

# **Margaret Creese collection on McCarthyism in schools**

**Ms. Coll. 1291**

**Finding aid prepared by Kelin Baldrige.**

---

Last updated on April 18, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 April 17

---

## Table of Contents

---

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	3
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	5
Collection Inventory.....	7

---

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Creese, Margaret
<b>Title</b>	Margaret Creese collection on McCarthyism in schools
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1291
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1948-1960
<b>Extent</b>	0.2 linear feet (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	Margaret Villiers Morton Creese (1899-2002) graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 1921 and was actively involved in supporting education, women's voting rights, and mental health issues throughout her life. This collection contains printed resources and a letter from the Teachers Union of Philadelphia documenting McCarthyism in American public schools during the middle of the 20th century.

**Cite as:**

Margaret Creese collection on McCarthyism in schools, 1948-1960, Ms. Coll. 1291, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

---

## Biography/History

---

Margaret Villiers Morton Creese was born in Atlantic City, NJ on July 28, 1899 and graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 1921. She married James Creese, the former president of the Drexel Institute of Technology, in Sweden in 1925. From 1924 to 1928, Mrs. Creese worked as a copyeditor and subscription/complaint clerk for *Forum Magazine*. After her marriage and the birth of her children, she was active in a number of organizations including as chairman of the Welfare and Health Department of the Hoboken League of Women Voters from 1936 to 1945; as a member of the Works Progress Administration Advisory Council for New Jersey from 1939 to 1941; as president of the Parent-Teacher Association at Stevens Hoboken Academy from 1941 to 1942; as a chairman of the Visiting Nurse Service in Hoboken, New Jersey from 1942 to 1944; as a member of the Mental Hygiene Committee of the New Jersey Council of Social Agencies from 1943 to 1945; as board member of the New Jersey State League of Women Voters in 1944; as president of Drexel Women's Club at the Drexel Institute from 1947 to 1948; and as board member of the Mercer County Mental Health Commission from 1964 to 1974. It is unclear what Mrs. Creese's role was in collecting this information, but based upon the 1963 letter in which she gifted the collection, she hoped that future generations of students of education would learn about the era. Mrs. Creese died June 8, 2002, at the age of 102.

The term "McCarthyism" refers to a series of investigations and hearings brought about by Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy in order to expose suspected communists in the American government and culture. In a Lincoln Day speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, on February 9, 1950, McCarthy presented a list of suspected Communists in the government, escalating the postwar Red Scare. According to Wendy Wall, "government loyalty boards investigated millions of federal employees, asking what books and magazines they read, what unions and civic organizations they belonged to, and whether they went to church. Hundreds of screenwriters, actors, and directors were blacklisted because of their alleged political beliefs, while teachers, steelworkers, sailors, lawyers, and social workers lost their jobs for similar reasons. More than thirty-nine states required teachers and other public employees to take loyalty oaths." Accusers rarely had concrete evidence; but investigations by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) often resulted in devastating consequences for the accused.

In schools, McCarthyism resulted in criticism of teachers, textbooks, subject matter taught, and unions. There was a strong encouragement to return to the basics, the "three R's" (reading, writing, and arithmetic) and to teach Americanism. Schools and teachers resisted these initiatives, worrying that Americans' civil liberties were being restricted.

**Works cited:**

Wall, Wendy. Anti-Communism in the 1950s. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

---

## Scope and Contents

---

This collection contains several resources concerning McCarthyism in American public schools, dating from 1948 to 1960, with the majority dating from 1950 to 1952. Included are pamphlets, newspaper articles, and magazines. Many of the pamphlets were issued by the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools and many of the newspaper articles come from the *New York Times*. There are several full magazines, including two editions of *McCall's*, *The Reporter*, *The American Legion Magazine*, the *Journal of the Association of University Women*, and the *NEA Journal*. In addition to the articles, there is a letter from the Teachers Union of Philadelphia warning of the witch hunt and abuse of legislative power of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities and its upcoming hearings in Philadelphia. For the most part, these documents are reacting to the criticism of America's education

program.

Researchers will find significant mention of Allen A. Zoll, who believed that "the strategists of the Kremlin saw that the key to the future of America lies in the education given to America's children. And so the infiltration and control of American education became communism's number one objective in America," (Bingham, page 29). There are also numerous mentions of the "Three R's" and the re-focus on Americanism in the schools.

**Works cited:**

Bingham, Robert K. "Public School Enemy No. 1?" *The Reporter*, Vol. 5, No. 8, 951 October 15, pages 27-30 (box 1, folder 5)

---

## Administrative Information

---

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 April 17

Finding aid prepared by Kelin Baldrige.

### Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

### Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

### Source of Acquisition

Gift of Margaret Creese, 1963.

---

## Controlled Access Headings

---

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Publications (document genre)

**GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)**

- United States--History--20th century

**PERSONAL NAME(S)**

- Zoll, Allen Alderson, 1924-

**SUBJECT(S)**

- Academic freedom--United States
- Anti-communist movements--United States
- Communism--United States
- Education
- Education--United States

## Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Letter from Francis P. Jennings, president of the Teachers Union of Philadelphia, to "Friend", 1952 October 8.	1	1
Magazine: <i>American Legion Magazine</i> , "Your Child is their Target," by Irene Corbally Kuhn (two copies), 1952 June.	1	2
Magazine: <i>Journal of the American Association of University Women</i> , "Currents and Cross-Currents," by Helen D. Bragdon, 1952 October.	1	3
Magazine: <i>McCall's</i> , "Save Our Schools" and "Danger's Ahead in the Public Schools," by John Bainbridge, 1952 September-October.	1	8-9
Magazine: <i>NEA Journal</i> , "News and Trends," largely relating to resolutions passed at annual convention of the American Legion on August 25-28, 1952, in New York City, 1952 October.	1	4

---

Magazine: <i>The Reporter</i> , "Public School Enemy No. 1?" by Robert K. Bingham, 1951 October 16.	1	5
Newspaper articles, 1951-1960.	1	6
Pamphlets ("Delaware Acts to Save Its Schools," "How to Organize Local Citizens Committees," "The School Problem Can Be Licked," "A Citizen's Assembly on Education," "Schools and Fishin' Poles," and "Our Schools Have Kept Us Free", 1948-1952, undated.	1	7

---