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14 Beacon Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS WWII  
Papers, 1940-1946

Size: 1 3/4 cubic feet

Processed: December, 1991  
By: Sarah Childs Gagnon

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## INTRODUCTION

These records pertain to the financial aspects of funding Congregational men who for reasons of conscience declared their opposition to participation in WWII. The records span from 1940 to 1946. They cover the entire process young men went through from filling out a form entitled "Registration of Members of Congregational and Christian Churches Who Are Conscientious Objectors to Military Service" to demobilization of the Civilian Public Service Camps in which the men were interned.

This collection contains insights through personal letters from Congregational men in the Civilian Public Service Camps (hereinafter C.P.S.) as to what life was like in the camps, their feelings about their decisions to become Conscientious Objectors (hereinafter C.O.'s), their families feelings and their fears of being stigmatized for not having participated in the war effort. The strength of this collection really lies in its ability to relay a feel for the times. For example, there are angry letters from people who were asked to donate money to the C.O. fund and there are letters praising the C.O. cause and the courage of the young men.

The records are largely financial. They deal with the problem of supporting Congregational men who wanted or who had attained C.O. status. In the early part of the civilian public service effort the camps were funded solely by churches. The three main peace churches that organized and funded the camps were the Brethern, Mennonites and Friends. The Congregational Church was not technically a peace-church. However, it did recognize that some of its members might be so opposed to war based on their Christian values that they would not want to fight. These records were deposited at the Congregational Library at an undetermined time.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

During WWII, men who wanted to be C.O.'s had generally, one of 2 choices they could either accept non-combatant military positions or they could be ordered to a C.P.S. camp. C.P.S. camps were set up by an arrangement between the National Council for Religious Conscientious Objectors (hereinafter NSBRO) and the Federal Government. C.P.S. camps were a cooperative venture that required constant negotiations between churches and the Federal Government. The first camps were opened in May of 1941. Until 1943, all of the C.P.S. camps were funded by the Brethern, Friends and Mennonites. In 1943, a series of government-sponsored camps were established with which the church agencies had no official connection. Information about Germfask, a government-sponsored camp can be found in this collection. Despite the fact, that the government sponsored some of its own camps, the majority of C.P.S. camps were under NSBRO's

jurisdiction. The Brethern, Friends and Mennonites bore the brunt from the beginning of paying for the maintenance costs of running the camps, ie. for food, clothing, dependency expenses, health & life insurance, death benefits and educational and vocational training after demobilization. The government supplied only administrative and technical supervision, equipment and tools.

This collection contains the papers of Dr. Albert W. Palmer and Rev. Alfred Schmalz. Both of these men were at one time Chairman of the Congregational Christian Committee on Conscientious Objectors. The Committee was set up to raise money to support Congregational men who wanted to attain C.O. status and be put in a C.P.S. camp. The average cost per man was \$30.00 a month. If a young man did not have the money to pay for himself, he relied on contributions. Dr. Albert W. Palmer held the position of Chairman from 1941 to October, 1944. Rev. Alfred Schmalz held the position from November 1944 to the dissolution of the Committee. Rev. Alfred Schmalz was also involved with the Council for Social Action in the 1930's.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The strength of this collection is in its ability to expose an area of WWII that is rarely written or even talked about. There is a great deal of personal information in this collection on C.O.'s and the public's perception of them. There are numerous letters from men and women across the United States expressing their opinions as to the C.O. cause. There is a lot information regarding the financial and administrative aspects of the entire process regarding funding for the Congregational men.

There was no discernible file folder order to the collection upon processing so one was established. The files are arranged in series order to show the progression from the application process for C.O. status to demobilization of the camps. The insides of each file folder remain the way they were originally filed by each man. There is no clear, consistent filing method for either man's papers but, some are partially arranged by subject, month or year. The only consistent filing procedure that was determinable from each man's papers was a collation of written correspondence.

#### SERIES I.      Application Forms.

Registration of Members of Congregational and Christian Churches who are Conscientious Objectors to Military Service. 1940-1943.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cubic foot.

BOX    FOLDER

- 1                    Bundle 1 - 1940-1943. Arranged alphabetically. 7"x3½".
- 1                    Bundle 2 - 1940-1943. Arranged alphabetically. 7"x1¼".

SERIES II.            Dr. Albert W. Palmer's Papers as Chairman of the  
Congregational Christian Committee on Conscientious  
Objectors. 1941-1945. ½ cubic ft.

Files in this series may include some or all of the below. The listing of folders highlight only the prominent materials in each file. This series contains correspondence regarding financial and general administrative concerns; breakdowns of denominational support of the C.O.'s in the camps; lists of Congregational and Christian men in the camps; letters from C.O.'s in the camps; completed questionnaires for Congregational Christian Enrollees in Civilian Service Camps; information regarding NSBRO conference; contribution slips to the Congregational Christian Committee for War Victims and Services; demobilization problems; educational programs after discharge; statement written by a C.O. Rev. Howard Schomer.

BOX    FOLDER

- 2            1a\*        1941-1943. (an account of a C.O.'s experience before the Selective Service Board, also personal letters from C.O.'s in the camps)
- 2            1b\*        same as 1a
- 2            2a\*        1941-1944. (personal letters from C.O.'s in the camps and some completed questionnaires for enrollment in the Civilian Public Service Camps)
- 2            2b\*        same as 2a
- 2            3a\*        1941-1943. (personal letters from C.O.'s in the camps)
- 2            3b\*        same as 3a
- 2            4            1941. (personal letters from C.O.'s in the camps - this file is in date order)
- 2            5            1944. (correspondence concerning contributions)
- 2            6            1944. (correspondence concerning contributions; assignment slips)

\* indicates that file was split because of size

- 2      7      1941-1944. (completed questionnaires for Congregational Christian Enrollees in Civilian Public Service Camps and list of Congregational Conscientious Objectors ordered to the camps)
- 2      8      1943. (lists of Congregational Conscientious Objectors ordered to the camps)
- 2      9      1944. (lists of Congregational Conscientious Objectors in the camps as of 1/17/44)
- 2      10      1942-1943. (lists of Congregational Conscientious Objectors in the camps)
- 2      11      1944. (responses to a March 25, 1944 fund-raising letter sent by Dr. Palmer)
- 2      12      1943-1944. (correspondence that reveals the personal feelings of some people towards the Conscientious Objector movement)
- 2      13      1944. (letter from a C.O. in a camp regarding issues of concern to the men in the camps)
- 2      14      1945. (information marked "confidential" regarding demobilization of the Civilian Public Service Camps)
- 2      15      1941-1944. (two resolutions recommended to the General Council, June 28, 1944 and lists of Congregational Conscientious Objectors in the camps)
- 1      16      1945. (Rev. Howard Schomer's (a C.O.) memorandum dated September 27, 1945 presented to the Congregational Christian Committee on Conscientious Objectors)

**SERIES III.**      Reverend Alfred Schmalz's Papers as Chairman of Congregational Christian Committee on Conscientious Objectors. 1944-1946. ½ cubic ft.

Files in this series may include some or all of the below. The listing of folders highlight only the prominent materials in each file. This series contains general correspondence and financial data regarding the efforts to reimburse the three peace churches; scholarship and loan information; requests for contributions; dependency aid and demobilization issues; "Campaign for Amnesty for Imprisoned Conscientious Objectors"; lists of C.O.'s discharged from the camps; information on visitation programs; Message of Governor Earl Warren of California; negative publicity regarding "Germfask"; letters expressing opposition to the C.O. cause. Resolutions presented to the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches; agendas and minutes of the Congregational Christian Committee on

Conscientious Objectors; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Committee for War Victims and Reconstruction; questionnaires entitled "Dependency Status of Congregational Christian Conscientious Objectors.

BOX    FOLDER

|   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 2 | 17   | 1944. (letter from Dr. Albert W. Palmer congratulating Reverend Alfred Schmalz on his appointment as the new Chairman, letter dated November 22, 1944 - indicates transfer of records) |
| 2 | 18a* | 1944-1945. (problems at the camps regarding the men and finances and the goal to reimburse the peace churches)   |
| 2 | 18b* | same as 18a  |
| 2 | 19   | 1944-1945. (dependency and demobilization issues)  |
| 2 | 20a* | 1944-1945. (confidential completed Dependency Status of Congregational Christian Conscientious Objector questionnaires and information relating to George Boutwell's case)             |
| 2 | 20b* | same as 20a.   |
| 2 | 21   | 1944-1945 (George Boutwell's case)   |
| 2 | 22   | 1944-1946. (includes some financial data from 1941)  |
| 2 | 23a* | 1945-1946. (scholarship, loan and dependency information and finances in regards to the peace churches)  |
| 2 | 23b* | same as 23a.   |
| 2 | 24   | 1946. (completed confidential Dependency Status of Congregational Christian Conscientious Objectors questionnaires and dependency and educational information)                         |
| 2 | 25   | 1946. (finances in regards to the peace churches)  |
| 2 | 26   | 1944-1945. (updates on the C.O.'s)   |

\* indicates that file was split because of size

- 2    27        1945. (finances in regards to the peace churches)
- 2    28        1945. (letters from ministers all over the country expressing their opposition and/or their congregations opposition to the Conscientious Objector cause)
- 2    29        1945. (promotion of visitation program)
- 2    30        1946. (scholarship and educational loan information)
- 2    31        1941-1946. (agenda and minutes of meetings of the Congregational Christian Committee on Conscientious Objectors, also minutes of the Executive Committee of the Committee for War Victims and Reconstruction)
- 2    32        1944-1946. (resolutions presented to the General council of Congregational Christian Churches, June, 1946)
- 2    33        1945-1946. (information regarding the "Campaign for Amnesty for Imprisoned Conscientious Objectors)
- 2    34        1945-1946. (newsletters from Germfask a Government sponsored camp and correspondence dealing with some negative press in regards to events at the Germfask camp)
- 2    35        1945 or 1946 - undated material ("Message of Governor Earl Warren of California Vetoing Bill Prohibiting Employment of Conscientious Objectors in State Agencies)
- 2    36        1944-1945. (C.O.'s from Connecticut)

**SERIES IV.            PUBLICATIONS**

Contains newsletters, pamphlets and brochures regarding a variety of topics as they relate to C.O.'s. Many items in this series are not dated, however the range is most likely 1940-1946. Whenever possible folders have been arranged chronologically.

**BOX    FOLDER**

- 3        1        "The Reporter" from July 15, 1944 through June 21, 1946. (missing some issues).

- 3 2 "NCCO Newsletter" April 13, 1944 through  
January 1946.
- 3 3 "Amnesty Bulletin" February 8, 1946 through  
May 15, 1946 (missing numbers 8 & 9).
- 3 4 "Information" October 13, 1944 through May  
20, 1946 (missing numerous issues).
- 3 5 "Germfask Newsletter" May 12, 1945 through  
May, 1946.
- 3 6 Publications of the Congregational Christian  
Committee on Conscientious Objectors and  
the Congregational Christian Committee for  
War Victims and Services, no dates, no  
arrangement.
- 3 7 Variety of newsletters, pamphlets, brochures  
and newsclippings regarding a variety of  
topics as they relate to C.O.'s, no dates,  
no arrangement.
- 3 8 Same as 7