

# Guide to the William J. Walker Papers

MS 1188



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

August 1983

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1188

**CREATOR:** Walker, William John, 1887-1939

**TITLE:** William John Walker papers

**DATES:** 1936-1937

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.5 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, and campaign materials relating to William J. Walker's unsuccessful campaign as Republican candidate for mayor of Albany, New York in 1937.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1188>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1188>.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Preferred Citation

William John Walker Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

William John Walker was born in Albany, New York, on March 23, 1887.

Father, William John Walker Sr., founder Walker & Gibson (later Gibson-Snow Company, Inc.), wholesale druggists, Albany; son of John and Frances (Ginn) Walker of Albany. Mother, Ada (Craig) Walker; daughter of John and Esther (VanderVeer) Craig of Fultonville, N.Y., and Albany. Yale relatives include Edgar A. VanderVeer, '95 S., Albert VanderVeer, '00, and William W. Gibson, '06 (cousins).

He graduated from Yale College with a B.A. in 1908. Registered *in absentia* Yale Graduate School 1910-14; associated with his father's firm 1908-17 and 1919-20 (manager Troy branch 1916-17 and 1919-20); attended National School of Commercial and Trade Organization Secretaries, Northwestern University, and University of Wisconsin summers 1920-23; executive secretary Board of Commerce, Peekskill, N.Y., 1920-21; acting secretary Hudson Valley Federated Chamber of Commerce 1921-22; executive secretary Greensburg (Pa.) Chamber of Commerce 1922-24 and editor of *Forward Together*.

Upon graduation, he began working for his father, who was a wholesale druggist. During World War I, Walker joined the National Guard and was sent overseas to work as a secretary and interpreter for the Y.M.C.A. In the early 1920s, he continued doing work in secretarial capacities. Between 1927 and 1933, he returned to military service, working in publicity and recruitment. He participated in numerous groups in his hometown of Albany, New York like the Albany Academy and French Club.

Republican candidate for president of Albany Common Council 1927 and for mayor 1937; secretary Mayor's Committee on Unemployment 1931; president Albany Boys' Club four years and director Federated Boys' Clubs of America; member Albany Boy Scouts Council; director Bender Hygienic Laboratory; secretary and treasurer Yale Alumni Association of Northeastern New York 1909-13; alumni correspondent *Yale Alumni Magazine* for many years and member Association of Class Secretaries (vice-president 1915); member Albany Historical and Art Society, New York State Historical Society, Society of Early Dutch Settlers of Albany (president 1938-39), Reserve Officers Association, Albany Chamber of Commerce, and Madison Avenue Reformed Church, Albany (deacon 1908-12; superintendent Olivet Mission of the Sunday School).

In 1937, he ran for mayor, a race he lost.

He was married on October 14, 1916 in Springfield, Mass. to Gretchen, daughter of Harry Perkins and Edna (Wetsel) Lane. The couple had two children before getting divorced in 1933: Janet (Bennington Coll. ex-'41) and William John, Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Walker were divorced in 1933.

Walkerr died on September 15, 1939, in Albany, New York due to carinoma. He was buried in Albany Rural Cemetery and survived by his children.

(Taken from *Yale University Obituary Record*, 1937-1940, pp. 129-130).

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## Scope and Contents

These papers pertain to the unsuccessful campaign of William John Walker as Republican candidate for mayor of Albany, New York, 1937. Included is a small amount of correspondence with other Republicans and with Albany residents concerning Walker's platform and campaign activities. There are also copies of Walker's platform, speeches, and statements, and notes and materials used for background; printed advertisements, bulletins, and pamphlets; newspaper articles; and a few items of memorabilia.

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## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1937 September- November
b. 1, f. 2	Political platform	1937 Apr, undated
b. 1, f. 3	Speeches and statements	1937 September- November
b. 1, f. 4	Notes and campaign materials	[1937]
b. 1, f. 5	Printed material	1937 April-Oct, undated
b. 1, f. 6	Memorabilia	1936 November, 1937 November
b. 2	Newspaper articles	1937 April- November

## **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.

### **Geographic Names**

Albany (N.Y.) -- Politics and government  
New York (State)  
United States -- Politics and government

### **Occupations**

Politicians

### **Names**

Walker, William John, 1887-1939

### **Corporate Body**

Republican Party (New York)