

Joseph A. Yablonski Legal Case Collection

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Joseph K. Brooks with the assistance of Brian McGuire and Tammi Taylor



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

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Collection Summary

Title: Joseph A. Yablonski Legal Case Collection

Span Dates: 1923-1978

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1970-1977)

ID No.: MSS85584

Extent: 8,750 items ; 26 containers ; 10 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Material relating to the murder of labor leader Joseph A. Yablonski, including trial records, crime scene photographs, Federal Bureau of Investigation files, and miscellaneous material.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Boyle, William Anthony, 1904-1985--Trials, litigation, etc.

Yablonski, Charlotte, 1944 or 1945-1969.

Yablonski, Joseph A., 1910-1969.

Yablonski, Margaret, 1912 or 1913-1969.

Organizations

United Mine Workers of America.

United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Subjects

Labor leaders--United States.

Labor unions--United States.

Murder--Pennsylvania.

Trials (Murder)--Pennsylvania.

Trials (Murder)--United States.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Joseph A. Yablonski Legal Case Collection was given to the Library of Congress in 2011 by Deborah Davis.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings in the Joseph A. Yablonski Legal Case Collection is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

Restrictions apply concerning the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in the collection. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Joseph A. Yablonski Legal Case Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Labor leader Joseph A. Yablonski was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 3, 1910. He followed his father into the coal mines at age fifteen and joined the United Mine Workers of America. The death of his father in a mining accident in 1933 inspired Yablonski to become active in union politics and in 1934 he was elected president of a UMWA local. He married Margaret Rita Wasicek. He served on the executive board of District 5, with oversight of UMWA locals in the greater Pittsburgh area from 1934-1942, and in 1958 was elected president of the district, serving until he was forced out by union president William Anthony Boyle in 1966. Through the 1960s Yablonski worked through union and state political venues to raise miners' pay and to add pneumoconiosis (black lung) to the list of compensated diseases in Pennsylvania. In 1969 Yablonski challenged Boyle for the presidency of the UMWA and lost in a disputed election.

On December 31, 1969, Joseph A. Yablonski was murdered with his wife and twenty-five year old daughter, Charlotte, at the family home in Clarksville, Pennsylvania, by killers hired by Boyle. Investigations of these murders by Pennsylvania and federal authorities and the federal and state prosecution of Boyle, the killers, and other co-conspirators proceeded throughout the decade of the 1970s.

Scope and Content Note

The material in the Joseph A. Yablonski Legal Case Collection was assembled by an unknown person close to the Yablonski family. The collection relates entirely to the investigation by Pennsylvania and federal authorities of the murders in 1969 of labor leader Joseph A. Yablonski with his wife Margaret and daughter Charlotte, and to the subsequent state and federal trials of United Mine Workers of America President William Anthony Boyle, who ordered the murders, and his co-conspirators. The collection spans 1923-1978, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1970-1977. The records are organized into three series: [Pennsylvania Trials and Investigations](#), [Federal Trials and Investigations](#), and [Restricted](#).

The bulk of the [Pennsylvania Trials and Investigations](#) series documents the state criminal trials of Boyle and seven hitmen and co-conspirators. Material includes trial and hearing transcripts, pre-trial and post-trial motions, confessions and other statements, opinions, records of appellant proceedings and other legal documents. The series also includes crime scene photographs taken by Pennsylvania authorities and clippings from western Pennsylvania newspapers.

Most of the [Federal Trials and Investigation](#) series consists of the Federal Bureau of Investigation file relating to the bureau's investigation of the Yablonski murders and other files relating to a witness and to crime scene photographs taken by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Pennsylvania Trials and Investigations, 1923-1978](#)
- [Federal Trials and Investigations, 1970](#)
- [Restricted, 1970](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-23

Series

Pennsylvania Trials and Investigations, 1923-1978

Records of several Pennsylvania trials relating to the murder of labor leader Joseph A.

Yablonski and his wife and daughter, including transcripts of trials and other hearings, pre-trial and post-trial motions, judicial orders and opinions, extraditions, defendant statements, appellant proceedings, and other legal documents; and material relating to the investigation of the murders by Pennsylvania authorities, including autopsy and crime scene photographs.

Arranged alphabetically by name of case, type of material, or subject.

BOX 23-25

Federal Trials and Investigations, 1970

Federal Bureaus of Investigation files relating to violations of federal laws by the Yablonski defendants and United States District Court documents relating to a federal trial occasioned by the Yablonski murders.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material or subject.

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Restricted, 1970

Photographs.

Unarranged

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