
Inventory of the Morris R. Evenson Papers, 1942 - 1988 (Bulk: 1960 - 1987)

Accession number: 1988/062; 1987/056; 1985/027; 1991/06

Labor Archives & Research Center

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Morris R. Evenson Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1942 - 1988

Date (bulk): (Bulk: 1960 - 1987)

Accession number: 1988/062; 1987/056; 1985/027; 1991/06

Creator: Evenson, Morris R.

Extent: 3.5 cubic feet

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Shelf location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Center's online catalog.

Language: English

Access

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Preferred Citation

Introduction

The Archives has brought together four separate donations to the Labor Archives and Research Center. Two donations by Morris Evenson consisted of newspapers and periodicals. After his death in 1988, his widow Jill Evenson donated his personal papers and a cloth banner from Local Union 1158 of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers, dated 1937. Morris Evenson was a member of the Painters Union, served as an elected official, and, as a retiree, was active in rank-and-file activity. He was a close associate of Dow Wilson, the Painters Union leader who was assassinated in 1966. This association was to have a strong impact on Evenson's career. A significant part of these papers records Wilson's career as well. This collection was processed by Carol Cuenod in 1997.

I. Morris Evenson

Evenson was born in Wisconsin in 1920, but spent his childhood school years in St. Paul, Minnesota. He dropped out of school in the ninth grade. Later he wrote, "It took both his hands to count the unions he had been a member of--Teamsters, Seamen, Electrical (Workers) in a radio factory, a busboy in the Culinary Workers, a switchman in the Railroad Brotherhood, a coffin maker in the Carpenters Union, and a plastic molder in the Machinists..." [1](#) and the Painters Union. He claimed that it was his life as a merchant seaman in the National Maritime Union (NMU) which continued his education, teaching him about unions and different political points of view. [2](#) It was as a merchant seaman in the NMU that he served his country during World War II. By 1948, Evenson had identified himself with the "left-wingers" in the Union, and became a victim of the purge of communists and their sympathizers by NMU President Joseph Curran. He was in New Orleans when he was "brought up on charges and expelled" from the union. [3](#) Evenson moved to San Francisco in 1948 and, in 1952, joined the Painters Union Local 1158.

Evenson was elected Business Representative of Painters Union Local 1158 in 1961. He also became a member of a rank-and-file caucus working to amalgamate the two separate locals in San Francisco--Local 1158 and Local 19. This was accomplished in 1963 forming Painters Local Union 4--the largest Painters Local in the country. Evenson was elected its first Business Representative.

When Wilson was assassinated in 1966, Evenson stepped in to continue Wilson's work as Local 4 Recording Secretary. He was also elected a trustee of the Bay Area Painters Trust Funds and served for 10 years as its chairman.

As a pensioner, Evenson focused his attention on the Bay Area Painters Trust Funds and also published a newsletter called *The Rank and File Voice*. Evenson's papers offer brief glimpses of his interests outside the Union through his correspondence, news clippings about his friends, and many "Letters to the Editor" published in the *San Francisco Examiner*, *Chronicle*, and *Progress*.

Footnotes:

1. Morris Evenson, *The Brotherhood of Blood*, p. 28
2. *Ibid.*, p.27
3. *Ibid.*, p.28

II. Dow Wilson

Dow Wilson's life had many parallels with Evenson. He was born in 1926 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Like Evenson, his formal education ended in the ninth grade. In 1942, at age 16, he also went to sea as a member of the National Maritime Union. Like Evenson, he was charged by the NMU leadership of being a communist; however, he successfully fought the charges while acting as his own attorney. Wilson left the NMU in the early 1950s, became a house painter and a member of Painters Union Local 19 in San Francisco. Wilson and Evenson had known about each other in the NMU, but did not meet until they became union brothers in the San Francisco Painters locals. Wilson was elected a business representative in Local 19 and was also in the caucus working for the amalgamation of the two painters locals. When the amalgamated local was chartered, Wilson was elected the first Local 4 Recording Secretary--the Local's most important officer.

Dow Wilson was assassinated three years later. A month later, Lloyd Green, an official of the Painters Union Local 127 in the East Bay, was also killed. A significant motive for these assassinations was the fight waged by Wilson and his supporters against the misuse and embezzlement of the Painters Union Trust Funds. Evenson was elected to replace Wilson during the period of turmoil and fear following the deaths of Wilson and Green.

Scope and Content

In addition to manuscripts and documents generated by Morris Evenson himself, the collection contains a large amount of originals or copies of the Bay Area Painters Union records covering the years when Evenson was an official and during his retirement. These were documents which Evenson felt were important enough to copy and keep. The attached Series Description sets forth the arrangement of the Collection.

Series I is where researchers will find biographical material on Evenson, his personal interests outside the Painters Union, and his friends. Other descriptions of his early life can be found in Series III in the manuscript of the novel he wrote about Dow Wilson's assassination.

Series II begins the Collection's holdings of the Painters Union material. There are three folders titled "Bay Area Painters - General" which hold correspondence, material on the Locals' elections, circulating letters to the membership, copies of news articles about the Union, and political activity. The file covering the years 1958 - 1964 includes correspondence written by Dow Wilson which will give researchers an insight to his unique and often bombastic writing style. Other folders have subject headings which include Negotiations, Bylaws, Constitutions and Agreements, but the documents do not constitute a comprehensive collection on these subjects. Researchers interested in Painters Union negotiations however will find a full, detailed description of collective bargaining for painters in the San Francisco Bay Area as provided by Wilson as part of his defense testimony (Int'l Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades (IBPAT) Hearing, 11/10- 11/65, Series V).

Evenson's association with Dow Wilson is well documented in Series III. There is a manuscript written by Evenson titled *The Brotherhood of Blood and Allied Crimes* which, in fiction form, tells the story of Wilson's life and the men responsible for his murder. Carl Black and Max Ward were brought to trial for the killing of Wilson and Green. Series III includes the trial transcript as well as notes taken by Evenson during that trial. The front-page newspaper articles on the assassinations reports the fear and outrage which San Francisco labor expressed after these killings.

Series IV Bay Area Painters Trust Funds documents Evenson's fight for honest administration of these Funds and his efforts to improve members' benefits under them. There are several folders documenting a case file on Douglas Page, a Trust Fund attorney, whom Evenson accused of illegally signing Trustees' names and notarizing them. Although a serious heart attack forced Evenson to retire, he continued to pursue the same goal--a strong voice for "rank and file" activity.

Series V holds a run of *The Rank and File Voice* (1986 - 1987) which Evenson published as well as the records generated in its publication--drafts of articles, cartoons, a collection of publications from the League for Industrial Democracy, a group which fought corruption in unions. There are flyers from different "rank and file" groups in Local 4 and other unions.

The most complete part of this collection is in Series VI Publications. Here can be found the Local's newspapers which Evenson prepared for deposit in the Archives. Researchers will find them useful in identifying the date, place and event not always fully stated in the other documents. The Bay Area Painters News runs from 1965 to 1970; *THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* starts with Volume 1 in 1970 through 1987. This series also has convention proceedings of the California State Conference of Painters from 1956 to 1965 and a few publications from the IBPAT.

As noted in the introduction, the Archives has the banner from Local 1158, Evenson's first Local when he joined the Painters Union in San Francisco.

For additional sources in the Labor Archives on Morris Evenson and the Bay Area Painters Union, see also:

1. *Organized Labor*, columns on Painters Locals "Painters News - Local 19," by Dow Wilson, mid-1955 to 7/22/63
"1158 Painters," by Morris Evenson, 1/14/63 to 7/22/63
"Painters News - Local 4," by Dow Wilson, 8/12/63 - 10/11/65 [4](#)
2. Morris Evenson Photograph Collection
3. For additional sources in the Labor Archives on Dow Wilson, see also: Ephemera Files, "Individuals - Wilson, Dow"

Footnotes:

4. news subsequently reported in newly-published Bay Area Painters News.

Series I Morris Evenson, 1942 - 1988

Physical Description: 7 Folders

Scope and Content Note

There is biographical material including obituaries. Here also are correspondence, clippings and general items with people and institutions not connected with the Painters Union.

Series II Int'l Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Workers Bay Area Locals and District Councils, 1958 - 1987

Physical Description: 11 Folders

Scope and Content Note

This series includes union records from the period when Evenson was an officer of Local 1158 and Local 4. Folders include constitutions, bylaws, agreements, negotiation case files, and case files of disputes with companies. Three folders include correspondence and other documents covering the years 1958 to 1987.

Series III Dow Wilson Assassination, 1965 - 1967

Physical Description: 19 folders

Scope and Content Note

This series begins with the transcript (3 volumes) of the IBPAT Hearing on charges against Dow Wilson in November 1965. There is a 145-page manuscript of a novel by Evenson, *The Brotherhood of Blood and Allied Crimes*. There are extensive news clippings from the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner as well as other papers on the Dow Wilson and Lloyd Green killings and the arrests of Carl Black, Norman Call, Max Ward and others. Transcripts of the trial, State of California against Carl Black and Max Ward, are here as well.

Series IV Bay Area Painters Trust Funds, 1963 - 1987

Physical Description: 17 Folders

Scope and Content Note

Annual reports, actuarial valuations, summary plan descriptions, financial statements, booklets and correspondence can be found here. The Trust Funds include the Pension, Welfare and Death Benefit Funds. There is also a case file on charges against Douglas Page, the Trust Fund attorney.

Series V Rank and File Activity, 1962 - 1987

Physical Description: 7 folders

Scope and Content Note

This series contains material created by Evenson after his retirement as well as leaflets written and distributed by various rank and file groups. It holds The Rank and File Voice and some of the working drafts used in its preparation. There are issues from two serials by the League for Industrial Democracy--Union Democracy in Action and Union Democracy Review, and one folder on Nat Weinstein, a member of the Socialist Workers Party active in Local 4.

Series VI Publications, 1956 - 1987

Physical Description: 24 folders

Scope and Content Note

IBPAT publications include one Convention Proceedings (1984) and five issues of the *Painters and Allied Trades Journal*. There are Convention Proceedings of the California State Conference of Painters from the years 1956 through 1965. All other publications are newspapers for Bay Area painters locals: *Bay Area Painters News* (1965 to 1970), *THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* (1970 through 1987).

I. MORRIS EVENSON

Box-folder 1/1	Biographical 1942 - 1988
Box-folder 1/3	Clippings (includes Jill Evenson & Kim Evenson) 1983 - 1987
Box-folder 1/4	Friends, Clippings & Correspondence (See Appendix for individuals) 1966 - 1986
Box-folder 1/5	Letters to Editors 1983 - 1987
Box-folder 1/6	General (includes material from Radical Education Project, SDS) 1968 - 1987& n.d.
Box-folder 1/7	General - Consultation, A. Glendenning case 1986

II. INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF PAINTERS & ALLIED TRADES (IBPAT) Bay Area Locals and District Councils

Additional Note

Pamphlets on Safety have been relocated in the Ephemera Files under: OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH and OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH - CAL/OSHA

Box-folder 1/8	IBPAT - Constitutions 1980, 1985
Box-folder 1/9	Painters Union Local 4 - By-Laws 1978 - 1987
Box-folder 1/10	Bay Counties District Council of Painters - By-Laws 1985 - 1986
Box-folder 1/11	Bay Area Painters - General 1958 - 1964
Box-folder 1/12	Bay Area Painters - General 1965 - 1984
Box-folder 2/1	Bay Area Painters - General 1985 - 1987 & n.d.
Box-folder 2/2	Bay Area Painter - Agreements 1947, 1971 - 1986
Box-folder 2/3	Painters & Decorators Joint Council, Inc. of San Francisco, Marin & Sonoma Counties 1980 - 1981
Box-folder 2/4	Bay Area District Council of Painters, Nos. 8, 16, 33 - Drywall Negotiation & Agreements 1967 - 1986
Box-folder 2/5	Painters Union Local 4 - Cases - Fess Paint Co. 1985 - 1986

III. DOW WILSON ASSASSINATION, 4/5/66

Box-folder 3/1 **IBPAT Hearing - Charges Against Dow Wilson - Transcript, Vol. I, 11/8/65**
Box-folder 3/2 **IBPAT Hearing - Charges Against Dow Wilson - Transcript, Vol. II, 11/9-10/65**
Box-folder 3/3 **IBPAT Hearing - Charges Against Dow Wilson - Transcript, 11/10-11/65**
Box-folder 3/4 **"The Brotherhood of Blood and Allied Crimes," ms by Morris Evenson**
Box-folder 3/5 **Evenson's notes--Call & Rasnick trial 1966 - 1967**
Box-folder 3/6 **Petition to Mayor John F. Shelley 1966**
Box-folder 3/7 **Dow Wilson - copy of photograph n.d.**
Box-folder 3/8 **News Reports - Bay Area Painters News 1966**
Box-folder 4/1 **News Reports - *Washington Post* 4/24- 25/66**
Box-folder 4/2 **News Reports - Photocopies of articles from *SF Examiner* and *Chronicle* 5/6-26/66, 1/17/67**
Box-folder 4/3 **News Reports - *San Francisco Examiner* 5/9- 10/66**
***San Francisco Chronicle* 5/10/66**
Box-folder 4/4 **News Reports - *San Francisco Examiner* 5/11/66**
***San Francisco Chronicle* 5/11/66**
Box-folder 4/5 **News Reports - *San Francisco Examiner* 5/12/66**
***San Francisco Chronicle* 5/12/66**
Box-folder 4/6 **News Reports - *San Francisco Examiner* 5/13/66**
***San Francisco Chronicle* 5/13/66**
Box-folder 4/7 **News Reports - *San Francisco Examiner* 5/16- 18/66**
***San Francisco Chronicle* 5/14/66, 1/17/67**
Box-folder 4/8 **News Reports - Memorials to Dow Wilson 1967, 1987**
Box-folder 4/9 **News Reports - (incomplete articles - jumps missing)**
Box-folder 4/10 **The People of the State of California vs. Max Ward and Carl Black, Transcript 11/15/66**
Box-folder 4/11 **The People of the State of California vs. Max Ward and Carl Black, Transcript 11/16/66**

IV. BAY AREA PAINTERS TRUST FUNDS

Box-folder 5/1 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Summary Plan Descriptions, Medicare Handbook 1979, 1982**
Box-folder 5/2 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Actuarial Report 1963**
Box-folder 5/3 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Actuarial Valuation & Review 1981, 1983**
Box-folder 5/4 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Annual Report 1966**
Box-folder 5/5 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Annual Reports & Summary Annual Reports 1983 - 1985**
Box-folder 5/6 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Reports to Federal Government 1981 - 1984**

Additional Note

Copy of the Labor-Management Reporting & Disclosure Act of 1959 has been relocated in the Ephemera Files under LABOR LEGISLATION - LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING & DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1959.

Box-folder 5/7 **Painters Union Local 4 - Cases - Berger Benson 1977 - 1980**
Box-folder 5/8 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Cases - Douglas Page 1980 - 1982**
Box-folder 5/9 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Cases - Douglas Page 1983**
Box-folder 5/10 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Cases - Douglas Page - Deposition 5/5/81**
Box-folder 5/11 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Cases - Douglas Page - Minutes 1980 - 1982**
Box-folder 5/12 **Bay Area Painters Pension Trust Fund - Cases - Douglas Page undated**
Box-folder 6/1 **Local Union & District Council Pension Fund (from Int'l Union) - Financial Statements 1980 - 1981**
Box-folder 6/2 **Bay Area Painters Death Benefit Trust Fund - Annual Report, Report of Examination 1981 - 1982**
Box-folder 6/3 **Bay Area Painters Welfare Funds - Report of Examination, Annual Report, Semi-Annual Report 1965, 1983**
Box-folder 6/4 **Bay Area Painters Welfare Funds - Booklets of Benefits 1978 - 1985**
Box-folder 6/5 **Bay Area Painters Trust Funds - Correspondence 1981 - 1986**
Box-folder 6/6 **Booklets on Pension Trust Funds 1976 - 1980**

V. RANK AND FILE ACTIVITY

Box-folder 6/7	General 1982 - 1987
Box-folder 6/8	General n. d.
Box-folder 6/9	Newsletters 1962, 1986
Box-folder 6/10	Newsletter - Painters Local 4 Rank and File Voice 1986 - 1987
Box-folder 6/11	Newsletter - <i>Union Democracy in Action</i> 1963 - 1973 1972 - 1973
Box-folder 6/12	Socialist Workers Party - Nat Weinstein 1970 - 1981

VI. PUBLICATIONS

- Box-folder 7/1 **IBPAT - Proceedings, 25th Convention 1984**
***Painters and Allied Trades Journal* Convention issue 1984**
- Box-folder 7/2 ***Painters and Allied Trades Journal* 4/71, 5/81, 10/85,2/87**
***Directory of Secretaries & Business Representatives* 1982 - 1983**
- Box-folder 7/3 **California State Conference of Painters**
Confention Proceedings - 20th to 23rd 1956 - 1959
- Box-folder 7/4 **California State Conference of Painters Convention Proceedings - 25th, 27th, 29th 1961 - 1965**
- Box-folder 7/5 ***Bay Area Painters News*, Vol. 1 1965 - 1966**
- Box-folder 7/6 ***Bay Area Painters News*, Vol. 2 1966 - 1967**

Additional Note

Vols. 1 & 2 (bound) are with the Periodicals in the hallway.

- Box-folder 8/1 ***Bay Area Painters News*, Vol. 3 1967 - 1968**
- Box-folder 8/2 ***Bay Area Painters News*, Vol. 4 1968 - 1969**
- Box-folder 8/3 ***Bay Area Painters News*, Vol. 5 1970 - 1970**
- Box-folder 8/4 ***Bay Area Painters News*, Vol. 5, #8 (1 issue) August 1976**
- Box-folder 8/5 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 1 1970**
- Box-folder 8/6 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 2 1971**
- Box-folder 8/7 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 3 1972**
- Box-folder 8/8 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 4 1973**
- Box-folder 8/9 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 5 1974**
- Box-folder 8/10 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 6 1975**
- Box-folder 9/1 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 14 1980**
- Box-folder 9/2 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 15 1981**
- Box-folder 9/3 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 16 1982**
- Box-folder 9/4 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 17 1983**
- Box-folder 9/5 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 18 1984**
- Box-folder 9/6 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 19 1985**
- Box-folder 9/7 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 20 1986**
- Box-folder 9/8 ***THE VOICE of Painters, Tapers and Paperhangers* Vol. 21 1987**

Appendix

Box-folder 1/4

Friends, Clippings and Correspondence

"Fort Point Gang"

Bill Bailey, Jack Olsen, James Kendall, Joe Passen, Miriam Johnson, Al Richmond

Fred Harris

Lewis Weinstock

Warren Hinckle

Stan Koppel

George R. Stewart

Louis Goldblatt

Al Richmond

Bill Bailey

Dave Jenkins