

Arthur Townley and the Nonpartisan League

Arthur Charles Townley (December 30, 1880-November 7, 1959) was an American political organizer who founded the Nonpartisan League (NPL) in North Dakota in 1915. This pathfinder will lead researchers to resources available at the North Dakota State Archives highlighting Arthur Townley in connection with the NPL.

Archival Collections

10027 John N. Hagan Papers

Correspondence, literary productions, printed material, financial documents, and miscellanea. The correspondence includes letters and telegrams that relate to Hagan's political and public service career and peak during election times. The entire span of the correspondence is from 1916-1957, with 1928 and 1937 having the most activity, with congratulations on nominations and condolences on losing the North Dakota governorship race. The literary productions consist of Hagan's campaign speeches and other undated speeches as well as addresses given by A. C. Townley, North Dakota Senator Joseph B. Bridston, and Clarence Haggard. The literary productions include newspaper clippings, articles, and press releases, relating either to the Nonpartisan League or Hagan. In the financial documents are checks, NPL donation receipts and NPL North Dakota Highway shop employee payrolls from 1937-1938.

10083 Theodore Gilbert Nelson Papers

Records of the Independent Voters Association (IVA), including minutes, articles of incorporation, correspondence, reports, speeches, telegrams, petitions, transcripts of investigations and debates, political ephemera, drafts of legislative bills, news releases, newspaper clippings, publications, and a subscription list of The Independent; and records of the Lincoln Republican League and the Doyle for Governor Campaign Organization. The IVA records relate primarily to Townleyism, the 1921 recall, Nonpartisan League, the Langer for Governor campaign (1920), and the investigation of the Home Building Association and other state industries. President, Equity Cooperative Exchange and Secretary, Independent Voters Association.

10099 Jay J. Eaton Papers

Personal and business correspondence relating to ranching, farming, Eaton's abstract business, activities as Register of Deeds, local school districts, the National Prosperity League, and the Nonpartisan League (NPL) (including a copy of a speech by A.C. Townley), bank statements, abstracts of title, and poetry. Farmer, rancher, postmaster, and Register of Deeds. Medora, Billings County (N.D.).

Useful Search Guidance

Subjects

- The Socialist Party of North Dakota
- The Nonpartisan League
- NPL
- Politics
- Townley, A.C.
- Arthur Townley
- Townleyism
- Governor William Langer
- Recall election

People

- Arthur C. Townley, 1880-1959

Locations

- Golden Valley County, North Dakota
- Bismarck, North Dakota
- Medora, North Dakota
-

Journal Articles

NPL in Nebraska—1917-1920

Douglas Bakken— *North Dakota History* Vol. 39 Issue 2

The New Day in North Dakota: The Nonpartisan League and the Politics of Negative Revolution

Dale Baum — *North Dakota History* Vol. 40 Issue 2

Equal Time for Townley: Media Politics in North Dakota, 1956-1959

Larry Remele—*North Dakota History* Vol. 52 Issue 1

10306 North Dakota Socialist Party, District Two (McKenzie and Williams Counties)

Organizing Department Records

Account Book documents names of organizers and members, and cash receipts.

Record highlights Arthur C. Townley's organizing and recruiting activities.

10310 Consumers' United Stores Company Records

Records consist of ledgers, financial statements, receipts, letters, and an agreement for various branch stores in ND. Non-Partisan League (NPL). Scandinavian-American Bank. Fargo, Cass County (N.D.).

10444 Harry Lashkowitz Papers

Papers relate primarily to Lashkowitz's time as Secretary of the Cass County Democratic Committee and his fund raising for the Jewish Welfare Association (N.D.). Also included is a scrapbook and transcripts of testimony relating to William Langer's trial on a felony charge (1934-1935), transcripts of testimony and briefs relating to William Langer's libel suit against the Courier-News (1919-1923), and transcripts of testimony relating to Arthur C. Townley's bankruptcy proceedings.

11038 Job Wells (J.W.) Brinton Papers

Contains correspondence, financial material, subscription information, stockholder information, legal agreement, extracts from speeches, business card, reminiscences, and reports of salesmen. Other than J.W. Brinton, the records include: T. P. Harvey, J. R., Waters, C. M. Brinton, Walter William Liggett, A. C. Townley, Minnie J. Nielson, H. P. Knappen, C. J. Solibakke, James Franklin Jaudin, T. L. Beiseker, the Burleigh County Farmers Press, Publishers National Service Bureau, the United States Sisal Trust, H. D. Hagerty Inc., the Nonpartisan League (NPL), the Bowbells Tribune, Bank of North Dakota, Scandinavian American Bank, and the Wells County Free Press.

11069 Dean Winkjer Family Papers

2. Vinyl recording of A.C. Townley speech titled "The Communist Russian New Deal Game To Bankrupt The U.S.A." August, 1956

11306 CAT Tape Collection

Tape 1403: Townley, Arthur C. Address. 60 min. 1958 address. Same both sides.

Tape 1404: Haggard, Clarence. On A.C. Townley and ND Politics Remele, Larry 90 min Interviewed by Larry Remele, 4-13-88 NPL.

Tape 1538: The Communist Russian New Deal Game to Bankrupt the U.S.A. 45 min. Townley delivering his point of view. Taped from disc recording. August 1956.

Tape 3003: Townley, A.C., TV talk on WDAY TV during the 1956 election campaign. Oct. 19, 1956.

20201 Willard G. Bingenheimer Papers

Papers consist of a notebook and other documents relating to Bingenheimer's training at the Ordnance Service Course on the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, French post cards, and two pilot's licenses. Also included in the collection are two panorama photographs of Nonpartisan League Delegation from North Dakota in Washington, DC on December 18, 1933.

Books

The Communist Russian New Deal Game to Bankrupt the U.S.A.

1956 - A.C. Townley

Call Number: 320.532 T746c 1956

A Warning to the Farmer Against Townleyism as Exploited in North Dakota: An Expose and Inside Story of the Methods, Personnel and Menace of the Most Remarkable Phenomenon of Fifty Years in American Political History

1918 – Jerry D. Bacon

Call Number: 329 B134

A.C. Townley, Dreamer, Promoter, and Boss Politician: His Failures and Defeat of the Nonpartisan League

1920 – J.W. Brinton and J.R. Waters

Call Number: 329 B772

The Nonpartisan League

1920— Herbert E. Gaston

Call Number: 329 G219

An Analysis of Selected Speeches of A. C. Townley, 1915-1921

1978 – Alice C. Poehls

Call Number: 329 P752

Townleyism's Future in North Dakota

1919 – Independent Voters Association

Call Number: 329 T662

The Nonpartisan League From the Inside

1918 — Rev. S. R. Maxwell

Call Number: 329.82 M451

Weeds: An Exposition of Arthur C. Townley, President of the Non-Partisan League: A Sower of Wind, a Reaper of Weeds

1919—Dan E. Richter

Call Number: 329 R535w 1919

Townley, A. C

General Information File Biography

Online Resources

[SHSND Photobook](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's Online Search Portal for all digitized photographs

[Digital Horizons](#)

Online consortium of historic photographs from the collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota

[WorldCat](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's publication search portal

External Resources

[A. C. Townley](#)

The Bank of North Dakota Story website

[The Birth of the Nonpartisan League](#)

The Bank of North Dakota Story website

State Archives

For more information related to the collections and resources available at the North Dakota State Archives, please email archives@nd.gov or call (701) 328-2668.



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