



The Historical  
Society of  
Pennsylvania

Collection 1523

**Indian Rights Association  
Records**

1830-ca. 1986

327 boxes, 63 volumes, 183 lin. feet

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**Inventory Completed:** April 2009  
**Restrictions:** None

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## **Indian Rights Association**

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### **Abstract**

Founded in Philadelphia in 1882, the Indian Rights Association's purpose was to "bring about the complete civilization of the Indians and their admission to citizenship." In 1884 the Indian Rights Association opened a Washington office to act as a legislative lobby and liaison with the Board of Indian Commissioners and the Board of Indian Affairs. The Philadelphia and Washington offices maintained almost daily correspondence until the latter office closed in 1939. The Indian Rights Association also maintained close contacts with Indian agents and with Indians themselves through correspondence and almost annual field trips to reservations and settlements. The papers include many reports and letters reflecting these contacts.

The responsibility for the Indian Rights Association's programs fell, largely, to five men, all of whom had lengthy careers with the Indian Rights Association: Herbert Welsh, Matthew Sniffen, and Lawrence E. Lindley, active in Philadelphia; and Charles C. Painter and Samuel M. Brosius, Washington agents.

The processed portion of the Indian Rights Association papers span from the early 1800s to the late 1960s and contains correspondence; organizational records; printed material, including early Indian pamphlets, Indian Rights Association Annual Reports and draft legislation; and the papers of Herbert Welsh. There are also photographs, mainly from Western field trips, materials from the Council on Indian Affairs, and manuscripts dealing with traditional Pueblo Indian dances and the legal rights of Oklahoma Indians under that state's probate laws. In addition, the unprocessed records, which date from 1880 to about 1986, contain more recent administrative files, financial records, correspondence, numerous publications both by the IRA and other American Indian and Indian-related organizations, clippings, and audio-visual materials.

## Separation report

None.

## Related materials

Herbert Welsh collection (Collections 702 and V51)

## Alternative format

The bulk of the collection is available on microfilm [Mfilm E 93 .I 418 1-13]

## Subjects

Civil service reform – United States  
Federal aid to Indians – United States  
Indians of North America – Economic conditions  
Indians of North America – Education  
Indians of North America – Government relations – 1869-1934  
Indians of North America – Government relations – 1940-1950  
Indians of North America – Government relations – 1960-1970  
Indians of North America – Government relations – 1970-1980  
Indians of North America – Politics and government – United States  
Indians of North America – Public welfare  
Indians of North America – Services for – Finance  
Indians of North America – Research – United States – Handbooks, manuals, etc.  
Indians of North America – Social conditions  
Indians of North America – Societies, etc.  
Indians, Treatment of – United States  
Indians, Treatment of – United States – History – 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Indians, Treatment of – United States – History – 20<sup>th</sup> century

Indian Rights Association  
Indian Rights Association – Archives  
Indian Rights Association – History – 19th century  
Indian Rights Association – Periodicals  
United States. Board of Indian Commissioners  
United States. Office of Indian Affairs

Brosius, Samuel M., 1851-1936  
Lindley, Lawrence E.  
Painter, C. C. (Charles Cornelius)  
Sniffen, Matthew  
Welsh, Herbert, 1851-1941

## **Administrative Information**

### **Restrictions**

The collection is open for research.

### **Acquisition information**

Gift of the Indian Rights Association, 1942-1978.

### **Preferred citation**

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], Indian Rights Association records (Collection 1523), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

### **Processing note**

A published guide to the microfilm holdings of this collection is available to researchers in HSP's library. Unprocessed material in boxes 252 to 327 is not microfilmed.

**Box listing: processed portion**

Box or volume number(s)	Brief description	Date range	MF reel #
Boxes 1-148	Incoming correspondence	1864-1968, n.d.	1-65
Boxes 149-151	Supplementary incoming correspondence	June 1930-Dec 1967, n.d.	66-67
Boxes 152-182	Letterpress copy books	3 Mar.1886-8 Jan. 1943	68-98
Boxes 183-184	Minutes of the Executive Committee	15 Dec. 1882- 2 May 1917	99
Box 184	Minutes of the Board of Directors	6 June 1917-6 Dec. 1967	99
Box 185	Minutes of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and of the annual business meeting (supplementary set)	1894-1968	100
Box 185	Financial records	1903-1968	100
Boxes 186-187	Office reports – Philadelphia	1893-1967	101
Boxes 188-189	Office reports – Washington, D.C.	1888-1939	101
Boxes 190-191	IRA pamphlets	1883-1935	102
Box 191	Miscellaneous printed matter	1885-1973, n.d.	103
Boxes 192-193	Annual reports	1884-1935	104
Box 194	Government documents: 21 <sup>st</sup> , 43 <sup>rd</sup> , 49 <sup>th</sup> , 50 <sup>th</sup> , 52 <sup>nd</sup> , 54 <sup>th</sup> , 55 <sup>th</sup> Congresses	1830-1899	105
Boxes 195-207	Government documents: 56 <sup>th</sup> -90 <sup>th</sup> Congresses	1899-1969	106-118
Box 208	Government documents: United States Supreme Court; United States Court of Claims	1900-1959	118
Box 209	Government documents: state and local courts; federal agencies	1893-1968	119
Box 210	Government documents: press releases	1924-1968, n.d.	120
Box 211	Government documents: circular letters; memos; orders	1902-1859, n.d.	120
Box 212	Government documents: speeches; bulletins; reports; directories	1912-1967, n.d.	121

Box 213	Research done for and by the Department of Indian Affairs and the Bureau/Office of Indian Affairs	1911-1962	122
Box 214	Research: Alaska	1900-1949	122
Box 215	Research: California; Educations; Health; Land and population	1906-1948, n.d.	122-123
Box 216	Research: Navajo; Oregon	1934-1955, n.d.	123
Box 217	Research reports; state and local government documents	1924-1953, n.d.	124-125
Boxes 218-221	Pamphlets (arranged alphabetically by author)	1867-1961	125-129
Boxes 221-225	Indian organizations (arranged alphabetically by name of organization)	1879-1967	129-132
Boxes 226-231	Herbert Welsh papers	Aug. 1877- Oct. 1934, n.d.	133-134
Boxes 232-237	Photographs (arranged in rough alphabetical order by subject or place)	1886-1933, n.d.	135-136
Boxes 238-239	Photographs - negatives	n.d.	Not filmed
Boxes 240-242	Maps (uncatalogued)	n.d.	Not filmed
Boxes 243-244	Council on Indian Affairs	1943-1968, n.d.	136
Boxes 245-246	American Indian Survey; Sniffens notes of government school and churches	1920-1921, n.d.	Not filmed
Box 247	Pueblo land legislation; Pueblo "Dances," progressive v. reactionary Indians; American Indian Defense Association; Haskill Institute	1923-1924, n.d.	Not filmed
Box 248	Matters relating to Probate; Pueblo "Dances"	n.d.	Not filmed
Box 249	Oklahoma dance controversy; Oklahoma legal problems	1924-1925, n.d.	Not filmed
Box 250	<i>Indian Truth</i> , v. 1 no. 4 – v. 50 no. 211 [non-consecutive run]	1924-1953, 1955-1967, 1970, 1973	Not filmed
Box 251	Photographs: Pequoit; IRA centennial and dinner	ca. 1980-1981, 1982	Not filmed
Vols. 1-5	Clippings scrapbooks, #1-5	1883-1893	104 (2-3 only)
Vols. 6-10	Members' dues ledgers	1885-1929	Not filmed
Vol. 11	Index to members	ca. 1892	Not filmed
Vols. 12-31	Ledgers	1887-1968	Not filmed
Vols. 32-33	Letterbooks	1888-1819 (bulk 1889-1895)	Not filmed

Vol. 34	Letterpress book (mostly blank)	Feb. 1916	Not filmed
Vol. 35	Account book/"List of signers of the appeal"	1890-1891	Not filmed
Vols. 36-37	Check stub books	1895-1900	Not filmed
Vol. 38	Receipt book	1961-1962	Not filmed

### Box listing: unprocessed portion

\*Please note that none of this material in the following inventory has been microfilmed\*

Box number(s)	Brief description	Date range
Box 252	Government documents - duplicates	ca. 1915-ca. 1965
Box 253	Government documents – duplicates (50 <sup>th</sup> -77 <sup>th</sup> , 88 <sup>th</sup> -90 <sup>th</sup> Congresses)	1887-1942, 1963-1968
Box 254	Government documents – duplicates (79 <sup>th</sup> -87 <sup>th</sup> Congresses)	1945-1962
Box 255	Government documents – duplicates; copies of the Congressional Record	ca. 1913ca. 1953
Boxes 256-260	Loose clippings	ca. 1930-ca. 1964
Box 261	Mixed correspondence and administrative papers; loose clippings	1891-ca. 1960
Box 262	Mixed correspondence; loose clippings; printed material	ca. 1914-ca. 1964
Boxes 263-265	Mixed correspondence and miscellaneous papers	ca. 1920-ca. 1940
Box 266	Reports and administrative files	ca. 1930-ca. 1960
Box 267	Mixed correspondence	ca. 1920-ca. 1940
Box 268	Mixed financial, administrative, and correspondence files	ca. 1960s
Box 269	Pamphlets and administrative papers	ca. 1893-ca. 1962
Boxes 270-274	Printed materials (IRA-published booklets and pamphlets; articles on the IRA and Indian rights)	ca. 1890-1960
Boxes 275-284	Subject and organizational files, A-Y	ca. 1970-1980s
Boxes 285-287	Mixed administrative files (board, membership, grants, legislative, judicial)	1980s
Boxes 288-293	Non-IRA journals, serials, and newspapers (first series A-Y)	ca. 1960-ca. 1980
Boxes 293-297	Non-IRA journals, serials, and newspapers (second series A-Z)	1980s
Boxes 297-299	Non-IRA journals, serials, and newspapers (third series A-W)	1980s

Boxes 299-300	IRA-published pamphlets	1880-ca. 1928
Box 300	“Indian dances, Pueblo-Hopi: papers and documents urging their suppression,” ca. 1915-ca. 1921 Board files (minutes, correspondence, statements, testimonies), 1968-1981	ca. 1915-1981
Box 301	Non-IRA publications – schools and education, ca. 1910-ca. 1930 “Memory Books” of Metlakatla, Alaska, 1932-1936	ca. 1910-1936
Boxes 302-303	Non-IRA publications	ca. 1910-ca. 1950, 1980s
Box 304	Mixed clippings and publications	1980s
Boxes 305-308	Mixed publications	1980s
Box 309	Mixed publications, correspondence, and administrative files	1980s
Box 310	Mixed administrative files, 1980s <i>Indian Truth</i> , 1970s-1980s	1970s-1980s
Box 311	Images, photographs, negatives	1980s
Box 312	Administrative files	1980s
Box 313	Financial files	1980s
Box 314	Mixed administrative files, 1980s <i>Indian Truth</i> , 1924-1980 (many duplicates)	1924-1980s
Box 315	<i>Indian Truth</i> (many duplicates)	1980-1985
Box 316	Cassette tapes, audio reels; slides; 16 mm film: “More than Bows and Arrows”	1980s
Boxes 317-319, 326-327	Miscellaneous printed material	1980s
Box 320	Card filed labeled “Books and IRA publications”	n.d.
Boxes 321-324	Lantern slides	ca. 1910-ca. 1920
Box 325	“Indian Tribal Series” commemorative coin collection	1970s
On shelf	Framed “Treaty Tree” engraving	1857
On shelf	City of Philadelphia proclamation declaring December 2-9, 1982 Indian Rights Association Week	1982
On shelf	Index card filing cabinets, drawers labeled “ <i>Indian Truth</i> index” (2 drawers); “Zip Codes;” “Paid Members;” “Index cards for address listing;” “Institutions;” “Yr’ly Drops;” “Complimentary”	n.d.
On shelf	Framed certificate honoring Lawrence E. Lindley	n.d.
On shelf	Two 16mm films, “Indian Rights, Indian Law” parts 1 and 2	n.d.