

Finding Aid to the Ralph Diehl Papers

Diehl, Ralph, 1905-1993

Ralph Diehl Papers, 1936-1993

5.4 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 280

Mss 1596.4

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding aid to the [Ralph Diehl Photograph Collection](#)

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BIOGRAPHY

Ralph Diehl was born March 31, 1905 near Hartley, Iowa. He was the third child of six children born to Charles and Emma (Lorch) Diehl. In 1917 the family moved to an area near Hillsboro, North Dakota. In 1929 Diehl graduated from North Dakota State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture. After graduation, he taught vocational agriculture and track and basketball in Castlewood, South Dakota. While in Castlewood, he met Gertrude Qualsett whom he married in 1931. By 1932 they

had settled on a farm near Hillsboro. The couple had two sons, R. Harlan and Roger. Diehl died May 12, 1993. Mrs. Diehl died March 30, 2004.

Diehl served five terms as a member of the North Dakota state legislature and was an active member of the state Republican Party. As a member of the legislature, Diehl was appointed to serve on the Natural Resources sub-committee. Some of the issues Diehl was most concerned with included the siting of energy plants, routing of transmission lines, and the reclamation of strip-mined land. In 1971 and 1972 Diehl was a delegate to the North Dakota Constitutional Convention.

While Diehl grew an assortment of crops and raised numerous animals on his farm, he was heavily involved in sugarbeet production and well known for the quality of his herd of Holstein cattle. He also was involved in numerous agricultural organizations including: Equity Elevator and Trading Company of Hillsboro of which he was president for twenty-four years; National Council of Agricultural Employers; American Crystal Sugar Company; Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers' Association, Incorporated; Western Sugarbeet Growers' Association, Incorporated; Red River Valley Cooperative, Incorporated; North Dakota and Traill County Crop Improvement Associations; Advisory Council for Agricultural Research and Education at North Dakota State University; Traill-Grand Forks Dairy Herd Improvement Association; and the Agricultural Hall of Fame. Diehl served on the board of directors for many of these organizations and served terms as president of the board for many of them.

Diehl was an active member in the community, belonging to several local civic organizations. He served as a board member of Nodak Rural Electric Cooperative for thirty-five years, the Hillsboro Community Hospital Association, Kiwanis, Shrine, Elks, Sons of Norway, Civic and Commerce Association, Hillsboro Masonic Lodge No. 10, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Hillsboro Township Board, and the local rural water district. He was also a leader in 4-H for fifteen years and involved in work with Boy Scouts.

Diehl's farming and community service activities were recognized when he was presented with the Soil Conservation Award, the Skelly Award, and the Electric Hammer Award. He also received the Distinguished Service Award from the North Dakota Crop Improvement Association.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Ralph Diehl Papers** contain business records from his farm as well as records from the various agricultural organizations he was involved with. The collection contains records from Diehl's involvement in the Republican Party, information pertaining to his campaigns, and records from his terms as a state legislator. There are also papers from various other organizations that Diehl was involved in including civic, political, and religious. These records consist of a variety of records particularly correspondence and meeting minutes. They also include information pertaining to the issues Diehl was most concerned with, such as energy and agricultural issues. The papers have been organized into three main series: Agriculture, Politics & Government, and Associations. Each of these series has been further organized into subsequent sub-series.

The [Agriculture Series](#) consists of a variety of records divided into several sub-series related to farm business procedures and agricultural organizations. These sub-series include: Farm Accounts Ledgers, Equity Elevator and Trading Company, Farm Contracts, Farm Labor, Conservation Plans, and Agricultural Organizations.

The **Farm Accounts Ledgers Sub-series** consists of annual ledgers that detail the income and expenses of the Diehl family farm. This series has two parts, the primary being the records for Ralph Diehl's individual farm records (1936-1989), the second being the records that detail the joint records of the partnership of Ralph Diehl and Sons (1963-1972).

The **Equity Elevator and Trading Company of Hillsboro, North Dakota Sub-series** consists of the By-Laws and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and financial audits from 1950 to 1973. These records also include annual reports, correspondence, and insurance information. Diehl was a member of the Board of Directors and served as president of the board for many years.

The **Farm Contracts Sub-series** includes contracts for rented land, paperwork for crop loans, and crop storage rental contracts. The records also include loan records, receipts, and correspondence pertaining to farm machinery.

The **Farm Labor Sub-series** includes ledgers that contain information about people hired to work on the Diehl farm, what they were paid, when they worked, and what they did. The sub-series also includes correspondence with migrant workers who were in contact with Diehl to arrange employment. The files contain regulations for wage rates and housing and health regulations for migrant workers. These records also include reports from the Labor Committee, which included members of the Governor's Migratory Labor Committee and the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers' Association. The Labor Committee attended and presented at hearings regarding labor wage rates.

The **Conservation Plans Sub-series** includes two farmland conservation plans for Ralph Diehl's farm issued by the Soil Conservation Service. Each includes an agreement and aerial maps of his farm land. Each is signed by Mr. Diehl. One is dated in 1948 and the other 1958.

The **Agricultural Organizations Sub-series** contains records from various organizations that Diehl was involved in that were related to agriculture and agri-business including: National Council of Agricultural Employers; American Crystal Sugar Company; Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers' Association, Incorporated; Western Sugarbeet Growers' Association, Incorporated; Red River Valley Cooperative, Incorporated; North Dakota and Traill County Crop Improvement Associations; Advisory Council for Agricultural Research and Education at North Dakota State University; Skelly Farm Achievement Award; Traill-Grand Forks Dairy Herd Improvement Association; and the Agricultural Hall of Fame. These files include general information about the organizations and Diehl's involvement in each including: by-laws, meeting minutes, and correspondence as well as resource files, newsletters, and news articles.

The [Politics & Government Series](#) contains several sub-series that document Diehl's political career. This includes: Republican Party Information, Campaign Materials, Legislative Terms, Natural Resources

Sub-Committee, North Dakota Constitutional Convention, North Dakota Economic Development Commission, and the North Dakota Governor's Committee on Migrant Farm Labor.

The **Republican Party Information Sub-series** consists of various material promoting the Republican Party such as: rules and modes of procedure, party platforms, precinct information, candidate information (1960-1968), news articles, and information for district chairmen such as fundraising quotas. The records also contain meeting minutes, reports, and correspondence from several Republican party state committees including: general state committee meetings, the Executive Committee, the Finance and Auditing Sub-committee, the Organization Sub-committee, the Publicity Sub-committee, and the Research Sub-committee. There is general information to assist party leaders such as papers from a political course, "Action Course in Practical Politics", which guides people to get others involved in issues. There is also information from a campaign seminar, which provides advice for organizing and running a political campaign and a Republican leaders manual. There are also two papers included in the files presenting Ed Doherty's policy position on education and farming.

The **Campaign Materials Sub-series** includes material from Diehl's campaigns for state office in the legislature. These papers include campaign speeches and text for radio advertisements. There is material regarding contested election results for the 1964 Republican primary election for the state legislature where Diehl lost by two votes to Eldred Dornacker and Gilman Wastvedt. The sub-series also contains news articles and promotional material from the 1960s and 1970s about elections and the various positions and candidates. There is also a folder containing Diehl's promotional campaign literature (two over-size broadsides in Mss 1596.4).

The **Legislative Terms Sub-series** includes Diehl's certificates of nomination from 1958 to 1968 and legislative reports written by Diehl to his constituents (1961-1967). The records include files pertaining to a variety of house bills either proposed or supported by Diehl. These files include the proposed bills, correspondence regarding the bills, and some speeches pertaining to the bills. These bills include: appropriations for institutions of higher learning and the Extension Service; cooperative agreements for student teachers and the construction of a 4-H Center; taxes for cooperatives; infrastructure development (section lines as public roads and the construction of crossings over ditches, drains, and roads); and corporate farming. The records include a proposed concurrent resolution regarding the destruction of county court records. There are several files regarding proposed senate bills also, including the repeal of all personal property tax and defining public utilities. The files include correspondence, newspaper articles, and resource information regarding tax reforms, sub-committee information on budgets, final budget reports, general correspondence from 1958 to 1987, directories, press releases, news articles, and speeches that may have been presented to the legislature by the governor regarding economic development and tourism.

The **Natural Resources Sub-Committee Sub-series** includes records of the sub-committee that Diehl was nominated to serve on by the legislative research committee. Documents include: meeting minutes and agendas (1967-1968), minutes from the Joint Advisory Committee meetings (1975), Plant Siting Advisory Committee meeting minutes (1975), Transmission Line Advisory Committee meeting minutes (1975), correspondence (1967-1975), surveys regarding plant siting and transmission line routing criteria. The records also include proposed bills regarding the reclamation of strip-mined lands. The resource

material includes research information prepared by the Natural Resource Committee regarding strip mines. The sub-series also includes documents pertaining to proposed environmental impact statements. These documents contain extensive research material and surveys including analyses of North Dakota's physical, natural, economic, social, and cultural environments. There are also maps of the state depicting various resources and information about routing transmission lines.

The **North Dakota Constitutional Convention Sub-series** includes documents that are from the 1972 convention to which Diehl was a delegate. At the convention delegates revised sections of the state constitution to then be approved or rejected by North Dakota voters. The papers include a copy of the proposed constitution and the proposed revisions, speeches arguing certain changes such as the voting age requirements. There are reports made by Diehl as a delegate to the convention and reports made to the delegates by the Delegate Information Service. The files include correspondence from 1971-1972 regarding the convention, press releases from 1972, news articles, *Constitutional Convention Information Digest*, and *Constitutional Convention News* Volume I, numbers 9, 10, and 11 (March-April 1972). The files also include directories of delegates and biographies of delegates and staff. There are also several documents accumulated around the debate of bicameral versus unicameral legislatures.

The **North Dakota Economic Development Commission Sub-series** includes a letter from its director Bruce Bartch to Diehl, and another letter detailing industries that have built or expanded in North Dakota in the past eight years as of 1969. There is also statistical flyers regarding the state and a typed speech by Diehl regarding industrial development in North Dakota.

The **North Dakota Governor's Committee on Migrant Farm Labor Sub-series** includes substantial information on the workings of this committee regarding migrant farm labor issues in the state, along with publications related to migrant labor. The records cover from 1958 to 1973, but the majority are from 1958 to 1962. Ralph Diehl was a long-time member of the committee. The records include meeting minutes, correspondence and various fact sheets, forms, etc. The publications section has been divided into general publications, Minnesota publications and those issued by the U.S. Department of Labor. The General file includes *Toward a National Policy for Migrant Labor* (1960) by the Catholic Council on Working Life, *Report on Farm Labor* (1959) by National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, *A Program for Migratory Farm Labor* (1961) by National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and *Salud Amigos* by the North Dakota Governor's Migratory Farm Labor Committee. The Minnesota publications include *Manual of Migrant Labor Camp Safety and Sanitation* (1965), and several issues of *Migrant Health Services News* (1969-1971). The U.S. Dept. of Labor publications include *Programs of National Organizations for Migrant Farm Workers and Their Families* (1961), *Selected References on Domestic Migratory Agricultural Workers, Their Families, Problems, and Programs, 1955-1960* (1961), *State Migratory Labor Committees, Their Organization and Programs* (1959?), and a number of issues of its *Migratory Labor Notes* (1958-1962).

The [Associations Series](#) is made up of several sub-series including: Hillsboro Centennial Celebration and All School Reunion, Hillsboro Community Hospital Association, Hillsboro Lodge No. 10 of the Freemasons, papers regarding the establishment and acquirement of land for highways, Kiwanis, Nodak Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Our Savior's Lutheran Church Annual Reports, Hillsboro Township,

Grand Forks-Traill Water District No. One, Inc and Trail County Rural Water District; Souris-Red-Rainy River Basins Commission, and a photocopy of a scrapbook compiled by the Diehl family.

The **Hillsboro Centennial Celebration and All School Reunion Sub-series** includes papers pertaining to the reunion and centennial that was celebrated in 1981. Diehl served as a chairman for the class of 1925 and was responsible for contacting former classmates about the reunion activities.

The **Hillsboro Community Hospital Association Sub-series** contains information regarding how the association was responsible for raising operating funds for the local hospital. Diehl was on the building committee, which was charged with raising funds to construct a new building.

The **Hillsboro Lodge No. 10 of the Freemasons Sub-series** comprises correspondence from 1941 to 1991; speeches commemorating past and present members; lists of officers and committees, budget information, banquet programs, news articles, and a resource file that contains brochures explaining what the organization is and what some of the philosophies of the members are.

The **Highway Information Sub-series** includes correspondence especially pertaining to the proposed routing of Interstate 29 and the re-routing of Highway 81. The records also include maps of the proposed routes and a resource file that includes a variety of brochures about how highway routes affect the people living along them. Diehl property was affected by the proposed routing of the Interstate and so the issue was a concern to the Diehl family.

The **Kiwanis Sub-series** includes information from the local Hillsboro Kiwanis club such as by-laws, lists of officers and committees, information on activities and events the organization sponsored and participated in, a local newsletter, *The Bulletin*; banquet programs from the Ladies' Nights suppers, and news articles.

The **Nodak Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. Sub-series** consists of meeting minutes from 1966 and 1967, news articles, audits from selected years between 1955 and 1971, and resource information including maps, brochures, and letters from the director. Diehl served on the Nodak Board of Directors for many years and also served as President of the Board of Directors in the 1960s.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Sub-series includes the annual church reports from 1963 to 1993. These reports include information about baptisms, confirmations, marriages, memberships, and funerals. There are reports from the pastor, auditor, treasurer, Sunday school teachers, and other various committees and circles. Members of the Diehl family served as deacons and trustees for many years.

The records of the **Hillsboro Township Sub-series** contain papers from the 1940s when Diehl was elected a township supervisor. The file includes correspondence and a variety of other papers related to building and maintaining township roads such as budgets, taxes, equipment purchases, and conservation programs.

The **Grand Forks-Traill Water District Number One, Incorporated, and the Trail County Rural Water District Sub-series** consists of correspondence regarding the organization of a rural water district

in order to provide rural residents with a dependable supply of quality water. Diehl was selected to serve on the Traill County Resource Conservation and Development Steering Committee. These papers also include correspondence regarding the Water District's negotiations with Diehl to acquire some property for the purpose of establishing a reservoir.

The **Souris-Red-Rainy River Basins Commission Sub-series** includes meeting minutes from 1972, correspondence from 1968-1971, newsletters from 1970-1972, an annual report from 1972, and a directory of the advisory committee. Governor Bill Guy appointed Diehl to the commission's advisory committee in 1968. The commission was established by the state legislature in 1967 for the purpose of basin-wide water resource planning.

The **Scrapbook Sub-series** is a photocopy of a scrapbook maintained by the Diehl family primarily featuring the life and achievements of Ralph Diehl.

SEPARATION RECORD

Photographs (Institute Photograph Collection 2075)

- Thirty-three photographic prints and two postcards. A separate finding aid is available.

Broadsides (Institute Mss 1596.4)

- Two political campaign broadsides

Publications (Institute publications collection)

- *Hired Farm Labor: Wages and Benefits*, by Tommy Reff, 1970
- *Migrant Worker and Employer Guide* (1960)
- *Program Report, North Dakota Youth in Sugar Beets* (1962 and 1969)

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6/2	1990 to 1993
6/3	Hillsboro Township
6/4	Grand Forks-Traill Water District No. One, Inc. and Traill County Rural Water District
	Souris-Red-Rainy River Basins Commission—
6/5	Meeting Minutes (1972)
6/6	Correspondence (1968-1971)
6/7	Newsletters: Vol. I, No. 3 to Vol. III, No. 1 (1970-1972)
6/8	Annual Report (1969)
6/9	Directory of the Advisory Committee
6/10	Photocopy of Scrapbook