownership was signed over to Jennie Schultze.

Also during February of 1944, Robert wrote to Jennie telling her she might as well give up on taking legal action, as their situation now seemed so hopeless. Despite his hopelessness, in late June the brothers received their writ of habeas corpus, but were unsure as to whether or not they should trust their attorneys to take the proper legal action, and do it promptly. On June 26th, 1944, Jennie received a carbon copy of a letter from Jay Barnsdall to his associate Julian Cornell, telling him that Jennie Schultze refused to pay the \$20.00 fee for her sons' cases, and informing him that "her promise was just as good as any other German promise." Two days later, she received two carbon copies of letters between Barnsdall and Cornell, discussing the Schultze brothers' case. Cornell wrote to Barnsdall that Waldemar's case alone cost \$20.00, and he would not further it. A strange change of heart made Barnsdall write back, urging him to follow through with the case, and even using his own money to pay for the costs. On August 6th, Waldemar wrote to Jennie informing her that his writ was sustained and he was slated for release later that week. Waldemar also wrote that the guard accompanying him to the court informed him that many of the brothers' letters had been read and returned to the mail room rather than given to Waldemar or sent back to the return address. The letter is the last letter written from either of the men during their internments.

## Scope of collection

The collection contains some 120 letters, dating from July of 1942 to 1950. The majority of the letters are from the Schultze brothers to their mother in Buffalo during their internments between 1943 and 1944. Letters from Robert to his fiancée Helen Anne Rosen are side by side with the three letters from Corporal Alfred Godfrey also to Helen, in which Godfrey tells her (referring to her as Anne) that he loves her. Included as well are letters to Waldemar from the War Department calling for his induction, announcing his sentence, and reporting his progress to Jennie.

All letters written from the brothers during their internment were written and sent on paper and envelopes provided for them. Some of these envelopes have the words "IDLE GOSSIP SINKS SHIPS" on the front, next to the address. Strict rules were posted on the header of the paper from Fort Leavenworth: there was to be no bad news conveyed within, nor news that could possibly upset the prisoner. Also, no letters passed censorship if they were too long to "permit censorship" or if they were not written in English.

Other letters are addressed to Robert, Waldemar, and Jennie Schultze in Buffalo, from the Richmond Avenue Methodist Church, the American Friends Service Committee, various Buffalo Radio Supply customers, and the brothers' attorneys, Jay Barnsdall and Julian Cornell.

Finally, the collection contains a black and white photograph of Helen Anne Rosen, a check for five dollars written out to "cash" from the Buffalo Radio Supply account, a National Service Veterans Insurance card for Waldemar J. Schultze, business cards, and various church donation envelopes sent to the Schultze family from the Richmond Avenue Methodist Church.

## Inventory

---

Correspondence

1941 Oct-1942  
Box 1: 1  
Correspondence  
1943 Jan-Feb  
Box 1: 2  
Correspondence  
1943 Mar 4-13  
Box 1: 3  
Correspondence  
1943 Mar 14-25  
Box 1: 4  
Correspondence  
1943 Apr 2-16  
Box 1: 5  
Correspondence  
1943 Apr 18-27  
Box 1: 6  
Correspondence  
1943 May  
Box 1: 7  
Correspondence  
1943 June  
Box 1: 8  
Correspondence  
1943 July  
Box 1: 9  
Correspondence  
1943 Aug  
Box 1: 10  
Correspondence  
1943 Sept 2-12  
Box 1: 11  
Correspondence  
1944 Sept 14-29  
Box 1: 12  
Correspondence  
1944 Oct  
Box 1: 13  
Correspondence  
1943 Nov-Dec  
Box 1: 14  
Correspondence  
1944 Jan  
Box 1: 15  
Correspondence  
1944 Feb  
Box 1: 16  
Correspondence  
1944 Mar-May  
Box 1: 17  
Correspondence  
1944 June 7-22  
Box 1: 18  
Correspondence  
1944 June 25-18  
Box 1: 19  
Correspondence  
1944 July-Sept  
Box 1: 20

Correspondence

1946-1950

Box 1: 21

Correspondence

undated

Box 1: 22

Business cards, insurance cards , receipts, notes

undated

Box 1: 23

Photograph: Rose, Helen Anne

circa 1943

Box 1: 24

---

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from Vincent DiMarco in June 2007.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Mary E. Fahey in June 2007.

### Related Material

For other personal accounts of service during World War II in the Special Collections and University Archives, see:

William Manchester Papers (MS 433)

Wayne G. Sharpe Papers (MS 462)

G. Clifford Stamper Papers (MS 463)

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

Please use the following format when citing materials from this collection:

Robert and Waldemar Schultze Papers (MS 528). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

### Subjects

Fort Jay (N.Y.)

Fort Leavenworth (Kan.)

Fort Niagara (N.Y.)

Governors Island (New York County, N.Y.)

Schultze, Robert

Schultze, Waldemar

World War, 1939-1945--Conscientious objectors--United States

### Contributors

Schultze, Waldemar [\[main entry\]](#)

### Genres and formats

Letters (Correspondence)

### Link to similar SCUA collections

Peace

Prison issues

Spiritual change



Special Collections & University Archives  
University Libraries : UMass Amherst  
154 Hicks Way : Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275  
Ph. 413-545-7282 (545-SCUA)



2020Site PoliciesAccessibility