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Guide to the John Landesco. Papers 1923-1946



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier ICU.SPCL.LANDESCO

Title Landesco, John. Papers

Date 1923-1946

Size .5 linear ft. (1 box)

Repository Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract John Landesco (1890-1954) Sociologist. The Papers contain correspondence, as well as a manuscript copy of *The 42 Gang: a Study of a Neighborhood Criminal Group*, an unpublished study of Chicago gangs in the 1920s. The collection also includes newspaper clippings relating to Romanian-American relations and the Central States Probation and Parole Conference, which Landesco directed.

Information on Use

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Landesco, John. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

John Landesco, born June 15, 1890, in Piatra, Rumania, came to the United States in 1900 and was naturalized five years later. Educated in Chicago public schools and at the Universities of Wisconsin and Cincinnati, he later received a Ph. B. in Sociology from the University of Chicago in 1923.

As research assistant for the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, Landesco began his study of organized crime, which was financed jointly by the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations. Soon he developed a related interest in boys' gangs and the importance of proper crime prevention. Landesco worked under the direction of E. W. Burgess, Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, and Andrew Bruce of Northwestern University, under the auspices of the Social Science Research Committee and the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology. He was paid by them to "live with" the gangsters, enabling him to gather a vast amount of first-hand material on organized crime in Chicago during the Prohibition era.

The results of Landesco's first two years of intensive study were published as part of the Illinois Crime Survey in 1929, titled *Organized Crime in Chicago*. The results of the last three years

of the study were supposed to be published by the University of Chicago Press as a two-volume book whose main sections would concentrate on "Eddie Jackson-The Immune, Pickpocket," and "The Story of the 42 Gang." This book was never published although various chapters appeared in the Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology.

John Landesco died in 1954.

Scope Note

John Landesco Papers contains correspondence, as well as a manuscript copy of *The 42 Gang: a Study of a Neighborhood Criminal Group*, a study of Chicago gangs in the 1920s. The collection also includes newspaper clippings relating to Romanian-American relations and the Central States Probation and Parole Conference, which Landesco directed.

The preliminary type-written draft of the manuscript titled "The 42 Gang: A Study of a Neighborhood Criminal Group" consists of the first 10 chapter sequence and describes the origins, formation, consolidation, and diffusion of the gang. Included is a cumulative, chronological study of all Chicago newspaper references to the 42 Gang from 1923 to 1931. The manuscript studies family and neighborhood disorganization and includes autobiographies of gang-members obtained through personal contact and the daily observation of the workings of the gang.

In addition to the drafts of the chapters themselves, the material includes several pages outlining a plan for the first section of the proposed book. The style of the chapters varies. Most of the chapters have "Introductions" and are written in the narrative whereas the Autobiography of the Gungirl, for instance, has Landesco's "discussion" attached to it. Landesco believed that wherever possible his documents should be allowed to "speak for themselves." He intended his comments to clarify only. There are also three pages of handwritten, editorial notes at the end of the manuscript illustrating some of the problems Landesco faced upon organizing his material for publication.

Another part of the collection deals with organizational matters, meetings of the local planning boards and committees, letters of invitation to the conference, discussion of possible topics and the agenda. A greater part deals with a publication of the CSPPA entitled *Central State News*, printed by inmates of the Illinois State Penitentiary. The first *Central State News* folder contains replies to Landesco's request for possible items of interest from association members, many of which were published in the February 1940 issue. The March-April 1940 issue in the second folder describes "highlights and previews" of the conference and includes a "professional guide" to Chicago consisting of short articles written by 26 institutions or agencies intending to welcome the delegates and to enable them to find their way around Chicago to places of professional interest such as prisons, criminal courts, training schools, etc. Another folder contains biographical sketches of many of the speakers and lists their topics for the conference.

In addition to plans for the forthcoming conference, the Program folders also contain letters of a somewhat more personal nature and illustrate the diverse opinions and factions on controversial political and social issues. One example in the collection is the debate over

the Ward-Schnachenberg Bill, seen by many as intending to destroy both the statutory indeterminate sentence and the parole system. There are finally comments on Landesco's success and other post-conference correspondence. These papers touch on many problems of prevention, probation, and parole work in the Central States.

Two folders in the collection deal with Landesco's Rumanian-American affairs. There are several issues of newspapers in Rumanian dated from 1943 to 1946. Also, there is correspondence with William Benton, Assistant Secretary of State, and others mostly concerning the legal status of the Rumanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate. Included is additional miscellaneous material consisting of church circulars, statutes, and Landesco's handwritten notes, all ranging from 1935 to 1943. Also, in this folder is a booklet commemorating the 25th anniversary jubilee of the Rumanian Orthodox Church.

The collection is comprised of three series: Series I: The 42 Gang Manuscript; Series II: Central States Probation and Parole Conference; and Series III: Rumanian-American Miscellaneous Papers.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Landesco, John
- Criminologists
- Parole
- Probation
- Criminology
- Gangs-Illinois-Chicago
- Gangsters-Illinois-Chicago
- Criminologists

INVENTORY

Series I: The 42 Gang Manuscript

Box 1

Folder 1

Chapters I-III

Box 1

Folder 2

Chapters IV-V

Box 1

Folder 3

Chapters VI-VIII

Box 1

Folder 4

Chapters VIII-X

Series II: Central States Probation and Parole Conference, 1940

Box 1

Folder 5

Invitations

- James V. Bennett
- Preston Bradley
- Jacob M. Braude
- Joseph J. Canavan
- Henry P. Chandler
- Howard Ellis Cox
- Henry Lou Gerig
- Frank G. Harris
- Robert H. Jackson
- John H. Klinger
- D. B. Rotman
- Bernard J. Sheil
- John J. Sonsteby
- Floyd E. Thompson
- Walter W. Wright

Box 1

Folder 6

Central States News-February 1940 Vol. II. No. 1

- Daniel Amico
- John C. Burke
- E. R. Cass
- Richard A. Chappell
- Charles L. Chute
- Robert C. Edson
- W. A. Goldberg
- Gus L. Heicken
- Harry H. Jackson
- L. C. Kersey Milton
- St. Alban Kite
- John H. Klinger
- William Koerber
- O. Loudet
- William K. Mackey
- Frederick A. Moran
- David P. Philips
- Frank X. Reller
- Samuel A. Stritch
- Walter M. Wallack
- Charles M. Webber

- Weiffenbach
- Walter W. Wright
- G. D. Woodward

Box 1

Folder 7

Central States News-March-April 1940 Vol. II. No. 2&3

- Form letter to agencies and institutions
- Jewish Children's Bureau of Chicago
- Central Howard Association CYO Hotels

Box 1

Folder 8

Committees

- CSP&PA Program Guide
- Committee on Local Arrangements
- Organizational form
- Agenda
- Local Meetings
- Local Advisory Committee-Dec. 2, 1939
- Local Committee on Arrangements-February 14, 1940.

Box 1

Folder 9

Biographies

- James V. Bennett
- Preston Bradley
- Jacob M. Braude
- John C. Burke
- Bertram J. Cahn
- E. R. Cass
- Harry M. Fisher
- Frank T. Flynn
- Ralph A. Gallagher
- Frank G. Harris
- L. Wallace Hoffman
- W. C. Jones
- L. C. Kersey
- John Klinger
- O. H. Lewis

Box 1

Folder 10

Program, A-F

- H. V. Bastin
- Jessie Binford
- Mark Beauchamps
- James V. Bennett
- Frank Bicet
- Rodney Brandon

- Ernest W. Burgess
- John Burke
- Gerald Bush
- Charles L. Chute
- Sam Daykin
- Charles DeLacy
- Walter Dodd
- Thos. A. Donlin
- Robert C. Edson
- Frank T. Flynn
- George I. Francis
- Blanche Fritz
- Mary P. Funk
- A. C. Lindholm
- Charles H. Z. Meyer
- David P. Philips
- E. W. Puttkammer
- Joseph E. Ragen
- Bishop Schlarman
- R. Clyde White

Box 1

Folder 11

Program, G-P

- Marian F. Gallup
- Richard Garrison
- Edwin Gill
- Frank G. Harris
- Richard Hartshorne
- F. E. Haynes
- Helen Hazard
- Gus L. Heicken
- Sister Mary Henry
- Michael L. Igoe
- John Klinger
- Harvey Long
- C. Lindholm
- Emory Lyon
- Abraham Marovitz
- Arthur O'Neill
- David P. Philips
- Mary W. Pickerill
- Roscoe Pound

Box 1

Folder 12

Program, R-Z

- Joseph E. Ragen

- S. C. Ratcliffe
- Frank X. Reller
- Hans Riemer
- John P. Scallen
- Thorsten Sellin
- G. Howland Shaw
- John J. Sonsteby
- T. P. Sullivan
- Donald R. Taft
- Rev. W. A. Vrooman
- S. B. Wenger
- G. D. Woodward
- Walter W. Wright
- Milton Weiffenbach

Box 1

Folder 13

Aftermath

- Carol Bates
- Bertram J. Cahn
- John Gee Clark
- Ellis E. Cox
- Robert C. Edson
- Edwin Eikland
- Frank D. Hope
- John P. Jarvis
- A. C. Lindholm
- H. M. Lydenberg
- G. D. Woodward

Series III: Rumanian-American Miscellaneous Papers

Box 1

Folder 14

Rumanian Newspaper Clippings

Box 1

Folder 15

Rumanian-American miscellany and Correspondence