

William Gobitas Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1997

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm89078637>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms001045>

Prepared by Margaret McAleer

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Collection Summary

Title: William Gobitas Papers

Span Dates: 1935-1989

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1935-1940)

ID No.: MSS73637

Creator: Gobitas, William, 1925-1989

Extent: 100 items

Extent: 1 container

Extent: 0.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm89078637>

Summary: Insurance executive and piano tuner. Correspondence, notes, court documents, newspaper clippings, printed material, ephemera, and photographs relating to freedom of speech and legal cases involving Jehovah's Witnesses. Documents the United States Supreme Court case of *Minersville v. Gobitis* (sic) concerning the refusal of Gobitas and his sister Lillian (Gobitas) Klose to salute the American flag in their school in Minersville, Pennsylvania, in 1935.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Gobitas, William, 1925-1989.

Klose, Lillian.

Organizations

Minersville (Pa.). Board of School Directors.

United States. Supreme Court.

Subjects

Flags--United States.

Freedom of religion.

Freedom of speech.

Jehovah's Witnesses--Legal status, laws, etc.

Occupations

Insurance executives.

Piano technicians.

Provenance

The papers of William H. Gobitas, insurance executive, piano tuner, and defendant in United States Supreme Court case, were given to the Library of Congress by the estate of William Gobitas in 1989 via his sister, Lillian Gobitas Klose, and Alan Nurmi of the United States Information Agency.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Gobitas is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Additional Guides

A description of the Gobitas Papers appears in *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, 48 (18 September 1989), pp. 321-22.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William Gobitas Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William H. Gobitas (1925-1989) span the years 1935-1989, with the bulk of the material dating from 1935 to 1940. The collection consists of court documents, photographs, correspondence, notes, ephemera, newspaper clippings, and other printed matter pertaining to freedom of speech and legal cases involving Jehovah's Witnesses. The papers document in particular the United States Supreme Court case, *Minersville v. Gobitis* (sic), concerning the refusal of ten-year-old Billy Gobitas and his twelve-year-old sister, Lillian, to salute the American flag in their school in Minersville, Pennsylvania, in 1935. The collection includes letters written by Gobitas and his sister to school officials explaining the religious basis for their refusal, Walter Gobitas's notes from the school board meeting at which his children were expelled, and photographs of the Gobitas children around 1935.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Jehovah's Witnesses Background material, 1959, 1982 (2 folders) Published accounts of treatment and harassment <i>Consolation</i> , 1940 Miscellaneous, 1983-1989 <i>National Geographic</i> , 1965-1975 United States Marine Corps, retraction of statement linking the church to communism, 1940 Legal cases <i>Cantwell v. Connecticut</i> , 1940-1957 Leoles, Dorothy, 1936 <i>Lovell v. City of Griffin</i> , 1936-1938 <i>Minersville v. Gobitis</i> (sic), 1935-1939, undated <i>Murdock v. Pennsylvania</i> , 1940-1943, 1986 <i>West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette</i> , 1943 Photographs, circa 1935-1940, 1975