Finding Aid to the
Ole H. Olson Papers

Olson, Ole H., 1872-1954
Ole H. Olson Papers, 1887-1952
5 linear ft.
Collection number: Mss 183
Mss 1596.14

Biography Scope and Content Box and Folder List

OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Links: Oral history interview with Ole H. Olson and Oliver Rosenberg, 1951

Provenance: Donated by Mrs. Inga Olson Martin, 1960 (Acc. 1060).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Ole H. Olson Papers, MS 183, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Related material: Ole H. Olson papers also at University of North Dakota, Chester Fritz Library Dept. of Special Collections

BIOGRAPHY

Ole H. Olson was born September 19, 1872, in Mondovi, Wisconsin. He was the oldest child of nine from parents who had emigrated from Sogn, Norway. When he was seventeen he left home, and attended and

graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. In 1891, he went to North Dakota and was employed by the Northern Pacific Railroad.

In 1895, Olson homesteaded near New Rockford, North Dakota. From 1895 until his retirement in 1946, his farm grew from the original 160 acres to more than 400 acres. He was considered by many of his fellow farmers to be very prosperous.

On December 12, 1912, he married Julia Ramberget in New Rockford. Mr. Olson and his wife had ten children; four boys and six girls. Clifford, was the oldest boy, followed by Orin, Raymond, and Raff. Inga, Olson's secretary while he was Lt. Governor and Governor, was the oldest daughter, followed by Martha, Anna Venoie, Dora (Dodo), and Metta Marilyn. One daughter died in infancy.

Olson began his political involvement just after the turn of the century, when he became secretary and treasurer of the local chapter of the American Society of Equity. He remained an active member until the organization was dissolved. He entered mainstream politics in 1916 with his election to the North Dakota House of Representatives. Beginning in 1918, he ran for the State Senate for the first time. He won three consecutive four-year terms in the State Senate, serving in 1929 as the president pro tem of the Senate.

In 1932, Olson was elected Lt. Governor under William Langer's administration. In June, 1934, Olson assumed the role of Governor after Langer was convicted by a federal jury for soliciting political funds from federal employees. Olson served the remainder of Langer's term, which ended January 7, 1935. After turning over the office of Governor, Olson was appointed Highway Commissioner until April 8, 1935, when he was removed from that office by the newly elected Governor Walter Welford.

After leaving public political life, Olson returned to his farm near New Rockford. During the years after leaving office, Olson became very active in the Farmers Union's various organizations, being chiefly involved in the Farmers Union Livestock Commission, as a director.

He, like most farmers during the late 30s and early 40s, took part in President Roosevelt's Agricultural Adjustment Association, which helped him get through the toughest time of the depression. He continued to farm until 1946, when he retired from farming and moved to New Rockford.

Ole H. Olson died January 29, 1954, in New Rockford, North Dakota. He was survived at that time by his wife, five daughters, and three sons. His son, Orin Olson, died during W.W. II, in Italy, on July 26, 1944.

SCOPE AND CONENT

The processing of the Ole H. Olson papers actually occurred twice, once in 1973 and again in 1995. When the collection was processed in 1973, an artificial order was given to the material. The only part of the papers that remained in Mr. Olson's original order was the correspondence. The correspondence was arranged in alphabetical order by sender. This part of the collection also remained unchanged during the second processing. However, the correspondence was divided into two areas during the second processing; political and personal.

The collection consists of four series: Personal, Political, Organizations and Ephemera. Each of these series has subseries. Each folder in the collection is arranged in chronological order.

The **Personal Series** has four subseries: correspondence, family farm, subject files, and books & ledgers.

The Correspondence Subseries files are organized alphabetically by sender, and within each file organized chronologically. There were letters that had been crossed-referenced to organizations of which Mr. Olson was a member. These organizational letters were given their own alphabetical folder (i.e. A-People, A-organizational).

The Family Farm Subseries files consist of papers dealing with the breeding, raising and selling of livestock for the farm, and miscellaneous papers dealing with the everyday running and operation of the farm. There are also papers which deal with the loans which Mr. Olson took out for the farm, and tax papers dealing with the payment of taxes on the Olson farm. Also contained in these files are stock certificates from companies which Mr. Olson invested in while farming.

Included within the Family Farm Subseries files are Mr. Olson's papers dealing with involvement in the Agricultural Adjustment Association. The AAA files consist of contracts & agreements signed by Mr. Olson with the AAA, correspondence between the AAA and Mr. Olson, and a file containing records on Mr. Olson's involvement in the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

The Subject Files Subseries includes files which show Mr. Olson's involvement in the American Red Cross; a copy of the "Co-operator Herald," which has a picture of Mr. Olson's farm on the front cover; a folder containing information on his investments into a land company in Cuba; and, information about his involvement as secretary of the First Lutheran Church, in New Rockford. Also included in these subject files are folders which contain insurance papers that pertain to Mr. Olson; miscellaneous certificates awarded to Mr. Olson for his service to government and his community; a naturalization certificate for Mr. John Anderson; purchase and ownership papers of Mr. Olson's Model-T Ford; the estate papers of Ole Sandvik, whose estate Mr. Olson was the executer of; a certificate from the Sheyenne Kreds Hospital Association entitling the bearer, when needed, to a one night free stay at the hospital; Mr. Olson's Social Security application; and, a copy of the U.S. Census of Agriculture from 1925 and 1930.

The Books and Ledgers Subseries files contain information about Mr. Olson's farm and organizations in which he was involved. Books and ledgers which pertain to his farm include: wheat threshing record books from 1906-1908; farm record books, 1906, 1909-1911, 1920, 1941, 1943, 1945-1946, 1947; account books, 1906-1907, 1912-1919; workmen's & threshers' time books, 1908-1912; stallion breeding & service records, 1910-1915; cash ledger, 1942-1952; and personal note books kept by Mr. Olson. Books which pertain to organizations in which he was involved include: Greenfield Farmers Union secretary record book, 1904-1924; secretary & treasurer book of Greenfield Livestock Association, 1905-1912; and, the Greenfield Horse Co. secretary & treasurer book, 1913-1918.

The **Political Series** has two subseries: correspondence and subject files. The correspondence files are arranged in the same manner as the personal series. The subject files include information collected by Mr.

Olson about various subjects of interest in North Dakota politics. The files in this area are arranged in alphabetical order, with information within each file arranged in chronological order.

The Subject Files Subseries includes information that deals with the Bank of North Dakota, campaign material used by Mr. Olson during his political career, the running of the Farm Security Administration, and information on the Missouri-River Diversion Association. Information about national organizations includes the National Economic League and the National Non-Partisan League. Files on North Dakota politics include political parties, rural rehabilitation corporation, senate, State Mutual Insurance Co., and the State Tax Commission. Newspaper clippings in these files include information on the political career of Mr. Olson. Within the subject subseries are files which contain some papers from when Mr. Olson was in the North Dakota Senate, when he was governor, and when he was the Highway Commissioner of the state. There are also political editorials which were written by H.W. Anderberg during Mr. Olson's term as Lt. Governor and Governor, and some letters dealing with political matters which were received after Mr. Olson had left public office. Also included in these files is the Precinct Directory & Voting List from Eddy County N.D., for the year 1908, primary election returns for June 25, 1940, letters concerning Senator Nye of N.D., a portion of a speech given by Mr. Olson on the production of synthetic rubber, and paper work on the tax of agricultural products in North Dakota.

The **Organizations Series** has been separated into three subseries: American Society of Equity, Farmers Union Cooperative Livestock Association, and subject files.

Mr. Olson was a founder and board member of the North Dakota Chapter of the American Society of Equity. This area of the collection has as its bulk correspondence between Mr. Olson, and other members of the society. The correspondence files cover the years 1911-1931. There are pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and a written history of the society included in this section. There are files that include information on Equity Elevators, creameries, publications, financial reports, and miscellaneous papers that deal with the society. Also included in this section are the local chapter's record and minute books.

Mr. Olson was also a board member of the Farmers Union Live Stock Commission, located at the time in Minneapolis, Minn. This subseries contains files which have Mr. Olson's correspondence with the organization from 1929-1944, financial reports from 1931-1944, meeting minutes from 1934-1943, and pamphlets which were put out by the association.

The Subject Files Subseries are organized in alphabetical order by the organization's name. This section includes organizations in which Mr. Olson was directly or indirectly involved. These organizations include: Eddy County Taxpayers Association, Farmers Educational & Cooperative Union of America, Farmers Elevator Association of North Dakota, Farmers Union Central Exchange, Farmers Union Cooperative Produce Association, Farmers Union Legislative Committee, Farmers Union Life, Farmers Union Oil Company of Sheyenne, Farmers Union Poultry Commission Company, Farmers Union Terminal Association, and National Farmers Union Property & Casualty. There are also three files which contain the minutes of the Farmers Cooperative Convention, March 7, 1912; newspaper clippings about the organizations Mr. Olson was involved in, which cover the years 1933-1942; and, a copy of "The Union Junior," a newsletter which was put out by the Farmers Union Cooperative.

The **Ephemera Series** (Mss 1596.14) contains forty-six items found in the Olson papers. This series is arranged by size of the items from largest to smallest. This series contains: a Farmers Income Tax and Farm Account Book (1944); an appointment certificate from the North Dakota Board of Federal Cooperative Agriculture (1943); property maps from a North Dakota Company; an appointment certificate from the North Dakota Highway Commissioner (1935); a marriage certificate from O.H. Olson & Julia Ramberget (1912); a confirmation certificate of Julia Ramberget (1907); an American Society of Equity-charter for Eddy County (1908); an election certificate for senator (1926), a land deed for Erick Nelson (1901), Arnie Olson (1902), and Lears D. Tweeten (1903); a nomination certificate for representative (1916); an election certificate for representative (1916); an election certificate for senator (1922); a certificate from Office of Price Administration (1944); a certificate of Farm War Service (1943); the confirmation certificate of Ole H. Olson (1887); a nomination certificate for senator (1918); a nomination certificate for lt. governor (1932); and, an election certificate for lt. governor (1932). In addition, this series contains certificates issued by: *Pearson's Magazine*, Delars Western Oil Co., The Equity Cooperative Packing Co., The League Exchange, Equity Elevator Co. of New Rockford, the North Dakota Realty Co., and the Equity Cooperative Exchange. Finishing the collection is a certificate of membership to the American Society of Equity (1910), a nomination certificate for senator (1926), and a $25 bond from The American Society of Equity.

SEPARATION RECORD

The following non-manuscript items have been removed from the Ole H. Olson Papers.

Books (Institute book collection)

- Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association Annual Reports, 1940, 1943-1944, 1947, 1949-1950, 1952.
- Farmers Union Central Exchange Annual Reports, 1945-1951.
- Matchan, Don C., *For An MVA : Based on what they did with TVA* (2 editions)
- Equity Union Creameries annual reports, 1931, 1942-1943, 1947 (SC 714)
- *Agriculture our Paramount National Problem*, by John H. Worst, 1914 (pamphlet)
- *Here Are the Facts, decide for yourself*, by Farmers Union Fact-Finding Committee
- *Since 1915*, by Equity Union Creameries
- *The Future and the Past of the Co-operative Farm Organizations of the Northwest*, by Glenn J. Talbott, 1940
- North Dakota Stallion Registration Board, 2nd Annual Report, 1912 (general library collection)

Photographs (Institute Photo Mss 183 & Folio 38)

- Includes an autographed picture dated 1937, from the United States comptroller of currency to Ole Olson; and, a Christmas card family portrait of Ole, his wife, and eight of his children, taken sometime during the late 1940s. There are also two studio portraits of Ole Olson. One was taken younger in life, and another during the middle part of his life. In addition, there are two group photographs. The first is a group of men and women in front of what appears to be a school. The second is a group of men at the 20th annual meeting at the North Dakota Mutual Insurance Association, taken in what appears to be a town hall. Also included in the photographs is a picture of Ole Olson as governor (1934), in front of the State Building being shown a road planer by five

men. Finally, there is a photograph of Ole H. Olson at his desk, on the floor of either the North Dakota Senate or House chambers.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	**Contents**
1/1	Finding aid, & Biographical material
	Personal Series
	Correspondence Subseries—
1/2	A - People
1/3	A - Organizations
1/4	B -
1/5	C - People
1/6	C - Organizations
1/7	D
1/8	E
1/9	F - People
1/10	F - Organizations
1/11	G -
1/12	H -
1/13	I & J -
1/14	K -
1/15	L -
1/16	MA - MH -
1/17	MI - MZ -
1/18	N - People
1/19	N - Organizations
1/20	O -
2/1	O.H. Olson - Letters from children
2/2	O.H. Olson - Letters to wife
2/3	O.H. Olson - Letters from wife
2/4	O.H. Olson - Letters from brothers & friends
2/5	O.H. Olson - Letters received in Norwegian
2/6	P - People
2/7	P - Organizations
2/8	Q -
2/9	R -
2/10	SA - SL - People
2/11	SM - SZ - People
2/12	S - Organizations
2/13	T -

2/14 U - V -
2/15 W -
2/16 X - Y – Z

Family Farm Subseries—

3/1 Livestock papers
3/2 Farm papers, misc.
3/3 Bank concerns
3/4 Tax papers
3/5 Stock certificates
3/6 Agricultural Adjustment Administration - contracts & agreements
3/7 AAA correspondence, 1934-1945
3/8 AAA correspondence, 1946-1948
3/9 AAA crop insurance

Subject Files Subseries—

3/10 American Red Cross
3/11 Co-operators Herald
3/12 Cuban Land Investment
3/13 First Lutheran Church - New Rockford, N.D.
3/14 Insurance Papers
4/1 Misc. certificates
4/2 Naturalization Petition - John Anderson
4/3 Papers for Model T Ford
4/4 Ole Sandvik - Estate papers
4/5 Sheyenne Kreds Hospital Association
4/6 Social Security Board
4/7 U.S. Census of Agriculture

Books & Ledgers Subseries—

4/7a Farm finance book, ca. 1901-1905
4/8 Greenfield Farmers Union secretary record book, 1904-1924
4/9 Threshing record book, 1906-1907
4/10 Threshing record book, 1908
4/11 Misc. account book, 1906-1907
4/12 Farm record book, 1906
4/13 Record book in Norwegian, 1908-1912
4/14 Workmen's time books, 1908-1912
4/15 Threshermen's time book, 1911
5/1 Stallion or Jack service records, 1910-1915
5/2 Greenfield Livestock Association secretary & treasurer book, 1905-1912
5/3 Cash ledger book, 1942- 1952
5/4 Personal note books
5/5 Misc. record book, 1916-1924
5/6 Breeders' note and certificate book, 1931
5/7 Misc. Account book, 1912-1919
6/1 Greenfield Horse Company - Secretary and treasurer book, 1913-1918

6/2	Farm record book, 1920
6/3	Farm ledger, 1927-1947
6/4	Farm family record book, 1941
6/5	Farm record book, 1943
Ephemera 1	Farmers Income Tax and Farm Account Book, 1944
6/6	Farm record book, 1945-1946

Political Series

Correspondence Subseries—

6/7	A -
6/8	B -
6/9	C -
6/10	D -
6/11	E -
6/12	F –
7/1	G -
7/2	H -
7/3	I & J -
7/4	K -
7/5	L -
7/6	MA - MH
7/7	MI - MZ
7/8	N - People
7/9	N - Organization
7/10	O -
7/11	P -
7/12	Q -
8/1	R -
8/2	SA - SL -
8/3	SM - SZ -
8/4	T
8/5	U & V -
8/6	W -
8/7	X - Y – Z

Subject Files Subseries—

8/8	Bank of North Dakota
8/9	Campaign material & Incorporation, 1933
8/10	Campaign material - O.H. Olson, 1914-1934
8/11	Farm Security Administration
8/12	Missouri River Diversion Association
8/13	National Economic League
8/14	National Nonpartisan League
8/15	North Dakota Political Parties

8/16 North Dakota Rural Rehabilitation Corporation
8/17 North Dakota Legislature, 1913-1935
9/1 North Dakota State Mutual Insurance Company
9/2 North Dakota State Tax Commission
9/3 Newspaper clippings - 1934
9/4 O.H. Olson - Governor papers
9/5 O.H. Olson - Highway Commissioner
9/6 O.H. Olson - Senate papers
9/7 Political editorials - A.W. Anderberg
9/8 Political letters - After leaving office
9/9 Precinct directory & voting record, 1908- Eddy County
9/10 Primary election returns - June 25, 1940
9/11 Senator Nye
9/12 Speech on Production of Synthetic Rubber (Partial)
9/13 Tax of agriculture products

Organizations Series

American Society of Equity-
9/14 Correspondence, 1911-1914
9/15 Correspondence, 1915-1916
9/16 Correspondence, 1917-1919
9/17 Correspondence, 1920-1931
Equity Cooperative Exchange-
10/1 Pamphlets, 1911-1922
10/2 History & newspaper clippings, 1913-1945
10/3 Equity Elevator Company
10/4 American Society of Equity, New Rockford Local #4772 - Minutes book, 1909-1911
10/5 American Society of Equity, New Rockford Local #4772 - Membership record book, 1909-1911
10/6 Equity publications
10/7 Equity Union Creameries, 1915-1947
10/8 Equity Cooperative Exchange financial reports, 1911-1918
10/9 American Society of Equity - Misc. papers
Farmers Union Live Stock Commission-
10/10 Correspondence, 1929-1944
10/11 Financial reports, 1931-1937
10/12 Financial reports, 1938-1944
11/1 Meeting reports, 1934-1942
11/2 Meeting minutes, 1943
11/3 Pamphlets
Subject Files-
11/4 Eddy County Taxpayers Association
11/5 Farmers Educational & Cooperative Union of America

11/6	Farmers Elevator Association of North Dakota
11/7	Farmers Union Central Exchange
11/8	Farmers Union Cooperative Produce Association
11/9	Farmers Union Legislative Committee
11/10	Farmers Union Life
11/11	Farmers Union Oil Company of Sheyenne
11/12	Farmers Union Poultry Commission Company
11/13	Farmers Union Terminal Association
11/14	Farmers' Cooperative Convention, St. Paul, Minn., March 7, 1912 - Minutes
12/1	National Farmers Union Property & Casualty
12/2	Newspaper clippings, 1933-1942
12/3	North Dakota Central Credit Union
12/4	Northwest Farmers Cooperative Dairy Producer
12/5	Parity income for wheat producers
12/6	"The Union Junior"
12/7	Voltaire Farmers Elevator Company

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