Finding Aid to the
Haile Chisholm Papers

Chisholm, Haile, 1851-1951
Haile Chisholm Papers, 1876, 1921-1951
1.4 linear ft.
Collection number: Mss 117
Mss 1519

OVERVIEW

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

Provenance: Donated by Anna Chisholm, Fargo, North Dakota, 1953 (Acc. 117).

Property rights: The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

Copyrights: The Institute does not hold the copyrights.

Citation: [Identification of item], Haile Chisholm Papers, MS 117, MS 1519, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Haile Chisholm, the son of William H. and Eunice Diana (Fillmore) Chisholm, was born October 22, 1851 at Chazy, New York. At the age of 10 he began learning the blacksmith trade from his father and at the age of 14 went to work for a smithy. In 1869 Mr. Chisholm secured a position with the Central Vermont Railway Company at St. Albans, Vermont in the locomotive shops. Due to a recession he was terminated. He then moved to North Fairfax, Vermont where he eventually established his own blacksmith shop. On July 30, 1877 he married Mary Cordelia Butler of St. Albans, the daughter of Wilder Pierce and Rebecca (Royce) Butler. They had two children; Anna, and Mary. Mr. Chisholm returned to
work at Central Vermont Railway Company but with no possibility of advancement he went west, settling in Edmunds County, South Dakota in 1885. But the venture proved unsuccessful and in October, 1888 he began work in the Fargo shop of the Northern Pacific Railway. He moved his family to Fargo and worked for Northern Pacific until 1902 when the shops moved to Dilworth. That fall he became Instructor in Forging and Metal Works at the North Dakota Agricultural College where he remained until retiring in 1937 at the age of 85. Mr. Chisholm gained wide fame as a metal design craftsman. He created the main gates at the College, the Roosevelt memorial gate, as well as other works at the College and North Dakota towns. In recognition of his artistry and work he received, on February 24, 1931, the honorary degree of Master of Artisans from the North Dakota Agricultural College as well as honors from the North Dakota Legislature, State Supreme Court, and State Board of Higher Education.

Mr. Chisholm continued to reside in Fargo after retirement with his daughter, Anna. Mrs. Chisholm died November 1, 1931. He was a member of the Quarter Century Club at NDAC, and very active in the First Methodist Church. On March 28, 1951, Mr. Chisholm died and was buried at Riverside Cemetery in Fargo.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Haile Chisholm Papers are organized into four series: correspondence, diaries, poetry and subject files.

The **Correspondence Series**, all incoming, is very scattered with the 1931 letters consisting of congratulations on his receiving the Master of Artisans degree.

The **Diaries Series**, covering the period 1940 to 1949, are quite complete and relate mainly to weather and daily occurrences. The autobiographies are typewritten ranging between 49 and 71 pages. They are all basically the same, but with various small additions or deletions. They cover from his childhood through retirement recounting events in his life.

The **Poetry Series** consists of typed copies of his many compositions on a great variety of subjects. There are also some speeches, or prose writings.

The **Subject Files Series** contain a wide variety of material including various booklets with addresses, birthdays, notes, quotations, and other similar types of information; family history; funeral book; and relatively complete financial ledgers for 1936 to 1949. Another item of note is the 208-page typed memoirs of Elmer A. Johnson of Fargo relating his life, family and genealogical material. Mr. Johnson was an agent with the Des Moines Life & Annuity Company. Other items include material related to his receiving the Master of Artisan’s degree, various newspaper clippings and articles, and copy of the *North Dakota Hymn*. The scrapbook was compiled by his daughter Anna and given to him at Christmas 1941. It includes many newspaper clippings about his career, receiving the Master of Artisans degree from the North Dakota Agricultural College, photographs of him and his works, and greetings on his various birthdays. Additions were made to the scrapbook after 1941 related to his annual birthday celebrations, concluding in 1948.
SEPARATION RECORD

The following items have been removed from the Haile Chisholm collection and sent to the section indicated.

Books (Library book collection, consult the main library catalog for call number and location).
Flicher tunes, by North Dakota State Federation Business and Professional Women’s Clubs.

Photographs (Institute Photo Mss 117)
8 items with iron works, Roosevelt gate by cabin, home, in college work shop (University archives), and by anvil (University archives - oversize).

Artifacts
Master of Artisans degree diploma in frame.

BOX/FOLDER CONTENTS

1/1 Finding aid, and Biographical material
1/a Biographical material by Neil Clark

Correspondence Series

1/2 1876, 1921-1922, 1929-1930
1/3 1931, January-February
1/4 1931, March
1/5 1931, April-November
1/6 1933, 1938-1939, 1943, 1947, 1950

Diaries Series

1/7 1940-1944
1/8 1945-1949
1/9 Autobiography, I
1/10 Autobiography, II
1/11 Autobiography, III
1/12 Autobiography, IV

Poetry Series

2/1 Poetry scrapbook, I
2/2 Poetry scrapbook, II
2/3  Poetry scrapbook, II - loose poems
2/4  Poetry
2/5  Poetry
2/6  Poetry and writings

Subject Files Series

2/7  Address, Christmas gifts, special events book, 1915-1937
2/8  Address book, trip notes, 1937
2/9  Birthdays book
2/10 Family history material
3/1  Financial ledger, 1936-1948
3/2  Financial ledger, 1948-1949
3/3  First Methodist Episcopal Church resolution, 1937
3/4  Funeral book, 1951
3/5  Elmer A. Johnson memoirs
3/6  List of letters and poems sent, 1940-1950
3/7  Little Country Theater Lincoln Day Dinner, 1933, 1939
3/8  Master of Artisans degree, 1931
3/9  Miscellaneous material
3/10 Newspaper clippings
3/11  North Dakota Hymn, 1927
2/12 North Dakota pupil reading course certificate, 1929
2/13 Notes, quotations, thoughts book
2/14 Poetry by other persons
2/15 Publications
2/16 Quotations and foolishness
Mss 1519 Scrapbook
2/17 Thoughts, notes, records