

Finding Aid to the Irma Callahan Papers

Callahan, Irma, 1899-1995

Irma Callahan Papers, 1948-1968

.6 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 200

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [Irma Callahan Photograph Collection](#)

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

Provenance: Donated by Evelyn Krebsbach, November 1997 (Acc 2496).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Irma Callahan Papers, MS 200, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Irma (Krebsbach) Callahan was born on October 11, 1899 in Stacyville, Iowa. When she was ten her family moved to Napoleon, North Dakota. Callahan graduated from Dakota Business College and then worked for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in Fargo from 1921 to 1943. During her last eight years there, Callahan was the Assistant Chief of Income Tax. After leaving the IRS she became more active in politics. She ran for State Auditor in 1958 and for the State Legislature in 1964 on the Democratic ticket, only to be defeated in both attempts. When she ran for State Auditor in 1958, Callahan was Vice-

chairman of the North Dakota Democratic State Central Committee, a position she held for four years. She also served as a delegate to the 1952 and 1956 Democratic National Convention and was an observer at the 1960 Democratic National Convention. Callahan was also active in areas apart from politics. She was the Secretary of the County Chapter of the March of Dimes, City Chairman of Mother's March on Polio and later was appointed by the National Foundation to serve as the State Advisor. Over the years Callahan made many friends as evidenced by the numerous Christmas cards and letters she received from various governors, United States senators, and Cabinet members. She had a long and distinguished record in state politics. In 1924 she married James Callahan, an engineer for the Northern Pacific Railroad. He died in 1966 and she died February 28, 1995. They had no children.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection consists of scrapbooks Irma Callahan made over the years and contain political memorabilia, invitations to inaugural balls, and Christmas cards from various VIPs. The collection contains political materials from the late 1940s to the late 1960s covering national and state politics. The scrapbooks contain letters from hopeful presidential nominees and telegrams from presidential nominees such as Adlai Stevenson. The majority of the material is letters, telegrams, flyers, and newspaper or magazine clippings. The scrapbooks show how the political process works on the state and national levels and how the candidates vie for support among the delegates. Also, they show the building up of contacts over the years as evidenced by the numerous letters and Christmas cards Callahan received. The collection of letters and other material from Callahan's time, as an active participant in politics, shows the transformation of the convention and nominating system. She kept "score" of the various attempts to nominate a presidential candidate. The process took several ballots and no one knew who would win whereas today everyone knows or can make a good prediction of who is going to win. The collection is divided into two series: **Scrapbook** and **Memorabilia**. Sixty-seven photographs were removed from the collection and can be found in Photo 2064.

The [Scrapbook Series](#) contains a wide variety of information. The original scrapbooks were the highly acidic magnetic photo albums. Therefore, the contents were removed from each one and placed in archival folders, yet retaining the original order within the albums. The magnetic albums were discarded. Some cover the Democratic National Convention, which contains ticket stubs for the convention, literature distributed to the delegates, and some of the perks (free entrance to a double header at Wrigley Field and Disneyland) the delegates received. Others contain information relating to the State Democratic Convention. These scrapbooks contain editorials from the *Forum* and newspaper speculation on who would receive the nomination. One scrapbook details Irma Callahan's campaign for the State's Auditor's office. This scrapbook contains great information on how a state campaign is run. There are letters she sent out, State and City of Fargo documents stating Callahan was a candidate in the up-coming election, expense reports so she could be reimbursed for her personal expenses, and other campaign material such as flyers and pamphlets. All the scrapbooks provide insight for the behind the scenes political activity. The letters and telegrams sent out by the hopeful presidential nominees are asking for support and explain their position on the some of the issues. There is also some campaign literature and advertisements in the scrapbooks.

The [Memorabilia Series](#) is a small but good collection of invitations, Christmas cards, correspondence and other political material. The invitations are to the inaugural balls of President John F. Kennedy in 1961 and Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in 1965. There are other invitations to other events that were pre-inaugural. The Christmas cards are from various VIPs in the Democratic Party: Hubert H. Humphrey (U. S. Senator and Vice President), Averell Harriman (Governor, New York), Robert B. Meyner (Governor, New Jersey), John F. Kennedy (U. S. Senator and President), and Quentin Burdick (U. S. Senator). Also there are programs for the Democratic National Convention and other gatherings Callahan attended. There is a copy of *Democratic Digest* from January-February 1961. This issue details Kennedy and his proposed governing plan and gives biographies of his selected staff.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid, and biographical information
	Scrapbook Series
1/2	1948-1952 Women, state convention, Robert S. Kerr visit, Kerr luncheon, state convention, Minot Jefferson-Jackson visit, national convention
1/3	1952-1954 National convention, Truman tour, and N.D. Jefferson-Jackson Day Committee
1/4	1954 State convention, Sioux Falls, Grand Forks League of Women, and Dollars for Democrats
1/5	1956 State convention, Harriman breakfast, and pre-National Convention material
1/6	1956 National convention, Sioux City Midwest Conference
1/7	1956-1958 Democratic Women's Conference, State convention, Women's Organization, United Nations
1/8	1958 State convention, my campaign
1/9	1960 State convention, Kennedy Dinner, Smorgasbord-Fargo, Burdick's birthday party (Stu

Symington), National convention in Los Angeles

- 1/10 1960-1963
National convention, Los Angeles continued, my souvenirs, Kelly Party in Grand Forks, Fred McLean, Gov. Guy inaugural ball, appointments for jobs, open house at Town House, Magunson dinner, Civic Center, special nomination convention, Grand Forks
- 1/11 1961
John F. Kennedy's inauguration-1961
- 1/12 1964
Clippings, programs, speeches, correspondence

Memorabilia Series

- 1/13 Inauguration invitations, announcements, and programs
- 2/1 Christmas cards from VIPs
- 2/2 John F. Kennedy memorabilia
- 2/3 Correspondence and Democratic national convention material
- 2/4 Photo album