

## Finding Aid to the Herman O. Fjelde Family Papers

### Herman O. Fjelde Family

Herman O. Fjelde Family Papers

.25 linear ft.

MSS 82

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### OVERVIEW

**Access:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the NDSU Archives.

**Provenance:** Donated by Mrs. Parke (Pauline) Pratt, 1953 (Acc. 38).

**Property rights:** The NDSU Archives owns the property rights to this collection.

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**Citation:** [Identification of item]. Herman O. Fjelde Family Papers (MSS 82), NDSU Archives, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

### BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Herman O. Fjelde (1865-1818) practiced medicine in North Dakota for more than 21 years. He came to Minneapolis from Norway in 1889. He earned his medical degree from the University of Minnesota. After graduation, he moved to Abercrombie, then to Cooperstown, Fargo, and finally to Rolla. But he is better known for his cultural efforts than for his medical career.

Fjelde identified strongly with his Norwegian roots. He did not want the culture of immigrants to be lost in the United States. He was recognized as an authority on Norse history and culture. He was determined to bring Norwegian art to Fargo. He was responsible for erecting many statues in Fargo, including the

Bjornson Obelisk at NDSU, the statue of Norwegian poet Henrik Wergeland in Island Park, and the statue of Rollo the Viking. In 1910, Theodore Roosevelt sat for a statue by Gustav Vigeland. Fjelde hoped to turn this into a life-size statue, but that never came to fruition. The small statue is currently in Old Main at North Dakota State University.

Fjelde was recognized in Europe for his efforts. He was invited to the coronation of King Haakon in 1906. A street in the town of St. Clair-sur-Epte is named for him. This is where Rollo is said to have signed a treaty with the King of France creating the Duchy of Normandy. Fjelde hoped to establish a Norwegian Museum in Fargo. He returned from Norway with a collection of items he purchased for that purpose. Unfortunately, when the collection was housed at Grand Forks, the building burned and the entire collection was lost.

Dr. Fjelde's brother Jacob (1855-1896) was a noted sculptor. One of his better known works is the monument dedicated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Infantry at Gettysburg. He also created a life-size bronze bust of Henrik Ibsen which stands on a pedestal in Como Park in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Jacob's son Paul (1892-1984) was also a noted sculptor. He created a bust of Abraham Lincoln which was a gift from the people of North Dakota to the people of Norway. During the Nazi occupation, the bust became a symbol of resistance. Paul's son Rolf was a well-known Ibsen scholar and translator.

Herman and Jacob's sister Pauline (1861-1923) was also an artist. She was known as a talented painter, seamstress, embroiderer, and weaver. In 1910, she traveled to Europe to study weaving in Copenhagen and Paris. Her "Hiawatha" tapestry is said to have taken 10-13 years to create. In 1893, the United States prepared to participate in the World's Columbian Exposition. Each state was supposed to be represented by a flag. It was then that officials realized that Minnesota had never adopted a state flag. Pauline and her sister Thomane were contracted to embroider the first Minnesota flag. It won a gold medal for embroidery at the Chicago exposition.

Herman's son Olaf S. Fjelde (1899-1961) was born in Abercrombie, ND. He was a well-known architect, watercolor artist, and pianist. He taught architecture at the University of Illinois. He studied buildings in Europe, and became an authority on stave churches and Viking boats. He wrote and lectured extensively.

Pauline's niece, Mrs. Parke (Pauline) Pratt of Gardner, ND, also became a well-recognized weaver.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Fjelde Family Papers contain newspaper clippings, articles, and scrapbook pages dealing with many of the family members. This includes Herman, Jacob, Paul, and Pauline. Many of the scrapbook entries are written in Norwegian.

**FOLDER LIST**

<b>Box-Folder</b>	<b>Content</b>
1/1	Newspaper Clippings 1918-1968, 1988
1/2	Norsk Familie Journal, Roosevelt statue dedication program
1/3	Pauline Fjelde articles
1/4	Scrapbook pages 1890s-1918