

Women in Government

Women in North Dakota were not allowed to vote in general elections until 1920, with the exception of school elections. However, even before they got the vote, they could run for some offices. North Dakotan Laura Eisenhuth became the first woman elected to a statewide office in the United States. Many would follow. This pathfinder will lead researchers to several resources available at the North Dakota State Archives highlighting female elected officials.

Archival Collections

10064 Edwin James Taylor Family Papers

Box 1, Folder 40

Papers of Edwin James Taylor, his wife Charlotte (Sterrett), and sons Herndon and Edwin Jr., as well as the papers of Mrs. Hazel Paris Reid (sister of Edwin Taylor Jr.'s second wife Aldeen Paris [Welch] Taylor), and papers of Major James Hanley (whose daughter Lewista married Aldeen Paris' brother Robert). E. J. Taylor Sr. was an educator and librarian. The Taylor papers include correspondence with Walter Stockwell, W. E. Hoover, Minnie J. Nielson, Beatrice Johnstone, and Jerry D. Bacon, among others, pertaining in part to educational affairs and politics. Contains personal correspondence with friends and relatives and some business papers and notes for speeches. Includes materials relating to the Masonic Lodge, Bismarck Presbyterian Church, the Rotary Club, and the Women's Fortnightly Club.

10107 Nielson Family Papers

Correspondence, newspaper clippings, financial records, photographs, printed materials, records of women's clubs, and biographies of WWI nurses. Records relate to management of the Department of Public Instruction, Teachers' Fund for Retirement, and service clubs. Consists primarily of the papers of Minnie Nielson, president of the North Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Hazel B. Nielson who operated army recreation stations in southern France during WWI.

10157 North Dakota Oral History Project Records

Oral history interview transcripts, indexes to recorded oral history interviews, interview referral files, interview files, photographs, lists of donations to the Project, oral history interview transcripts relating to the Governor's Mansion, family histories, biographies, reminiscences, and manuscripts. Most of the records document administration of the Project. Genealogical information and oral history interview transcripts make up the remainder of the collection. Sponsored by the North Dakota (Continued on next page)

Useful Search Guidance

Subjects

- Elected officials
- Politicians
- Women

People

- Laura Eisenhuth, 1859-1937
- Brynhild Haugland, 1905-1998
- Minnie D. Craig, 1883-1966
- Ruth Meiers, 1925-1987
- Lydia Langer, 1890-1959
- Rosemary Myrdahl, 1929-2000
- Jocelyn Burdick, 1922-2019
- Bertha Rachel Palmer, 1880-1959
- Sarah Vogel, 1946-
- Heidi Heitkamp, 1955-
- Susan Wefald, 1947-
- Corliss (Dodge) Mushik, 1922-2004
- Linda Slaughter, 1843-1911
- Minnie J. Neilson, 1874-1958

Journal Articles

Minnie D. Craig: Gender and Politics in North Dakota

Maren Claus – *North Dakota History* Vol. 63 Issue 2 & 3

*Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award—
Brynhild Haugland
North Dakota History Blue Book 2021-2023*

*Legislative Assemblies: Twenty-third
Session—1933 (House)*

*North Dakota History Centennial Blue Book
1889-1989*

American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, the State Historical Society of North Dakota, and the North Dakota Farmers Union, the Project conducted oral history interviews with older North Dakotans and others who were participants in significant events in the history of the state.

10202 North Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs Records

Records of the state and district offices and various affiliated clubs including minutes, subject files, biographies, district annual reports, pioneer daughters club records, annual meeting programs, scrapbooks, photographs and records of the North Dakota Federation of Womens' Clubs Pioneer Mothers Project.

10443 Speakers of the North Dakota House of Representatives Records

Consists of correspondence, memoranda, notes, biographical sketches, and printed material providing biographical information on Speakers of the North Dakota House of Representatives from 1911 to 1983.

10547 Kathie (Ryckman) Anderson Papers

Papers consist of a draft manuscript copy entitled "Dakota: The Literary Heritage of the Northern Prairie State" from which excerpts were published in North Dakota History, as well as research, notes and publications about North Dakota authors and musicians, and cassette tapes of interviews with North Dakota authors.

10605 Commission on the Status of Women Plum Valley Chapter (Minot, N.D.) Records

Copies of interviews of 94 Ward County women, community involvement reports, photographs, photocopies of newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, and ephemera.

10697 Ann Rathke Papers

Research notes, publications, interviews, and a chart documenting women who served in the state legislature for Rathke's book entitled, Lady, If You Go Into Politics.

10716 Eureka Homemakers Club of Ward County (N.D.) Records

The records consist of minute books, letters, guest book, scrapbooks, programs, photographs, and newspaper clippings. Of special interest are the materials of Brynhild Haugland, a charter member of the club.

10729 Oral History Interviews with North Dakota Women

The interviews feature women in politics, and were conducted by Barbara Honeyman-Pierce in August 1997. Interviewees include Jane Bovard, Heidi Heitkamp, Pat Owens, Anne Summers, Jane Summers, and Sarah Vogel. The collection includes summaries of the interviews and several photographs.

10752 Corliss (Dodge) Mushik Papers

Consists of correspondence, budget materials, legislative bills, minutes, newspaper clippings, publications, reports, and subject files of a member of the North Dakota State Legislature from Mandan. Notable subjects include social welfare, abortion and reproductive rights, incarceration and the criminal justice system, women's rights, (Continued on next page)

healthcare, human services, education, the Democratic-NPL, women in politics, North Dakota Centennial celebrations, North Dakota Heritage Center, North Dakota Bicentennial Commission, Garrison Diversion, and Morton County.

11033 Ellen (Kilander) Chaffee Papers

Documents Ellen Kilander Chaffee's activities as a member and as President of the North Dakota Commission on the Status of Women, and also as a speaker and presenter on equal rights issues. Presentation and speech material, a scrapbook, copies of cartoons, programs, official gubernatorial documents appointing Ellen to the Commission, newspaper clippings, list of book titles, and the articles of incorporation of the North Dakota Commission on the Status of Women.

11036 Susan Wefald Papers

Consists of materials from Wefald's political campaigns in 1994, 1996, 2002, and 2008, for the office of Public Service Commissioner, and from her 1989 campaign for the Bismarck School Board. Also included in the collection are a scrapbook created by Robert Wefald documenting Susan's campaigns, articles about Wefald and her work, press releases, resumes, speeches, appointments and certificates, materials related to the Equal Rights Amendment Wefald's papers toward a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of North Dakota, from 1997-2001 (she graduated in 2002).

11279 Minnie D. Craig Papers

Draft and typed autobiography by Minnie (Davenport) Craig (1883-1966) detailing her childhood and education in Maine, her life in North Dakota, and her political experiences, including the agricultural and economic situation in North Dakota during the depression of the 1920s-1930s, the creation of the North Dakota Mill and Elevator, and the founding of the Bank of North Dakota. The collection also includes a speech given at the 1928 Indian Fair, Fort Totten (N.D.) about the history of Fort Totten and Devils Lake, a speech against a 1928 proposed constitutional amendment that would have required the state to cover the \$25 million worth of deposits lost by insolvent banks, a speech against the Independent Voters Association (I.V.A.), the manuscript "How the State Protects Its Children," and part of a speech about the history of public schools (common schools).

11306 CAT Tape Collection

11463 Ruth Meiers Papers

Consists of Meiers' speeches, correspondence, photographs, audio-visual material, funeral and memorials, biographical information, magazine and news clippings, and materials from Meiers' trip to the Soviet Union as part of a "Women in Leadership" dialogue with Soviet Women on ways to perpetuate peace and good relations between the United States and Russia (U.S.S.R.). The USSR material includes Meiers' diary, drafts and a completed edited version of the diary by Joyce Krachmalnick that includes background material and biographies and reminiscences of other women who went on the trip.

21279 Lydia Langer Papers

Broadside promoting the campaign of Lydia Langer for Governor. The original portrait on the poster was taken by Andreas Risem (Bismarck, N.D.).

30785 Historical Society. State Archives, Biographies and Portraits of Prominent Citizens of the State

Consists of biographies and portraits of prominent North Dakotans prior to 1929. Biographies include information such as residence, birthplace, occupation, education, political records, family information, club memberships, and religious affiliations.

31172 Public Instruction. Administration. Superintendent's Record.

Series consists of daily accounts of the Superintendent's activities.

31265 Attorney General. Correspondence.

Attorney General. Administration Correspondence, 1958-2005. 12 ft. Series consists of correspondence between the Attorney General and Senators William Langer, Milton Young, and Norman Brunsdale concerning legal opinions and management of complaints and legal problems for constituents. OCLC 18149380 3 Langer, William, 1886-1959; Young, Milton, 1897-1981; Brunsdale, Norman, 1891-1978; Correspondence. Inventory available. Later accession includes Attorney General Heidi Heitkamp's subject files correspondence.

31811 Governor. Lieutenant Governor, Ruth Meiers Records

Series consists of scheduling correspondence, committee files, speeches, information on state agencies, and on issues dealing with women and children.

32023 Tax Commission. Commissioner Heidi Heitkamp, Speeches

Tax Department. Commissioner. Speeches of M. Heidi Heitkamp

01060 Langer, Lydia

Photo collection

Books

A History of Ward County: Term Report

1927—Brynhild Haugland

Call Number: 978.463 H371h

Important Voices: North Dakota's Women Elected State Officials Share Their Stories, 1893-2013

2014—Susan E. Wefald with a forward and conclusion by Dr. Kjersten Nelson

Only 17 women have been elected to statewide office in North Dakota in 125 years.

Read their stories in this book. Laura Eisenhuth, elected Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1893 (and the first woman in the United States to be elected to statewide office); Agriculture commissioner Sarah Vogel, first woman to serve on the powerful North Dakota Industrial Commission and who teamed up with Willie Nelson to provide help to farmers; Superintendent of Public Instruction Minnie Nielson who was not allowed into her office for a week after her inauguration; Senator Heidi Heitkamp, who raised her family while serving as tax commissioner and attorney general, all the time working on important issues for North Dakotans.

Call Number: 920 W399i 2014

Lady, If You Go Into Politics: North Dakota's Women Legislators, 1923-1989

1992—Ann M. Rathke

Call Number: 324.08209784 R234L

Haugland, Brynhild

General Information File Biography

Eisenhuth, Laura J

General Information File Biography

Craig, Minnie, 1883-1951

General Information File Biography

Online Resources

The First Woman Legislative Speaker

Columbus Reporter article from January 26, 1933

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

[Brynhild Haugland: Scandinavian–American Hall of Fame 1984 Inductee](#)

Norsk Høstfest website

[North Dakota Elected First Woman to a Statewide Office](#)

InForum 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.



North Dakota State Archives Subject Guides made possible through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).