

Morris Watson papers, 1932-1971

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Watson, Morris, 1901-1972
Title	Morris Watson papers
Dates	1932-1971 (inclusive) 1932 1971
Quantity	4.5 linear feet, (3 containers)
Collection Number	Ax 744
Summary	Morris Watson (1901-1972) was a reporter, labor leader and an active participant in progressive causes of the 1930s and 1940s. The collection contains records from Watson's work with the Living Newspaper, the Newspaper Guild, the International Longshoremen's & Warehouse Union, the American Labor Party, and the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties and includes play and radio manuscripts, correspondence, memos, speeches, articles, meeting minutes, committee reports, statements and conference materials, publications, publicity, publications, and photographs.
Repository	University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives. UO Libraries--SPC, 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 Fax: 541-346-3485 spcarref@uoregon.edu
Access Restrictions	Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections & University Archives Reading Room.
Additional Reference Guides	Paper finding aid with additional information is available in Special Collections & University Archives.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for production of this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Historical Note

Morris Watson (1901-1972) was born in Joplin, Missouri on January 29, 1901. He ran away from home after one year of high school and joined the army the following year. After the war he attended the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts for one year, 1920-1921.

Watson began his journalistic career as a reporter for the *Omaha World Herald* in 1923. In 1927 he moved to the *Denver Post*. After two years he moved to Chicago and read copy for the *Chicago Herald*

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and *Examiner*. Later in 1929 he became a reporter for the Associated Press (AP) in Chicago, then in New York.

Watson's first union activities involved the Newspaper Guild labor union. He was one of the six reporters that organized the Guild in 1933. Watson served as treasurer of the Newspaper Guild of New York during 1933-1934, as vice president in charge of wire services of the American Newspaper Guild from 1934-1941, and as organizer of the American Newspaper Guild, CIO from 1937-1941. AP dismissed Watson in 1935 because of his active participation in the Guild. The National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act) had recently been passed and a test case was made of Watson's dismissal. In 1937 the Supreme Court ruled that freedom of the press was not violated by the Wagner Act. Unions were legitimized by the decision and Watson returned to AP. He remained with AP for two weeks and then left by choice.

After being fired by AP, Watson was appointed managing producer of the Living Newspaper, which was a federal theatre project of the Works Progress Administration and was sponsored by the Newspaper Guild of New York. Watson remained managing producer until 1937.

In the early 1940s Watson was active in the American Labor Party. He ran for Congress in New York's 17th District in 1940 and was chairman of the Progressive Committee to Rebuild the American Labor Party in 1941.

Watson moved to San Francisco in 1942 to become the Director of Publicity, Education & Publications of the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) and editor of the union's weekly newspaper, *The Dispatcher*. He remained with the ILWU until his retirement in 1965.

Watson was married in 1927 and had three children. He died in 1972.

Content Description

The collection contains records from Watson's work with the Living Newspaper, the Newspaper Guild, the International Longshoremen's & Warehouse Union, the American Labor Party, and the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties and includes play and radio manuscripts, correspondence, memos, speeches, articles, meeting minutes, committee reports, statements and conference materials, publications, publicity, publications, and photographs.

Living Newspaper material consists of play manuscripts, correspondence by Watson that contains separated outgoing and incoming sections organized by date (1936-1968), as well as individual and organizational files containing correspondence that are organized alphabetically by title. There is also a file of interdepartmental memos from 1936-1937, speeches, articles, and radio scripts by Watson, and meeting minutes, statements, and reports from committees and meetings regarding the WPA and federal arts projects organized by committee or meeting title. Also included are program files, publicity and photographs of theater performances.

American Newspaper Guild material consists of the papers of Carl Randau as well as Watson's files. Randau material includes incoming (1938-1947) and outgoing (1938-1948) correspondence files, Randau's notes and arguments about the 1937 ANG referendum, elections committee reports, memos, statements, contracts, leaflets, and biographical material. Watson's files include outgoing (1937-1965) and incoming (1932-1969) correspondence as well as correspondence files organized alphabetically by organizational title or person's name, telegrams, speeches, articles, memos, statements, reports, notes, leaflets, contracts, pamphlets and photographs.

International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union material contains outgoing (1943-1965) and incoming (1943-1967) correspondence as well as correspondence files organized alphabetically by organizational title or person's name, memos, reports, material from Harry Bridges Victory committee, material from legal cases involving Bridges and other trials, pamphlets, and press releases.

There is also a section of general correspondence separated into outgoing (1937-1968) and incoming (1937-1969), as well as correspondence files organized alphabetically by organizational title or person's name, files on Richfield Oil regarding an anti-communist rally the company sponsored, manuscripts that include a proposal for California Labor School, book reviews, and articles, as well as speeches that include research and drafts.

American Labor Party material (1940-1942) includes campaign material, memos, minutes, press releases, material on radical/liberal split within the party, official newspaper, material regarding a law suit between factions within the Labor Party, and correspondence.

National Federation for Constitutional Liberties material includes correspondence, action letters, pamphlets, leaflets, and newspapers, and a play manuscript.

The collection also contains miscellaneous publications, biographical material, and folders of Watson's work as an arbitrator for San Francisco.

Photographs are housed separately for preservation purposes and are mostly black and white prints of play performances.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Property rights reside with Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries. Copyright resides with the creators of the documents or their heirs. All requests for permission to publish collection materials must be submitted to Special Collections and University Archives. The reader must also obtain permission of the copyright holder.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Morris Watson papers, Ax 744, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Collection is organized into the following series: Living Newspaper, American Newspaper Guild, International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union, General Correspondence, American Labor Party, and the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties.

Material within this collection is minimally arranged. Any arrangement is either derived from the records' creators or custodians or from staff at the time of initial processing. It may be necessary to look in multiple places for the same types of materials.

Processing Note

Collection processed by staff, 1973.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

This collection received a basic level of processing including minimal organization and rehousing.

Description information is drawn in part from information supplied with the collection and initial surveys of the contents.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Papers, circa 1901-1972

3.0 linear feet

Photographs (PH225), not yet assigned

1.25 linear feet

Description	Dates
PH225_001: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Theatre / Play] 1.0 photographic print 7.8 x 10.3 inches Watson, Morris	
PH225_002: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Theatre / Play] 1.0 photographic print 11.9 x 18.3 inches Watson, Morris	
PH225_003: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on Stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 14.3 x 23.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_004: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.4 x 25.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_005: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage WPA]	not yet assigned

Description	Dates
1.0 photographic print 17.7 x 19.1 inches Watson, Morris	
PH225_006: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 13.7 x 20.4 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_007: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Proof of actor shot] 1.0 photographic print 17.7 x 25.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_009: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_010: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Man with "Buck" hat on smoking cigarette] 1.0 photographic print 13 x 17.8 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_011: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actor on stage man with giant cigar WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_012: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage "We the people" backdrop WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_013: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage - police and woman with bundle WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_014: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage - crowd of men - stock exchange WPA]	not yet assigned

Description	Dates
1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	
PH225_015: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage - dressy couple having dinner] 1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_016: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas 1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_017: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Backstage at production WPA] 1.0 photographic print 13.8 x 22.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_018: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Backstage at production WPA] 1.0 photographic print 13.8 x 22.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_019: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Backstage at production WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.5 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_008: Tennessee Valley Wilfred Clark Jean Thomas [Actors on stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.2 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_020: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [backstage at production WPA] 1.0 photographic print 20.5 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_021: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Rehearsal [?] WPA] 1.0 photographic print	1935

Description	Dates
20.2 x 25.2 inches Watson, Morris	
PH225_022: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Actors - on stage man with sandwich and one standing WPA] 1.0 photographic print 14.7 x 17 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_023: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Actors - on stage man with sandwich and one standing WPA] 1.0 photographic print 7.7 x 22.7 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_024: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Theatre goers [?] (backstage)] 1.0 photographic print 20.4 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_025: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Theatre goers [?] (backstage)] 1.0 photographic print 20.4 x 25.3 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_026: "Power" - Childish questions - Allan Tower Viola Swayne [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 18.7 x 21.6 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_027: "Power" Insull's Empire [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 17.8 x 18.6 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_028: "Power" Insull's Empire [Actors on stage - "We the people" backdrop] 1.0 photographic print 17.7 x 23 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_029: "Power" Tennessee Valley. Gureta (??) Donnelly, John Larenz, Frank McMunn [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 14.3 x 22.7 inches	not yet assigned

Description	Dates
Watson, Morris	
PH225_030: Finale of "Power" Masks represent the supreme court [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 15.7 x 22.8 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_031: Finale of "Power" Masks represent the Supreme Court [Backstage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 13.3 x 23.8 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_032: Finale "Power" [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 12 x 23 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_033: Finale of "Power" [Actors on stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 12.5 x 23.8 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_034: Finale of "Power" [Actress on stage with big gun WPA] 1.0 photographic print 13.5 x 15.7 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_035: Finale of "Power" [Actors on stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_036: "The Living Newspaper" [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_037: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 ["The Living Newspaper" [?] WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	1935
PH225_038: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [WPA] 1.0 photographic print	not yet assigned

Description	Dates
28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	
PH225_039: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_040: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_041: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Actors on stage - men in jail WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_042: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Actors on stage - Man with loops and angry old man WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_043: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Doctor and patient on operating table - actors on stage WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_044: Power: The Living Newspaper c.1935 [Actors on stage - young man tipping hat and business man WPA] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned
PH225_045: Ritz Theatre - Power: The Living Newspaper [Outside theatre] 1.0 photographic print 28 x 35.2 inches Watson, Morris	not yet assigned

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Morris Watson papers, 1932-1971
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv03268>

Journalists--Labor unions
Labor unions--United States
Progressivism (United States politics)

Personal Names :

Watson, Morris, 1901-1972

Form or Genre Terms :

Correspondence
Speeches

Finding aid prepared by Tanya Parlet.
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