

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Manuscripts Collection Summary

Name: Nelsen, Ancher, 1904-1933.
Title: Ancher Nelsen papers,
Dates: 1944-1974 (bulk 1958-1974).
Quantity: 28.0 cu. ft. (28 boxes).

Arrangement: Nelsen's congressional records are organized into 5 sections: Personal/Political/Official Records, Legislative Records, Press Relations/Media Activities Records, Office Administration Records, and Photographs. Nelsen's Flood Files and Rural Electrification Administration Files constitute two separate subgroups in the collection.

Summary: Congressional Records of Ancher Nelsen (R-Minn.), a Minnesota farmer who served as a Minnesota State Senator (1935-1948), Minnesota Lieutenant Governor (1953-1955), and U.S. Congressman from Minnesota's second district (1959-1975). The papers reflect the wide range of Nelsen's congressional duties, with emphasis on agriculture, health care, foreign trade, and District of Columbia matters. There are also a number of records relating to flooding and flood control, as well as rural electrification.

The papers consist of Minnesota issue mail, newsletters, legislative records, speeches, press releases, and photographs. These records contain information on small business, transportation, taxation, foreign trade, agriculture, rural development, education, health care, veterans' matters, and Nelsen's election campaigns. In addition are records dating from 1944 from the office of Nelsen's predecessor, Joseph O'Hara, on flooding in the second district, and files from the Rural Electrification Administration, which Nelsen headed from 1953-1956.

Subject headings

Aged--Medical care.
Agricultural law and legislation--United States.
Business enterprises--Minnesota.
Drugs--Law and Legislation.
Electioneering.
Environmental policy.
Flood control--Law and legislation.
Health planning--Law and legislation.
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963.
Legislators--United States.
Minnesota--Public works.

Subject headings (cont.)

Nelsen family.
Photographs.
Politicians--Minnesota.
Pollution--Law and legislation.
Press releases.
Republican Party (United States: 1854-).
Republican Party (Minnesota). Rural
electrification--United States.
Transportation--Law and legislation.
United States. Interstate Commerce Commission.
United States. Federal Communications Commission.
United States. Rural Electrification Administration.
United States. Congress. Commission on the Organization of the District of Columbia. United States.
Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
United States. Congress. House. Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee.
United States. Congress. House.
United States. Congress. House. District of Columbia Committee.
Veterans--Law and legislation.
Vietnamese Conflict, 1961-1975.
Voting rights.
Washington (D.C.).

PALS ID No. 0900042057

Location(s): See Container List for box locations

Manuscripts Nelsen, Ancher, 1904-1993.
 Ancher Nelsen papers, 1944-1974
 (bulk 1958-1974).
 28.0 cubic feet (28 boxes).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ancher Nelsen was born on a farm in Renville County, near Buffalo Lake, Minnesota, on October 11, 1904, the son of Nels Peter and Elizabeth (Andersen) Nelsen. Nelsen Attended elementary school in Brownton, Minnesota, and was graduated from Brownton High School in 1923. In 1924 he began operation of his 280-acre diversified farm at Hutchinson, McLeod County. In 1929 he married Ito Zimmerman of Brownton; they had three children.

While farming, Nelsen became active in civic affairs and politics. He served on the District 75 school board from 1926 to 1935 and on the Lynn township board from 1929 to 1935. Nelsen was elected as a Republican to the Minnesota state senate in 1934. He served as state senator from McLeod county from 1935 until his resignation in 1948, focusing much of his energy on legislation concerning agriculture in general, rural electrification, and the dairy industry. In 1936 Nelsen helped organize the McLeod Co-op Power Association, and he served as its first vice president. In 1949 he was defeated in the primary election in a bid for the Republican party nomination as lieutenant governor. Nelsen remained active in the Republican Party, serving as a delegate to the Republican National Conventions in 1948 and 1952. At the 1952 convention Nelsen served as chairman of the national Republican platform subcommittee on agriculture.

In 1952 Ancher Nelsen ran again for the office of lieutenant governor and this time was elected to a two-year term. He took office on January 2, 1953. A few months later he was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to be the head of the U. S. Rural Electrification Administration. Nelsen served as REA administrator until 1956, when he resigned to run for governor of Minnesota. He lost the election to incumbent Orville Freeman and returned to farming for a couple of years. Nelsen served as the Republican state chairman for three months in 1958 until he resigned to run for Congress.

In 1958 Nelsen was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives from Minnesota's second district, filling the vacancy left by Republican Joseph O'Hara who had represented the district since 1941. Nelsen served in the House for eight terms, from 1959 until his retirement in 1974.

During his tenure in Congress, Nelsen served on the following committees, commissions, and boards:

- House District of Columbia Committee, 1959-1974.
- House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, 1959-1974.
- Public Health and Environmental Subcommittee, [1959-1974.
- Chairman, 86 Club, composed of freshman Republican Representatives of the 86th Congress, 1959-1960.
- Board of Directors, Gallaudet College, a college for the deaf in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of HEW, 1963-1968.
- Chairman, GOP Task Force on the Federal Service Merit System, 1965.
- Commission on the Political Activity of Government Personnel (Hatch Act Commission), 1967-1968.
- Conference of Great Lakes Congressmen, 1970-1971.

Republican Party Committee, 1967-1968.
Chairman, Commission on the Organization of the Government of the District of
Columbia, 1971-1972.

As the ranking minority member on the District of Columbia Committee, Nelsen played a strong role in legislation affecting the governance of the nation's capital. He was very influential in the creation and passage of bills establishing the Washington Technical Institute and Federal City College. He was also involved in the enactment of the District of Columbia crime bill (1970).

As a member of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, Nelsen was a delegate to the first meeting of the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group in 1961. In 1964 he was a delegate to the Seventeenth World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. Nelsen was the ranking minority member of the Public Health and Environment Subcommittee of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. In that capacity he was influential in legislation concerning health and safety matters. At a "Salute to Nelsen" dinner in 1972 the Minnesota Dental, Hospital, Nurses, and Medical associations, along with the Mayo Foundation, Mayo Medical School, and the University of Minnesota Health Sciences, paid tribute to Nelsen's contributions to Minnesota health organizations and institutions.

In 1972 Nelsen's wife, Ilo Zimmerman Nelsen, died. He married Mrs. Elvem Krasean of Hutchinson in 1973. In 1974, at the conclusion of the 93rd Congress, Nelsen retired from Congress and returned to his farm near Hutchinson.

Tracey Baker
April 1977

11,732
11,771

CONTAINER LIST

Nelsen, Ancher
P. ³

Section I: Personal/Political/Official Records

Personal Files:

144.F.5.8F

Oral History Transcript for Eisenhower Library, 1971.
Assignments to Committees and Boards, 1967-1973. (2 folders)
Certificates of Election, 1960-1972.
Christmas Cards (blank sample Nelsen cards).
Gallaudet College, Services as Director, 1963-1968. (2 folders)
Hennepin County Republican Club's Tribute to Nelson, 1973.
Organizational Ratings of Nelsen. (2 folders)
Testimonial Dinner by Minnesota Health Organizations, 1972.

Campaign Files: These files relate to the eight Congressional elections in which Nelsen ran, and cover the organization of his campaign; background information; financial data; publicity; news releases; correspondence with local, state, and national party members on issues and operation of the campaign; and information on Nelsen's DFL opponents. Included in the 1964 files are files on the 1964 Republican National Convention, to which Nelsen was a delegate.

1958 Campaign:

144.F.4.9B

Election Results.
Miscellaneous.

1960 Campaign:

Clippings and Printed Material.
Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers.

1962 Campaign:

Congratulations Received and Thank-you Letters Sent.
Contacts.
Contributions.
Expenses.,
Form Letters.
Hammar, Conrad (Nelsen opponent).
Mailings and Materials.
News Releases.
Official Election Papers.
Primary Election Results.
Publicity: Billboards.
Publicity: Brochures.
Publicity: Buttons.
Publicity: Newspaper Advertising.
Publicity: Radio.
Publicity: Red Anchors.
Publicity: Tabloids.
Publicity; Television.

Volunteer Groups. (2 folders)

1964 Campaign:

General Correspondence. (2 folders)

General Party Correspondence.
Congratulations Received.

Election Results.

Expenses.

Issues.

Mailings and Materials.

Minnesota Campaign: General.

Miscellaneous Lists.

National GOP Platform.

News Releases.

Official Election Papers.

Polls.

Publicity: Billboards. Publicity:

Brochures. Publicity: Newspaper

Advertising.

Publicity: Radio.

Publicity: Television.

Publicity: VIP Letters.

Schedules.

Simpson, Charles V. (Nelsen opponent).

Thank-you Letters Sent.

Volunteers: AN Volunteer Committee.

Volunteers: AN Volunteers, Hutchinson.

Volunteers: District of Columbia.

Volunteers: Bankers.

Volunteers: Dentists.

Volunteers: Doctors.

Volunteers: Lawyers.

1964 Republican Convention Files:

General. (3 folders)

Correspondence. (4 folders)

1966 Campaign:

General Correspondence. (2 folders)

Christensen, Charles M. (Nelsen opponent).

Congratulations Received.

Contributions. (3 folders)

Issues.

Mailing Permit.

Minnesota: GOP: LeVander for Governor.

Official Election Papers.

Publicity: Billboards,

Publicity: Campaign Brochure Development.

Publicity: Campaign Materials Shipping Bills.

Publicity: Cards.

Publicity: Newspaper and Magazine Advertising.

Publicity: Posters.

Publicity: Red Anchors.

144.F.4.10F

144.E5.1B

Publicity: Store-front Advertising.
Publicity: Television and Radio.
Schedules.
Thank-you Letters.
Volunteers: AN Volunteer Committee.
Volunteers: Volunteer Headquarters.
Volunteers: Volunteer Help.
Volunteers: Bankers.
Volunteers: Dentists. Volunteers:
Doctors. Volunteers: Lawyers. 1968

Campaign:

General Correspondence.
Congratulations.
County Committees, Second District.
Mailing Permit.
Official Election Papers. Publicity:
Buttons. Publicity: Cards.
Publicity: Newspaper Advertising.
Publicity: Outdoor Advertising.
Publicity: Television and Radio.

Schedules.
Solicitation Letters. Thank-you
Letters. Volunteers: AN Volunteer
Committee.
Volunteers: Bankers.
Volunteers: Dentists.
Volunteers: Doctors.
Volunteers: Hospital and Clinic Administrators.
Volunteers: Lawyers.
Wefald, Dr. Jon (Nelsen opponent).

1970 Campaign:

General Correspondence. (2 folders)
Congratulations Received.
Contributions. (2 folders)
Issues.
Mailings.
Official Election Papers.
Publicity: Campaign Brochure.
Publicity: Campaign Buttons.
Publicity: Newspaper Advertising.
Publicity: Outdoor Advertising.
Publicity: Radio and Television.
Publicity: Red Anchors.
Schedules.

Second District GOP Committee.

1972 Campaign:

144.F.5.2F

General Correspondence.
Congratulations Received.
Contacts (incl. 2 envelopes of photos of Nelsen at 2nd district gatherings).
Contributions.
Minnesota GOP.
Official Election Papers.
Publicity: Advertising.
Publicity: Buttons, Brochures, Stickers.

Turnbull, Charles (Nelsen opponent).

144.F.5.3B

Subject Files: These files contain constituent mail, political and party correspondence, and background files on miscellaneous topics. Biographical information on Nelsen, polling information, and files on Minnesota matters are present. Within each Congress the files are arranged alphabetically by folder title, which is either a subject or the name of the correspondent. Files for the 87th and 88th Congresses (1961-1964) and for the 89th and 90th Congresses (1965-1968) are combined. There are no files for the 86th Congress, but some items dated 1959 and 1960 can be found in the combined subject files for the 87th and 88th Congresses. Files entitled "Questionnaires" contain questionnaires sent to Nelsen by individuals, interest groups, media organizations, and similar groups, and provide insight into Nelsen's positions on a broad range of issues.

87th and 88th Congress, 1961-1964:

144.F.2.10F

Biographical Sketches and Information.
County Fairs. (2 folders)
Eisenhower, Dwight D.
Farm Bureau.
Farmers' Union.
Farmers' Union: Alleged Un-American Activities.
Form Letters.
Forsythe, Robert A.
Humphrey, Hubert.
Land O'Lakes.
McCarger, Elmer.
Minnesota: Printed
Material. Minnesota State
Legislature. Petersen,
Svend.
Poll Samples.
Questionnaires.
Taconite.
United Nations.

89th and 90th Congress, 1965-1968.

Architect of the Capitol.
Minnesota: Chamber of Commerce.
Contacts.
County Fairs.
Dura Mesh (copies of form letters) (2 folders)

Hatch Act Commission. (6 folders)
Kruger, Hans.
Knights of Columbus.
Minnesota Economic Development Commission.
Minnesota Historical Society.
Minnesota Matters: General. (3 folders)

Minnesota Matters: General. (5 folders)
Minnesota Matters: Fort Snelling.
Minnesota Matters: Mankato Trip: Flood. (2 folders)
Minnesota Matters: Schmidt Memorial Hospital, Westbrook.
Minnesota Matters: State Welfare. (2 folders)
Minnesota Matters: Taconite.
Minnesota Matters: Tornado, 1967.
Minnesota State Legislature. (2 folders)
Poor People's Campaign.
Questionnaires. (2 folders)
Republican Delegation (Minn.): Nelsen Chairman.
Republican Policy Committee.
Republican Task Force: General.
Republican Task Force: Civil Service System.
Republican Task Force: Voting Rights.
Sheppard, Dr. Charles (Minnesota Mission to Moscow).
United Nations.

144.F.2.6F

Violins.

91st Congress, 1969-1970:

Minnesota Matters. (5 folders)

Minnesota Matters. (6 folders)
Minnesota Matters: Governor LeVander. Minnesota
Matters: Nuclear Power Plant, Monticello.
Minnesota Matters: State Welfare Dept.
Minnesota State Legislature.
White House.

144.E2.9B

92nd Congress, 1971-1972:

Minnesota Matters. (9 folders)
Minnesota State Legislature.

Minnesota State Legislature.

144.F3.4F

Opinion Poll.
Republican Committee on Committees.
White House.

White House: Conference on Aging.

93rd Congress, 1973-1974:

Jones, Dr. George Jr.: Dispute with Nelsen.
Minnesota Matters. (4 folders)
Minnesota Matters: Local and County Issues.
Minnesota Matters: Governor's Office.
Minnesota Matters: Highways.

Minnesota Matters: Legislature.
Minnesota Matters: State Agencies. (5 folders)
Minnesota Matters: Welfare.
Questionnaires.
White House.
White House: Watergate. (3 folders)

Section II: Legislative Records

Bills: These files contain copies of bills and resolutions introduced or co-sponsored by Nelsen, arranged by bill number. For many bills there is extensive documentation, including correspondence, testimony, drafts, background information, and office memoranda. The files are complete for Nelsen's eight terms in Congress, and are listed chronologically by bill number, concurrent resolution number, and joint resolution number. Summary lists of Nelsen bills for each Congress are found in the first box for each session. Files on bills (Nelsen and non-Nelsen) from the 93rd session related to the Rural Electrification Administration are also included.

86th and 87th Congress (1959-1962).	1444.1.10F
88th Congress (1963-1964).	144.J.2.1B
89th Congress (1965-1966):	
HR 1446-HR 15505 (incl. summary list).	144.J.2.10F
HR 15551-HJ Res. 736.	144.F.3.1B
90th Congress (1967-1968):	
HR 1015-HR 9498 (incl. summary list).	144.F.3.1B
HR 9979-HT Res. 1302.	144.14.1B
91st Congress (1969-1970):	
HR 2191-HR 17026 (incl. summary list).	144.E.16.1B
HR 17138-HJ Res. 923.	144.E.16.2F
92nd Congress (1971-1972):	
HR 139-HR 9059 (incl. summary list).	144.E.16.2F
HR 9483-HJ Res. 1070.	144.E.17.2F
93rd Congress (1973-1974):	
HR 65-HR 8648 (incl. summary list).	144.E.17.10F
HR 9215-HJ Res. 1158 (incl. REA bills).	144.E.18.1B
Congressional Record Inserts, 1959-1974.	144.F.5.9B
Voting Record, 1959-1974. (9 v.)	144.F.5.8F

Section III: Press Relations/Media Activities Records

These files contain publicity-related correspondence, messages, articles and statements, news releases, newsletters, opinion polls, and speeches. The news release files appear to be comprehensive and the speeches nearly so; the other files contain samples or represent only portions of Nelsen's congressional career.

Correspondence: Publicity, 1971 1974. (9 folders)
Messages, Articles, and Statements, 1965 1974. (11 folders)

News Releases, 1959 1974. (15 folders) **144.F.5.6F**
Newsletters, Sample Opinion Polls, 1959 1973.

Speeches, 1961-1974. (15 folders) **144.F.5.7B**
Includes background material, summaries, drafts, and some correspondence related to Nelsen's public appearances.

Photographs: See 1972 Campaign Files and Flood Files.

Section IV: Office Administration Records

Trip Files: These files contain itineraries, correspondence, background material, memoranda, and other material relating to Nelsen's trips to other countries as a delegate or representative of the United States.

Denmark, John F. Kennedy Plads Dedication, 1964. **144.F.5.713**
Denmark, Funeral of King Frederick IX, 1972. (2 folders)
Geneva, Seventeenth World Health Assembly, 1964.
Geneva, Conference on Narcotics Control, 1972.
Mexico, Interparliamentary Group Meeting, 1961.

Section V: Flood Files, 1944-1958

Nelsen inherited these files from his predecessor, Joseph O'Hara. They document river and flood control legislation, proposed and authorized flood control projects, and proposed bridges and navigational channels. There are newspaper clippings, transcripts of public hearings, reports, and correspondence on the major floods affecting the second district, which occurred in 1951, 1952, and 1957.

Omnibus River and Harbor Bill, H.R. 3961 (March 22, 1944). **144.F.5.3B**

Includes related correspondence and printed reports, 1939-1946.

Minnesota River Flood Control Legislation, 1944-1951.

Includes correspondence and information on flood control survey conducted by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Minnesota River Nine-Foot Channel, 1946-1956. (2 folders)

Correspondence and miscellaneous items on project to create navigational channel from Mendota to Shakopee.

Minnesota River: Erosion at Mendota Bridge, 1947-1949.

Flood Control: Jordan Park, Jordan, Minn., 1949.

Flood Control: General, 1951-1958.

Contains some snapshots of 1952 flood.

Mankato-North Mankato: Floods and Flood Control, 1951-1958. (3 folders)

Flood Disaster in Minnesota: Hearings, Reports, etc., 1952-1953.

1952 Flood: Clippings.

Chaska Flood, 1952.

New Ulm, St. Peter, Springfield Floods, 1952.

South St. Paul Flood, 1952.

Includes 1952 *Food Disaster Book*.

Transcript of Minutes of Public Hearing on Flood Control at Chaska, October 14, 1952. (1 v.) Transcript of Minutes of Public Hearing on Flood Control at Granite Falls, Oct. 17, 1952. (1 v.) Minnesota River: Lyndale Ave. Bridge, 1954-1956.

Minnesota River Channel, H.R. 364 (1957).

Includes other rivers and flood control legislation information and correspondence, 1957-1958.

Rivers and Harbor Bill, 1957-1958. (2 folders)

June 1957 Flood. (2 folders)

St. Paul: South St. Paul Flood Control Project, 1957-1958.

144.F.5.4F

Section VI: Rural Electrification Administration Files, 1953-1967

Nelsen was REA administrator, 1953-1956, but few of the REA files besides the clippings cover this period. The correspondence has been arranged chronologically, as were the first four folders of clippings. Included in this series are materials relating to Nelsen's work as REA administrator, his voting record on rural electrification issues, memos and speeches, official reports and publications from the REA, and miscellaneous publications by local cooperative power associations and interest groups. As a congressman, Nelsen maintained strong interest in the REA, which is reflected in the magnitude of the later correspondence. Additional records concerning the REA can be found in the *Bill Files*.

Correspondence. (3 folders)

144.F.5.4F

Clippings. (5 folders)

Miscellaneous Publications.

National Rural Electrification Cooperative Association.

Nelsen Memos, Speeches, etc. (2 folders)

Newsletter: *Lowdown on Farm Affairs*, 1957 - 1960.

Official Reports, Releases, and Publications of the REA.

Tennessee Valley Authority.

Voting Record (NRECA analysis of Congressional voting on rural electrification; Nelsen voting record).

Section VII: Photographs, undated, 1952-1974.

Includes photographs of Archer Nelsen during his various duties as a U.S. House Representative. Many of the images are identified and have accompanying correspondence. Nearly all of the images are arranged chronologically, though some of the undated views are arranged by topic.

Undated

144.K.13.6F

Disassembled binder, 1950s. 4 folders.

1959. 2 folders.

1960.

1961. 3 folders.

1962. 2 folders.

1963. 6 folders.

144.K.13.7B

1964. 6 folders.

1965. 4 folders.

1966. 6 folders.

1967. 3 folders.

1968. 2 folders.

144.K.13.8F

1969. 3 folders.

1970. 3 folders.

1971. 3 folders.

1972. 3 folders.

1973-1974. 4 folders.