

Thomas Joseph Burns papers, 1891-1979

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Burns, Thomas Joseph.
Title	Thomas Joseph Burns papers
Dates	1891-1979 (inclusive) 1891 1979
Quantity	1.8 cubic feet, (4 document cases)
Collection Number	Mss 1101
Summary	Papers, printed ephemera, books and pamphlets collected by Thomas J. Burns, a socialist leader who ran a watch repair shop in Portland, Oregon, through the early 1950s. Includes pamphlets, books, broadsides, and clippings relating to national, local and Oregon politics, and a small amount of personal correspondence.
Repository	Oregon Historical Society, Davies Family Research Library Davies Family Research Library Oregon Historical Society 1200 SW Park Avenue Portland, OR 97205 Telephone: 503-306-5240 Fax: 503-219-2040 libreference@ohs.org
Access Restrictions	The collection is open to the public.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Thomas J. Burns was born in England in 1876, and after living in San Francisco he settled in Portland, Oregon in 1904. He was a watch repairman by trade and a well-known local personality, and his shop on West Burnside Street in downtown Portland included political books and pamphlets, as well as curiosities and other memorabilia. He was an executive secretary for the Socialist Party of Oregon and published various political pamphlets, tracts and newsletters, including *The red flag*, *The harpoon*, and *The fax*. Among his many dislikes were Communists, Republicans, fascists, big businesses, and organized religions. He died in 1957.

Content Description

The papers include correspondence, receipts, certificates, news clippings, a journal and various publications, booklets, political and religious leaflets, a bible, handbooks, and a small number of family photos.

Other Descriptive Information

Includes materials formerly designated Mss 1101-1.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation

Thomas Joseph Burns papers, Mss 1101, Oregon Historical Society Research Library

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two series:

Series A: Materials formerly designated Mss 1101-1

Series B: Materials from the original collection

Custodial History

The collection consists primarily of materials found among the effects of Thomas Burns by his daughter Elizabeth after his death in 1957.

Acquisition Information

Acquired 1958, Library Accession 7392.

Separated Materials

Several issues of *The fax*, a four-page newspaper edited and owned by Burns during the 1930s, and a few issues of other labor newspapers, have been placed in the Oregon Historical Society newspaper collection. Nine oil-cloth posters with anti-religious slogans and a hand-drawn anti-Axis poster are located in the Oregon Historical Society broadside collection.

Related Materials

Most of the books, pamphlets and letters of Thomas J. Burns are now housed in the Knight Library of the University of Oregon, Eugene.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series A: Mss 1101-1, 1891-1979

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Biographical data	1891-circa 1957
1/2	Writings by Thomas Burns	1911-1944
1/3	Correspondence between family members	1943-1979
1/4	Correspondence, outgoing	1925-1944
1/5	Correspondence to Burns	1914-1953
1/6	"Buy American watches" campaign	1945-1946
1/7	Financial materials	1931-1955
1/8-9	"Resource" files (mostly printed articles)	1918-1955
2/1	General materials (mostly broadsides and clippings)	1916-1953
2/2	Bible with annotations by Burns, and annotated bookmarks	undated
2/3	Books and serials (primarily related to political and social issues)	1914-1946; undated
2/4	Newspapers and clippings	1925-1971
3/1	NBC recipe bulletins (collected by Elizabeth Burns)	1936-1937
3/2	Materials concerning watchmaking in Oregon	1947;
3/3	Booklets on cooking, sewing, and health (including dress patterns)	circa 1920-1955

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3/4	Booklets--Mostly from the <i>Little blue book</i> and <i>People's pocket</i> series	1916-1938; undated
3/5	Books, primarily political in nature	1908-1948
4/1	Two books: <i>Catholic history of Oregon</i> (1916) by Edwin V. O'Hara, and <i>The kingship of self-control</i> by William George Jordan (c1899)	1899; 1916
4/2	Family photographs (3 items and negative strip)	1949; undated

Series B: Original collection, 1899-1957

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
4/3	Letters to Thomas Burns Lembert, R. J., 1916 August 8, Montana Anti-Saloon League Peterson, Hjalmar, 1943 January 20, watch request Widmer, 1946 January 17, crank letter McGar, O. R., 1950 October 6, thankyou letter	1916-1950
4/4	Receipt for insured mail, and certificate of re-registration in watchmaking	1950 October 9; 1944 January 11
4/5	Postcards and printed leaflets Five postcards printed by Burns and titled "Me un Gott-Heinie and Teddy," addressed to Charles L. McNary, Claude Pepper, Fulton Lewis, Jr., Tom Young, and others. Funeral notice card, Harry L. Gross, 1902-1938 Broadside: "Fosterism -- a Communist Party disease"; "The essence of Leninism"; "Attention! Watefront strikers!"; and "The tramp" by Jack London, 1904, 28 p. Flyer to "Repeal special tax levy for police and firemen," signed by the East Side Tax Payers' League and executive committee, Multnomah Tax Economy League. On reverse: Burns listed names of signers and his objections to each of them (primarily economic). Christmas cards, one from Mayor and Mrs. Earl Riley, 1944	1902-1944
4/6	Periodicals <i>The American farmer</i> -- a report on the farm policies of the Democratic administration, 1932-1943, by Democratic National Committee	1943-1956

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p><i>Free mind</i>-- Official organ of Institute of Human Fellowship, Vol. III, No. 6, 1949</p> <p><i>The challengers</i>-- Official organ, Portland section, Communist Party, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 1, 1956</p>	
4/7	<p>Tom Mooney labor booklet</p> <p>"Tom Mooney destroyed by labor leaders," expose of connection between California labor politicians and other forces involved in continued imprisonment of Mooney. Asks for help from every member of organized labor in demanding unconditional pardon for Mooney from San Quentin.</p>	1931 May
4/8	Newspaper clippings	1931-1945
4/9	<p>Conservative/Congressional publications</p> <p>Two letters from America's Future, Inc., distributors of reprints of John T. Flynn radio programs</p> <p>Report of the Super Power Committee of Oregon to the governor and 1933 legislatures of Oregon, Washington and Idaho, December 1932, suggesting cooperative and reciprocal hydroelectric power development of interstate streams.</p> <p>"Ceiling Price Regulation 7" -- retail ceiling prices for certain consumer goods, Office of Price Stabilization, D. C., August 14, 1952.</p>	1933-1952
4/10	<p>Broadsides</p> <p>"Universal mental liberty"</p> <p>"My parents were preachers too"</p> <p>Handwritten sign, Burns's reply to "Mr. Green-hand Communist"</p> <p>Handwritten sign advertising Rablie Berkowitz's lectures on religion in a changing world, undated</p>	undated
4/11	<p>Booklets</p> <p><i>The carpenter</i>, Vol LVII, No. 12, December 1937 -- Monthly owned and published by United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America</p> <p><i>The civic review</i>, Portland, 1938-1939 -- Annual review of Portland's city government</p>	1937-1939
4/12	<p>Political leaflets</p> <p>"Private power manipulation" -- reprint of an address by Homer T. Boone, in support of candidacy of Julius L. Meier for governor, 1930 October 9</p> <p>"Julius L. Meier for Governor"--a radio talk by Rufus C. Holman, 1930 October</p>	1930-1956

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>Senator J. E. Bennett for city commissioner, 1930 October <i>Northwest laborer</i>, Vol. 5, 1930 October (on Julius L. Meier) "Labor repudiates unfair circular" (against Meier and Frank Co.) "The battleship Oregon," reprinted from <i>Oregon Grange bulletin</i>, 1933 February 23 "An open letter to the President on his reorganization plan" by Amos Pinchot (exposing a purpose to break the authority of Congress and expand the powers of the president), 1938 January 29. Tom Burns leaflet: "If you're screwy...vote for Dewey! Roosevelt or Ruin!," showing "Tom Burns Roosevelt rooster," compliments of Tom Burns, FAX editor, ex-state secretary, Oregon Socialist Party. "What's cooking Mr. Dewey-- more apples," 1944 "Let's get the facts straight Mr. Dewey," "Communists -- show their hand," "Fascism vs. democracy," 1944. "Utopia" -- leaflet from H. H. Stallard. "Old age pensioners live on bread and water," 1949. "F.D.R. vs. Churchill," <i>Stalin's crusader</i>, Vol. 1, no. 8, May 1950 "Elect Lew Wallace for mayor," 1952 May 16 "Who are taxpayers?" -- Leaflet put out by Stallard for Congress, 1952 "Stallard for Congress in 1954" "Elect Willis Mahoney, United States Senator," 1954? "A picket's eye view of the Douglas McKay Chevrolet Company strike, 1956 (vote for Wayne Morse) "Defeat doublecross Democrats," by Tom Burns of League for Independent Political Actions, undated.</p>	
4/13	<p>Pamphlets, leaflets, and related materials <i>The harpoon</i>, article by Burns on "Saint Fred Boalt," 1927 <i>The harpoon</i>, June 1928, the "Make America Catholic" campaign and Aimee Semple McPherson. "Portland Community Chest racket," August 1933, on its failure in welfare relief. The Old Hickory Club of Oregon, 1935 (Burns first vice-president) "An appeal for unity of the Socialist movement on a scientific basis," Neil Barnett, 1937 "Bill of rights for G.I. Joe," 1944.</p>	1927-1944; undated
4/14	Assorted religious leaflets	1908-1950; undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
4/15	<i>Consolation : a journal of fact, hope and courage</i> (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society)	1943 June 23
4/16	Collection book for FAX, and R. G. Dun & Co. business ratings for Oregon	undated; 1926
4/17	Clippings which were in store window at various times	1940-1945; undated

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Clocks and watches--Repairing--History.

Socialism--Oregon.

Personal Names :

Burns, Thomas Joseph--Archives

Corporate Names :

Socialist Party (U.S.)

Geographical Names :

Oregon--Politics and government

Portland (Or.)--History.

Form or Genre Terms :

Letters

Newsletters

Printed ephemera

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