NAHA Norwegian American Historical Association

Encyclopedia of Norwegian-American Politicians in Minnesota

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Lars K. Aaker

Minnesota Senate, 1881-82 (Republican)
Minnesota House of Representatives, 1859-60, 1862, 1867, 1869



Image from the Aaker Family Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
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Born in Laerdal, Norway, in 1825. He emigrated to Wisconsin at the age of 20. In 1859, the Aaker family moved to Goodhue County, Minnesota where they first homesteaded. He was elected to the state legislature at the outbreak of the Civil War but instead enlisted in the Minnesota Third Regiment of Infantry where he was a lieutenant. In 1869, he moved to Alexandria, Minnesota where he served as a register in the United States Land Office.

Resources:
Aaker Family Papers (P0001)
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Elmer L. Andersen

30th Governor of Minnesota, 1961-63
(Republican)
Minnesota Senate, 1949-59



Image from the Knut Gjerset Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
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Born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1909. Andersen and his family moved to Muskegon, Michigan where he graduated from high school and attended junior college. While in junior college he worked for a real estate firm and the Muskegon Chronicle. Andersen and his brothers started Muskegon Reality. After he graduated from Junior College, Andersen was a salesman for the Sheldon Company, working out of Minneapolis. During that time he enrolled at the University of Minnesota and graduated in 1931. He joined the H.B. Fuller Company in Saint Paul in 1934. By 1941, he took over as president.

Anderson was in the Minnesota legislature from 1949-58. In 1960, he ran for governor against incumbent Orville Freeman and won. During his tenure the common loon became the Minnesota state bird, several state parks were created, and fair housing legislation passed. He ran again in 1962 but lost to Karl Rolvaag, the lieutenant governor at the time. The election was close and had many recounts and court challenges.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Sydney Anderson

U.S. House of Representatives, 1911-1925 (Republican)



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Born in Goodhue County, Minnesota, in 1880. He graduated from Zumbrota High School and studied law at Highland Park College in Des Moines, Iowa, and at the University of Minnesota. He was admitted to the bar and practiced in Kansas City Missouri and at Lanesboro, Minnesota. During the Spanish-American War, he served in Company D of the Fourteenth Minnesota Infantry. From 1925-26, he was president of the Millers' National Federation. He also served as vice president of General Mills. He was the chairman of the National Wheat Conference (Chicago), and vice-chairman of the Research Council, National Transportation Institute (Washington D.C.).

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

William A. Anderson

30th Mayor of Minneapolis, 1931-33

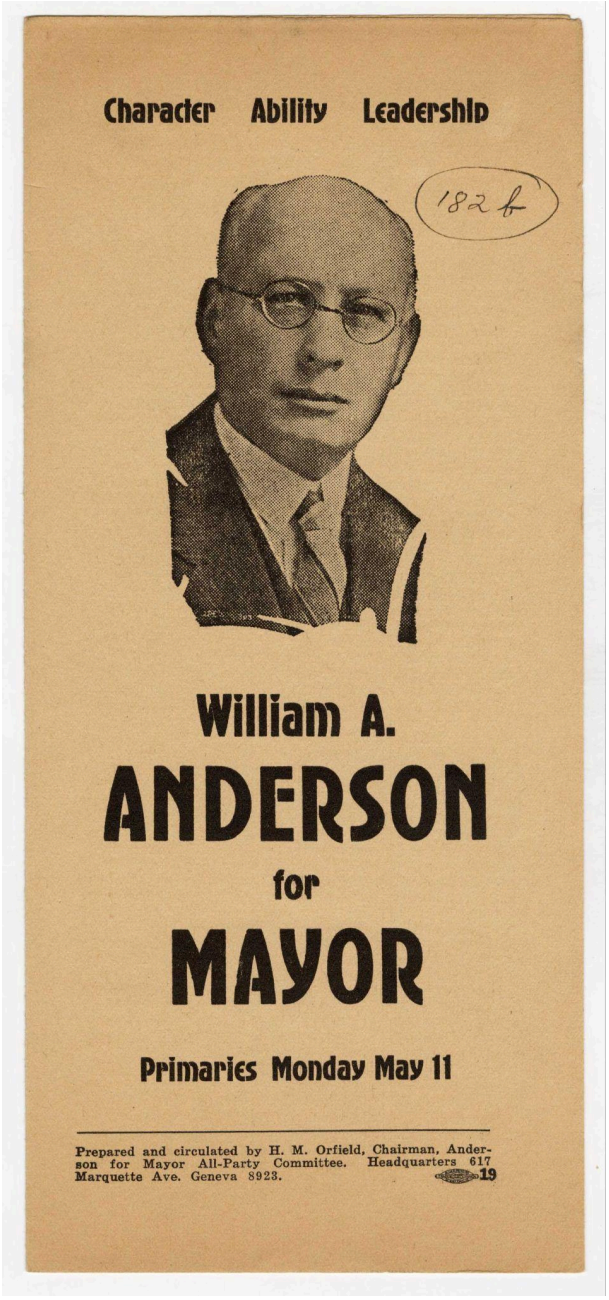


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Born in Adams County, Wisconsin. Anderson studied law and was admitted to the bar. He was a member of the park commission of Minneapolis from 1916-19 but resigned to accept the position of Commissioner of Industry in North Dakota. In 1921, he was appointed assistant attorney general of North Dakota. He returned to Minnesota and ran as a candidate for the justice of the state supreme court in 1922, but wasn't elected. He was the chairman of the Farmer-Labor Party and the manager of the campaign for Henrik Shipstead for the U.S. Senate. In 1931, he was elected mayor of Minneapolis.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Olaf M. Norlie Papers (P0561)

August Andresen

U.S. House of Representatives, 1925-33, 1935-58 (Republican)



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Born in Newark, Illinois, in 1890. Attended public school in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and Eagle Grove, Iowa. He moved to Red Wing in 1905 and received a bachelor's degree from Red Wing Seminary and St. Olaf College. He attended St. Paul College of Law and was admitted to the bar. He was an officer of two labor unions, and acted as a special investigator for the Minnesota Department of Weights and Measures He was Chairman of Goodhue County Republican Committees, president of Goodhue County Red Cross, Goodhue County Soldiers Memorial Association, Red Wing Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, and Red Wing Fair Association. He was first elected to Congress in 1925. He died in office in 1958.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)
Theodore Jorgenson Papers (P0716)
Olaf M. Norlie Papers (P0561)

Elmer A. Benson

24th Governor of Minnesota, 1937-39
(Farmer-Labor)
U.S. Senator, 1935-36



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Born in Appleton, Minnesota, in 1895. Benson entered St. Paul College of Law just before he enlisted as a soldier and left for France during World War I. Upon his discharge and return to St. Paul in 1919, he opened a law office the same year he moved back to Appleton. He worked as an assistant cashier at the First National Bank and eventually became a cashier at the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Appleton. He was appointed state securities commissioner by Governor Floyd B. Olson in 1933. He was appointed U.S. Senator in 1935 after Senator Thomas D. Schall died. After the death of Floyd Olson in office, Benson was elected governor of Minnesota.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Theodore Jorgenson Papers (P0716)
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)

Adolph Biermann

United States Collector of Internal Revenue, 1885
Minnesota State Auditor, 1891-95



Portrait of Adolph Bierman., Public Domain.

Born in Oslo, Norway, in 1842. Biermann emigrated to America at 19 and enlisted in Company I of the 24th Wisconsin Volunteers during the Civil War. He settled in Rochester, Minnesota, and became a bookkeeper in a mercantile firm. In 1874 he was elected county auditor of Olmsted County. In 1875 he was a nominee as secretary of state for the Democratic party and in 1882 as the candidate for Congress, but was defeated both times. In 1884, he was the democratic candidate for Governor but was defeated, though he was considered a leader of his party in the state. He was appointed Collector of Internal Revenue for Minnesota by President Cleveland in 1885. In 1890, he was elected state auditor.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Haldor E. Boen

U.S. House of Representatives, 1893-95
(Populist Party)



Portrait of Haldor E. Boen, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Sondre Aurdal, Norway, 1851. Boen emigrated at the age of 16 to Mower County, Minnesota, but eventually settled in Otter Tail County. There he worked in the county auditors' office, taught in the public schools, and was an active agitator of the Farmers' Alliance and People's Party Movement.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Fred P. Brown

Secretary of State, 1891-95



Portrait of Fred P. Brown, Collection of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Kopperwik, Norway, in 1838. Brown served as a sailor for two years in Norway. In 1854 he emigrated to America and was a sailor on the Great Lakes. For sixteen years he was a register of deeds of Brown County. From 1891-95, he was Secretary of State in Minnesota. He was also elected mayor of Blue Earth, Minnesota.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Theodore Christianson

21st Governor of Minnesota, 1925-31
(Republican)
U.S. House of Representatives, 1935-37



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Born in Lac qui Parle Township, Minnesota, in 1883. Christianson graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1906, and 1909 from the University of Minnesota Law School. Christianson, before his political career, worked as a lawyer and was editor of the Dawson Sentien for fifteen years. In 1925, he was elected the 21st Governor of Minnesota with the slogan “More Ted, Less Taxes.” He served two terms as governor. After a brief hiatus from politics, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from 1932-37. He did not run again after launching a bid for the Senate, which he lost to Ernest Lundeen.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Carl G.O. Hansen Papers (P0543)
O.E. Rølvaag Papers (P0584)
Olaf M. Norlie Papers (P0561)

Thomas Frankson

22nd Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota, 1917-1921 (Republican)



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Born in Fillmore County, in 1869. Frankson attended Decorah Institute and Valder Business of College in Decorah, Iowa. He taught school in Fillmore County for thirteen terms. He then went on to law school at the University of Minnesota. He practiced law for a few years and then engaged in real estate. He developed land under the name of Frankson's Land Agency. Frankson represented Fillmore County in the State Legislature (1911-1913) and in the special session of 1912. He was elected Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota in 1917.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Kittel Halvorson

U.S House of Representatives, 1891-93 (Populist Party)
Minnesota House of Representatives, 1886-88



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Born in Hjertdal, Norway, in 1846. Halvorson emigrated at the age of 2. He first settled in Wisconsin. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Halvorson and his three brothers enlisted. The family later moved to Stearns County, Minnesota where they farmed. In 1887, he represented his district in the state legislature and was elected in 1890 to Congress by the Farmers' Alliance and the Prohibitionists.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Einar Hoidale

U.S. House of Representatives, 1933-35 (Democrat)

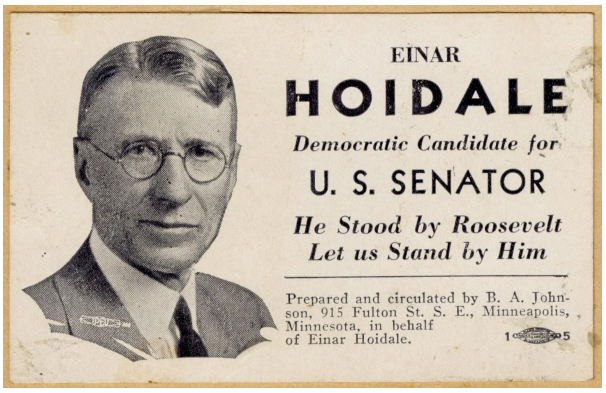


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Born in Tromsø, Norway. Hoidale grew up on a homestead in Lac Qui Parle County, Minnesota. He served as the editor of the *Western Guard* in Madison, Minnesota. In 1898 he graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School and was admitted to the bar the same year. He practiced in New Ulm and served as prosecuting attorney for Brown County. From 1933-35, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Einar Hoidale Papers (P0163)
Ola Johann Saevold Papers (P0587)
Theodore Jorgenson Papers (P0716)
O.E. Rølvaag Papers (P0584)
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)

Hubert Humphrey

38th Vice President, 1965-69
(Democratic–Farmer–Labor)
U.S. Senator, 1971-78
Senate Majority Whip, 1961-1964
35th Mayor of Minneapolis, 1945-48



Image from the Walter Mondale Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota. In Copyright.

Born in Wallace, South Dakota, in 1911. Humphrey enrolled at the University of Minnesota but left after a year due to family financial problems. He earned a pharmacist's license to help out at his father's drugstore in Huron, South Dakota, from 1931-37. By 1937, he enrolled at the University of Minnesota again and earned his degree in 1939. He earned his master's degree from Louisiana State University in 1940 where he also served as an assistant instructor of political science. He continued with his education to become an instructor and doctoral student at the University of Minnesota (1940-41) but never finished his doctoral degree. He served as a professor of political science at Macalester College (Saint Paul, Minnesota).

In 1943, Humphrey first ran for the mayor of Minneapolis but lost. The next year he was important in the merger of the Democratic and Farmer-Labor parties in Minnesota to form the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL). Humphrey ran for mayor of Minneapolis again in 1944 and won. Humphrey moved to the U.S. Senate in 1948 and won reelection until 1964. His party voted him majority whip – a position he had until he became the Vice President under Lyndon B. Johnson.

Humphrey had aspirations to be president throughout his career, seeking the nomination twice before he was the vice president. The first time he ran in 1960 he was seeking the nomination against fellow Democrat John F. Kennedy. After being outspent and defeated in the West Virginia primary, Humphrey left the race. In 1964, he had his eye on becoming the running mate for Lyndon B. Johnson – an election they overwhelmingly won. Johnson withdrew his nomination for a second term after declining approval ratings regarding the Vietnam War. Once again, Humphrey announced he was running for president again. Humphrey won the primary, and faced another former vice president running for president – Richard Nixon. Humphrey lost this presidential election, though he ran again in 1972 unsuccessfully.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Hubert H. Humphrey Papers (P0178)
Theodore Jorgenson Papers (P0716)
Kenneth Bjork Papers (P1343)
Ole G. Landsverk Papers (P0724)

John S. Irgens

Secretary of State, 1876-80 (Republican)



Born at Modum, Norway, in 1832. Irgens emigrated in 1849 and served as a lieutenant in the Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment. After the war, he held county offices in Mower County and was elected to the legislature for that district. In 1875 he was elected as secretary of state.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Samuel G. Iverson

Minnesota House of Representatives, 1887-88 (Republican)



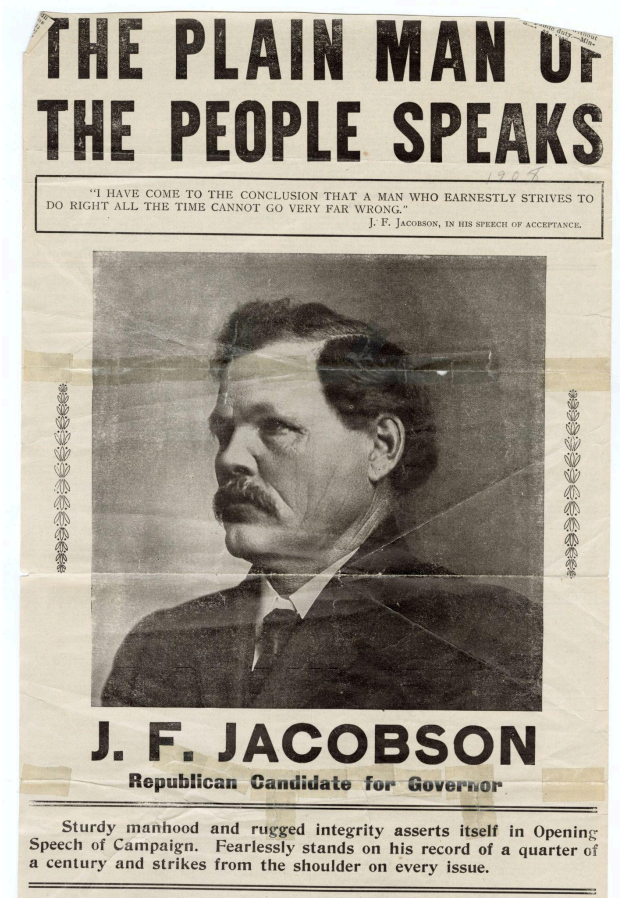
Image from the Knut Gjerset Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
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Born in Rushford, Minnesota, in 1859. Iverson's family were among the first settlers in the Red River Valley. In 1881, he was appointed postmaster in Rushford by President Hayes. In 1886 he was elected to the state legislature. He served as an accountant in the state auditor's office (1887-91), deputy state treasurer (1891-95), and deputy state auditor (1895-1903). Iverson was a graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Jacob F. Jacobson

Minnesota House of Representatives, 1889-9, 1893-1902 (Republican)


THE PLAIN MAN OF THE PEOPLE SPEAKS

"I HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT A MAN WHO EARNESTLY STRIVES TO DO RIGHT ALL THE TIME CANNOT GO VERY FAR WRONG."
J. F. JACOBSON, IN HIS SPEECH OF ACCEPTANCE.

J. F. JACOBSON

Republican Candidate for Governor

Sturdy manhood and rugged integrity asserts itself in Opening Speech of Campaign. Fearlessly stands on his record of a quarter of a century and strikes from the shoulder on every issue.

Image from the Knut Gjerset Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
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Born in Kristiansand, Norway, 1848. He emigrated at seven years old and first settled in Fayette County, Iowa where he worked on his father's farm until 1871. He moved to Lac qui Parle and began to work in farm machinery. A few years later he was elected county auditor and in 1889 to the state legislature. In 1908 he was the Republican candidate for governor but was defeated.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Johannes Johannesen Papers (P0189)
Olaf M. Norlie Papers (P0561)
Carl G.O. Hansen Papers (P0543)

Ole P. B. Jacobson

Chairman Minnesota Railroad and Warehouse Commissioner, 1914-1920 (Republican)

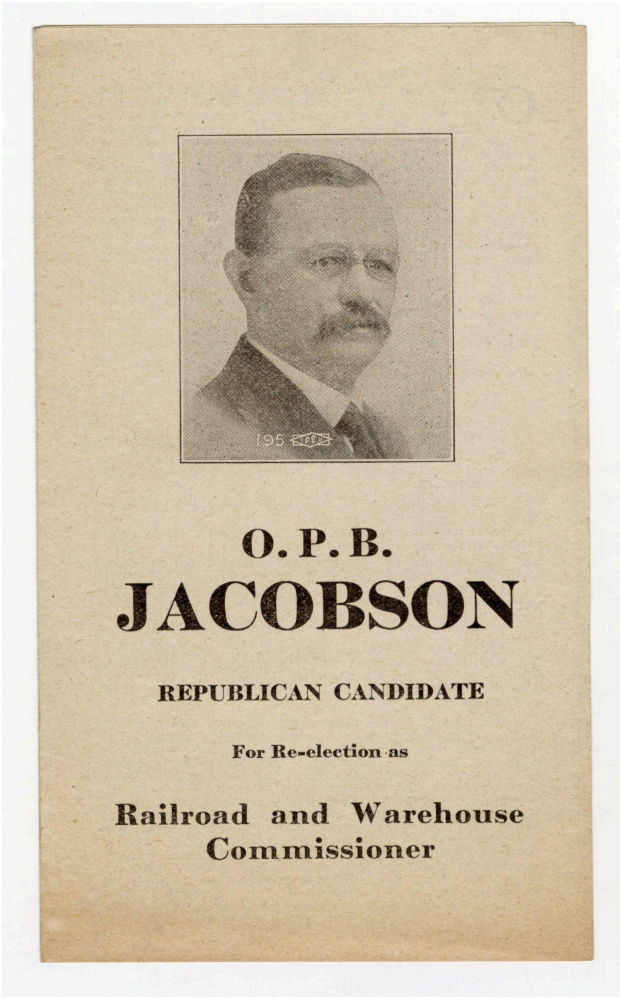


Image from the Knut Gjerset Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
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Born in Fredriksvern, Norway, 1857. Jacobson emigrated to Fergus Falls in 1884. He was involved in the grain trade and for several years was editor of the Fergus Falls Ugeblad. He was appointed by Governor Eberhart to the Board of Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners. Ran in the primary for Minnesota Governor in 1924. He lost to Theodore Christianson – another Norwegian-American.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Carl G.O. Hansen Papers (P0543)
Kenneth Bjork Papers (P1343)

Charles Kittelson

State Treasurer, 1872-87



Born in Sigdal, Norway, 1837. Kittelson emigrated at thirteen years old and spent seven years in Wisconsin. He moved to Albert Lea and was elected county treasurer of Freeborn County. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he enlisted in the Tenth Minnesota Regiment of Infantry. He was elected state treasurer in 1872 until 1887. He eventually started working in banking and became president of Columbia National Bank in Minneapolis.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Coya Knutson (nee Gjesdal)

U.S. House of Representatives, 1955-59 (Democratic-Famer-Labor)
Minnesota House of Representatives, 1951-55



Image from the Gretchen U. Beito Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota. In Copyright.

Born in Edmore, North Dakota, 1812. Knutson attended Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, with dreams of working in the opera in New York City. She eventually returned to Minnesota and lived on a farm near Oklee. She first served on the Red Lake County Welfare Board (1948), and ran for the Minnesota House of Representatives (1950). In 1954, Knutson decided to run for Congress. To finance her efforts, she sold some land inherited from her father. Knutson ran again for Congress in 1958 but lost. A letter circulated that was signed by her estranged husband, Andy, that ran in newspapers across the country with the headline “Coya, Come Home.” Coya Knutson was the first woman to be elected to Congress in Minnesota.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Gretchen U. Beito Papers (2023/024)

Harold Knutson

U.S. House of Representatives, 1917-49 (Republican)
House Majority Whip, 1919-23



Portrait of Harold Knutson. Library of Congress. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Skien, Norway, 1880. Knutson attended State Agriculture School at St. Anthony Park. After graduating, he learned printing through the Clear Lake Times office. He published and edited the Royalton Banner and Foley Independent. He was also an associate editor of the St. Cloud Daily Journal Press and published the Pioneer Journal in Wadena. He was first elected to Congress in 1916 and after two years in service was made the majority whip of the house.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Harold Knutson Articles (P0200)
Eyvind Klaveness Papers (P0551)

Ole J. Kvale

U.S. House of Representatives, 1923-29
(Farmer-Labor)



Image from the Knut Gjerset Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
No Copyright - United States.

Born in Decorah, Iowa, 1869. Kvale was educated at Luther College and Luther Seminary in Minneapolis. Later, he went to the University of Chicago for graduate work in psychology and sociology. He was ordained as pastor in 1894 and served for 23 years in Orfordville, Wisconsin. In 1917, he was the pastor of Our Savior's Church in Benson. From 1908-17, he served as a member of the Board of Education of the Norwegian Synod, and then again in the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America when it was formed in 1917. Kvale was elected to Congress in 1922, first as an independent but later joined the Farmer-Labor Party.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Olaf Norlie Papers (P0561)

Paul J. Kvale

U.S. House of Representatives, 1929-39
(Farmer-Labor)



Portrait of Paul J. Kvale, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Orfordville, Wisconsin, 1896. Kvale's family moved to Benson with his parents. He served during World War I after he graduated from Luther College. After the war, he enrolled at the University of Minnesota. He was an editor of Swift County News (1920-21) and was a staff editor of the Minneapolis Tribune. From 1922 to 1929, he served as secretary to his father, Ole Kvale, who was a member of Congress. Upon his father's death, he was elected to fill the vacancy. He was elected to congress from 1929-1935.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Olaf Norlie Papers (P0561)

James A. Larson

Minnesota House of Representatives, 1897-98, 1899-1902 (Republican)



Born in Illinois, 1860. Larson was appointed postmaster and served the state legislature. He was a farmer and lived in Walnut Grove. Appointed secretary of state by Governor J.A.A. Burnquist.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Jenova Martin

Suffragist



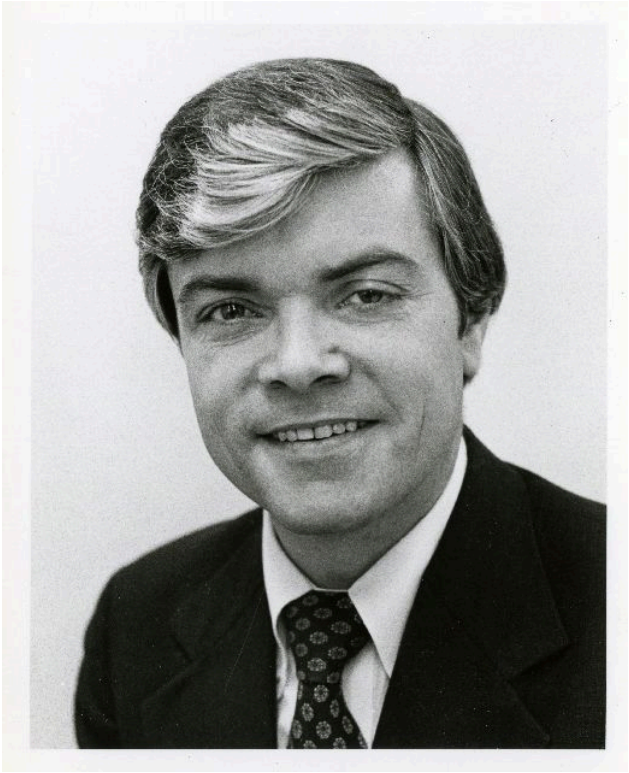
Image from the Knut Gjerset Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Norway, 1866. From 1909-1920, Martin contributed to newspapers such as the *Star Tribune* and the *Minneapolis Star*. She was the first president and one of the founders of the Scandinavian Voting Association. She also belonged to the Progressive Literary Club of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Donald Moe

Minnesota House of Representatives, 1971-80 (Democratic-Farmer-Labor)
Minnesota Senate, 1981-90



Portrait of Donald Moe, Collection of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Crookston, Minnesota, 1942. Moe received his bachelor's in business administration from the University of Minnesota.

Roger Moe

Minnesota Senate, 1971-2003 (Democratic)
Majority Leader of the Minnesota Senate, 1981-2003



Portrait of Roger Moe, Collection of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Crookston, Minnesota, 1944. Moe graduated from Mayville State College in North Dakota with his bachelor's degree and at Moorhead State University and North Dakota State University for graduate studies. Moe was first elected to the Senate in 1970 and became the majority leader in 1981. He held that position for 22 years.

Resources:
Odd S. Lovoll Papers (2019/008)

Walter Mondale

42nd Vice President, 1977-81 (Democratic)
24th Ambassador to Japan, 1993--96
U.S. Senator, 1964-76
Attorney General of Minnesota, 1960-64



Image from the Walter Mondale Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota. In Copyright.

Born in Ceylon, Minnesota, 1928. Mondale attended Macalester College for two years before attending the University of Minnesota. He graduated in 1951 with a degree in political science. After enlisting in the US Army and serving in the Korean War, Mondale enrolled at the University of Minnesota Law School. After his graduation in 1956, he served on the Minnesota Law Review, and was a law clerk for the Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Thomas Gallagher. Before entering politics, Mondale practiced law in Minneapolis for a few years.

Mondale worked with Humphrey during his 1948 senate campaign and for Orville Freeman's campaigns from 1952-58. In 1960, Freeman appointed Mondale the attorney general of Minnesota. During the next election, Mondale was reelected as the attorney general. After four years in the attorney general's office, Mondal was appointed by Karl Rolvaag to fill the senate vacancy of Hubert Humphrey who was elected Vice President of the United States. Mondale was reelected until 1976 when he was chosen as the running mate for Jimmy Carter. Mondale served as the vice president for one term.

After losing the 1980 election, Mondale returned to practicing law until the 1984 election when he ran for president. His running mate was

Geraldine Ferraro – the first woman nominated for the position. They lost to incumbent Ronald Reagen. Mondale returned to practice law for many years, until he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Japan by President Bill Clinton. During Clinton's presidency, he also chaired a study on campaign finance reform and was the special envoy to Indonesia.

Following the death of Paul Wellstone (Democratic Senator from Minnesota) 11 days before the election, Mondale stepped in as the candidate following the support of Wellstone's relatives. Mondale lost this election – his last ever.

Resources:
Odd S. Lovoll Papers (2019/008)
Walter Mondale Papers (P1297)

Knute Nelson

12th Governor of Minnesota, 1893-1895 (Republican)
U.S. Senator, 1895-1923
U.S. House of Representatives, 1883-1889
Minnesota Senate, 1874-1878
Wisconsin State Assembly, 1868-1869

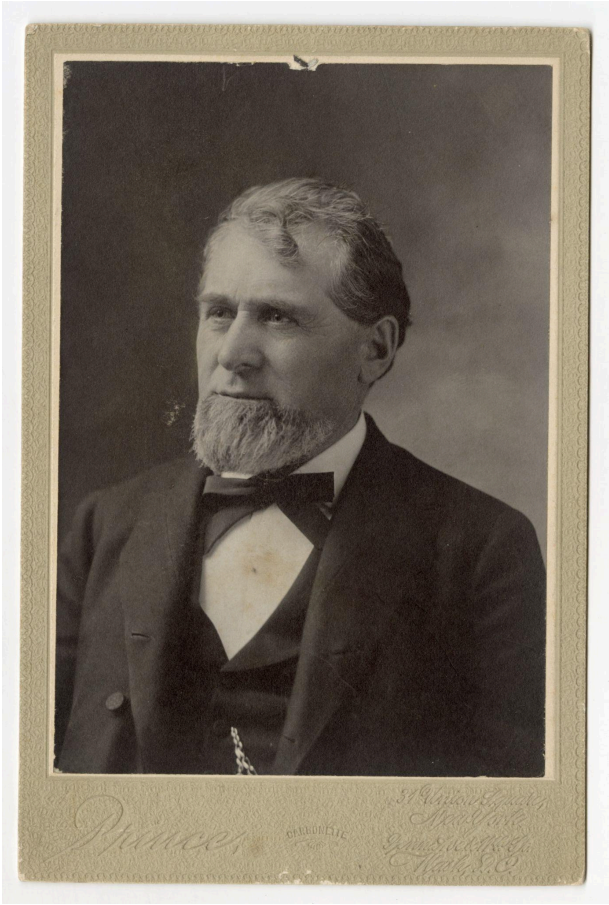


Image from the Knute Nelson Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Voss, Norway, 1843. At the age of 5, Nelson and his mother settled in Chicago where he was a newsboy for a while. A year later they settled in Dane County, Wisconsin where he attended common school and Albion Academy. When the Civil War broke out, he was enlisted into Company B, Fourth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. He entered Law School at the University of Wisconsin and was admitted to the bar. That same year (1867) he was elected to the Wisconsin State Legislature. In 1871, he left Wisconsin for Minnesota to homestead in Alexandria. There he practiced law and served as county attorney, state senator, and congress. He was also a member of the board of regents of the University.

In 1893, the Republican party nominated Nelson as their candidate for governor. He was up against D.W. Lawler and Ignatius Donnelly – an election he won. He was reelected two years later. After his gubernatorial run, he was elected as a United States Senator from 1895 until he died in 1923.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
D.G. Ristad Papers (P0582)
John A. Johnson Papers (P0691)
Knute Nelson Papers (P0257)

Floyd B. Olson

22nd Governor of Minnesota, 1931-1936
(Farmer-Labor)
Hennepin County Attorney, 1920-31



Painting of Floyd B. Olson, Public Domain.

Born in Minneapolis, 1891. Olson graduated from North High School in Minneapolis in 1909. After graduation, he worked for the Northern Pacific Railway for a year before entering school at the University of Minnesota. He was only enrolled for a year, after which he worked various jobs in Canada, Alaska, and Washington. Upon his return to Minnesota in 1913, he enrolled at William Mitchell College of Law and graduated in 1915.

Olson first ran for governor in 1923 against Theodore Christianson and lost. 1930 marked the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression, Olson ran again and was elected with a large majority of the votes. He held that position until 1936 when he passed away from stomach cancer at the age of 44.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Floyd B. Olson Clippings (P0298)
Eyvind Klaveness Papers (P0551)

Ole Petersen

Minnesota Senate, 1872
Minnesota House of Representatives, 1883-84



Born December 1835 in Norway. Petersen came to America and was a soldier in the Union Army during the Civil War. After his terms in the Minnesota government, he was appointed receiver of the U.S. land office in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Jacob A.O. Preus

20th Governor of Minnesota, 1921-1925
(Republican)

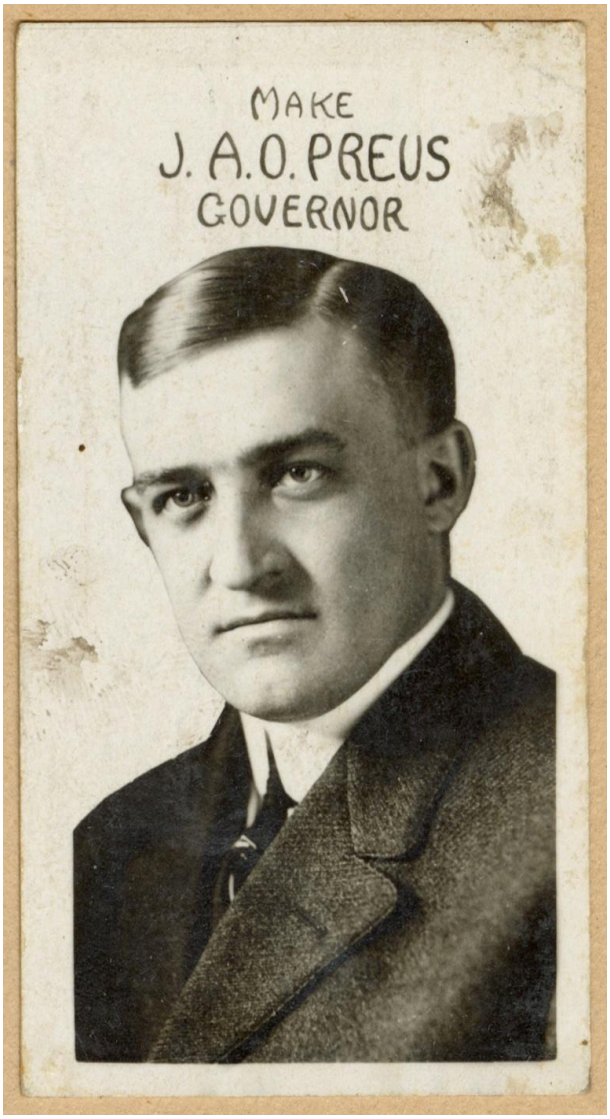


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Born in Wisconsin in 1883 to C.K. Preus, president of Luther College. Jacob A.O. Preus graduated from Luther College in 1903, and from the law school at the University of Minnesota in 1906. For three years he served as clerk under Senator Knute Nelson in the United States Senate. From 1909-1911, he was executive clerk in the governor's office. He was appointed insurance commissioner by Governor Eberhart in 1911 and 1913.

In 1921 until 1925, he was governor of Minnesota. He was succeeded in office by Theodore Christianson – another Norwegian American governor. After his terms in office, he became an insurance executive in Chicago. From 1858-1961, Preus moved back to Minneapolis and served as a chairman for the Lutheran Brotherhood, a fraternal insurance society he had co-founded in 1917. He also founded the Aid Association for Lutherans (became part of Thrivent Financial).

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Eyvind Klaveness Papers (P0551)
Carl G.O. Hansen Papers (P0543)
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)

Al Quie

35th Governor of Minnesota, 1979-83 (Republican)
U.S. House of Representatives, 1958-79
Minnesota Senate, 1955-58



Image from the Al Quie Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota. In Copyright.

Born in Wheeling Township, Minnesota, 1923. Quie graduated from Northfield High School and joined the US Navy during World War II. After returning home, he enrolled and graduated from St. Olaf College. Quie first ran as a write-in candidate for the House of Representatives in 1952 but lost. However, from 1955-78, he served the Minnesota Senate. In 1958 he ran for Congress after August Andresen died. He won and was elected until 1979 when he ran for governor. He ran against incumbent Rudy Perpich and was elected. He served one term and did not seek reelection.

Resources:
Albert H. Quie Papers (P1257)

Sidney Rand

Ambassador to Norway, 1980-81



Born in Eldred, Minnesota, 1916. Rand graduated from Concordia College in 1938 and was ordained at Luther Seminary in 1943. Rand served on the faculty of Concordia College before he became president of Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa until 1956. From 1956 to 1963, he was the executive director of college education for the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 1963, he became the president of St. Olaf College. He was president until 1980 when he became the U.S. Ambassador to Norway.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Kenneth Bjork Papers (P1342)
Einar Haugen Papers (P0545)
Lois Rand Journal (2021/013)

Albert E. Rice

10th Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota (under Governor Andrew Ryan McGill and William Rush Merriam)



Portrait of Albert E. Rice, Minnesota Historical Society. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Vinje, Norway, 1847. Rice first settled in Wisconsin. When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted in the Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment. At the battle of New Hope Church, he was wounded. In 1870 he settled in Wilmar and established a general merchandise store. Later he was also engaged in banking. He served as a member of the legislature in 1879 and served as a state senator in 1874-75 and 1878-85. From 1887-91, he was lieutenant governor. He was appointed in 1897 as a member of the board of regents of the University of Minnesota – a position he held for many years.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Anton J. Rockne

29th Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives (Republican)

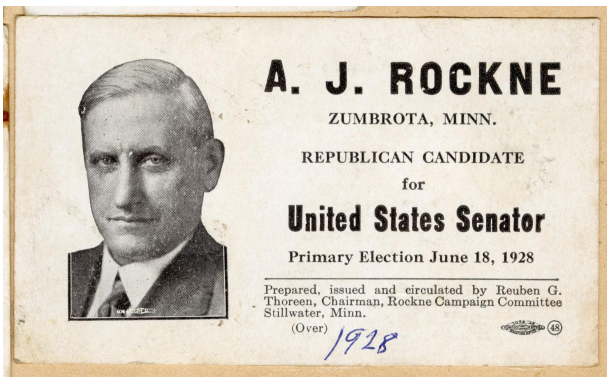


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Born in Fillmore County, Minnesota, 1869. Rockne graduated from the University of Minnesota with a law degree. Served as a member of the house in 1903-1909 and speaker of the House in the Minnesota State Legislature in 1909. By 1911, he was a state senator and served until 1947 – the longest-serving state senator in the history of Minnesota.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)

Karl Rolvaag

31th Governor of Minnesota, 1963-67
36th Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota, 1955-63
Ambassador to Iceland, 1967-69



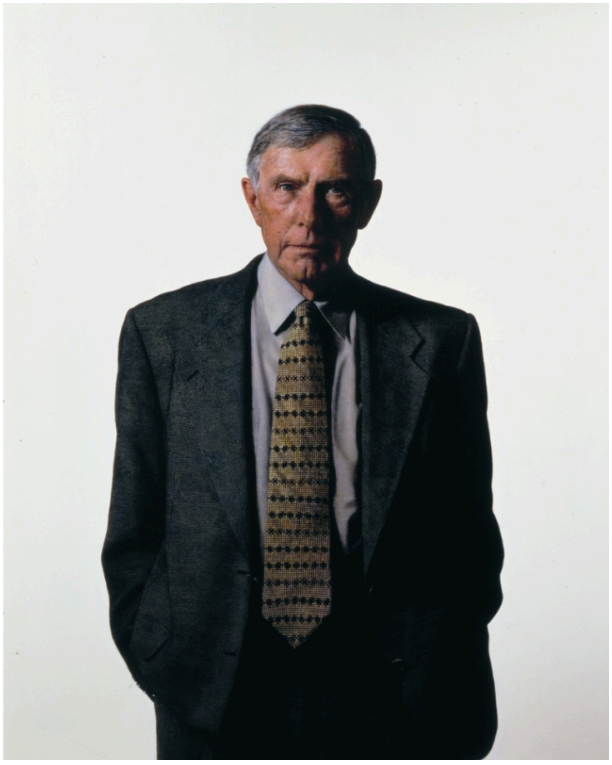
Image from the O.E. Rølvaag Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
In Copyright.

Born in Northfield, Minnesota, 1913. Rolvaag graduated from St. Olaf College before fighting in World War II. In 1954, he was elected lieutenant governor for eight years before he was elected governor. Rolvaag was the first Minnesota governor to serve a four-year term. In 1966, Rolvaag ran for reelection but lost to Lieutenant Governor Alexander Keith. After he left office, he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Iceland by Lyndon B. Johnson.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
O.E. Rølvaag Papers (P0584)
Ella Valboorg Tweet Papers (P1563)

Martin Olav Sabo

U.S. House of Representatives, 1979-2007 (Democratic)
Chairman of the House Budget Committee, 1993-95
Minnesota House of Representatives, 1961-79
Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, 1973-79



Portrait of Martin O. Sabo, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives. No Copyright - United States.

Born in Crosby, North Dakota, 1938. He received his bachelor's from Augsburg and graduate degree from the University of Minnesota. Sabo was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1960 at the age of 22. Following his eighteen-year career in the Minnesota House of Representatives, he ran for congress and was elected, a position he held was reelected continuously thirteen times. By the end of his career, he served 28 years in Congress.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Odd S. Lovoll Papers (2019/008)

Conrad Selvig

Congress, U.S. House of Representatives (Republican)



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Born in Rushford, Minnesota, 1988. Served as private in Co. F. 12 Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in the Spanish American War. He taught rural schools, and later attended the University of Minnesota where he earned a bachelors and masters degree. In 1910, he was appointed director of the University of Minnesota Northwest School of Agriculture and Experiment Station at Crookston, Minnesota. He was elected in the Ninth Minnesota District to serve Congress in 1926, 1928 and 1930.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Carl G.O. Hansen Papers (P0543)
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)

Henrik Shipstead

U.S. Senator (Farm-Labor, 1923-40, Republican 1940-1947)



Image from the Henrik Shipstead Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota. No Copyright - United States.

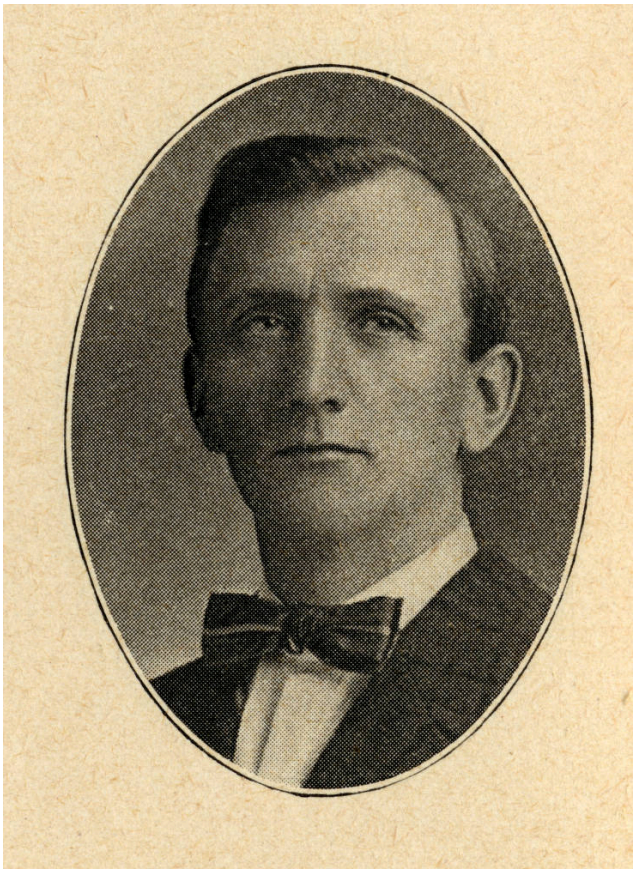
Born in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, 1991. Shipstead attended the Dental College at Northwestern University, Chicago, and opened a dental office in Glenwood, Minnesota where he first became politically active. He first served as mayor of the village and later as a member of the state legislature. In 1918, Shipstead was pitted against Andrew Volstead for Congress by the Nonpartisan League, but was ultimately defeated. Two years later the same organization put him forward for the Republican nomination for governor, but was defeated in a close race by J.A.O. Preus. From that race, Shipstead gained various acquaintances and prestige that helped him receive endorsement by the new Farmer-Labor Party two years later – a race he won against Frank Kellogg. As a member of the senate, he served as the chairman of the Printing Committee, member of Foreign Relations, Agriculture, Public Buildings, and Grounds, Pensions, and Joint Printing Committee of the House and Senate.

Resources:

Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
O.E. Rølvaag Papers (P0584)
Theodore Jorgenson Papers (P0716)
Henrik Shipstead Papers (P0349)
Olaf Ray Papers (P0580)
Olaf Norlie PApers (P0561)

Konrad K. Solberg

Lieutenant Governor, Farm-Labor



Portrait of Konrad Solberg, Collection of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. No Copyright - United States.

Born at Rushford, Minnesota, 1874. In Yellow Medicine County, he started farming, served his community as supervisor, clerk of the school districts, and secretary of the Farmers Elevator. He organized the Farmers and Merchants Bank (president for 5 years), the Clarkfield Creamery (president for 12 years), and the Clarkfield Oil Co. During this time he also served as president of the Clarkfield Consolidated Schools and treasurer for 18 years of the Clarkfield Norwegian Lutheran Church. He served the Minnesota State Senate in 1923, 1925, 1926, and 1928. He retired from politics after his initial terms, but was drafted by the executive committee of the Farmer-Labor Association to file for Lieutenant Governor – in which he was elected.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Halvor Steenerson

Congress, Republican



Portrait of Halvor Steenerson, Library of Congress. Public Domain.

Born in Dane County, Wisconsin, 1862 but moved to Houston County the following year. June 1878, he was admitted to the bar in the supreme court of Illinois and Minnesota the same year. He moved to Crookson in 1880 to become an attorney in the Red River Valley. He was elected county attorney and served two years before he was elected state senator for two sessions in 1883 and 1885. He was elected to the 58th Congress in 1902, and reelected until 1922. He lost that election with the tidal wave of the Farm-Labor victories.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Elias Steenerson Memoirs (P1488)

Steve Sviggum

Minnesota House of Representatives, 1979-2007 (Republican)
Minnesota House Minority Leader, 1992-1999
Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, 1999-2007



Portrait of Steve Sviggum, Collection of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library.
No Copyright - United States.

Born 1951. He received his degree in mathematics from St. Olaf College. He was first elected to the house in 1978.

Resources:
Odd S. Lovoll Papers (2019/008)

Lauritz Swenson

Diplomat



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No Copyright - United States.

Born in Nicollet County, Minnesota, 1865. Swenson studied at St. Olaf College and later Luther College. He went on to continue his studies at John Hopkins University. In 1895, the Governor of Minnesota, D.M. Clough appointed him a member of the board of regents of the University of Minnesota. In 1896, he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, and the following year appointed minister plenipotentiary to Denmark by President McKinley. He held that position until 1905. After serving one long term, he came back to Minneapolis and organized the Union State Bank (Vice president from 1905-1019). However, in 1909, he was appointed minister plenipotentiary to Switzerland by President Taft. Two years later, he was appointed Minister to Norway. In 1913, he was decorated by King Haakon VII of Norway with the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Olaf.

By 1915 when he arrived back in Minneapolis, he helped organize the Mercantile State Bank of Minneapolis. He also served as the president of the Scandinavian Art Society of America and was a member of the board of directors of the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA). He was once again appointed Minister plenipotentiary to Norway by President Harding, and in 1931 to the Netherlands.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Carl G.O. Hansen Papers (P0543)

Henry Teigan

U.S. House of Representatives, 1937-39 (Farmer-Labor)

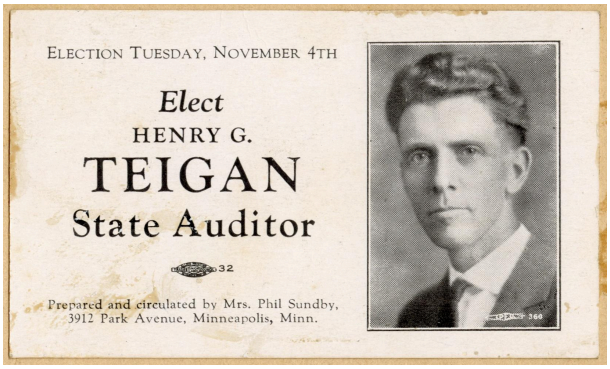


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Born in Forrest City, Iowa, 1881. He attended Luther Academy (Albert Lea, Minnesota) and Central College (Pella, Iowa) before graduating from Valparaiso University in 1908. Teigan's first involvement with politics came in 1913 when he was secretary of the North Dakota State Socialist Party. After moving to Minneapolis, he was the secretary of the National Nonpartisan League, and secretary to Senator Magnus Johnson. In 1936, he was elected to Congress, but failed to get reelected.

Resources:
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)

Julius Thorson

Mayor of Benson

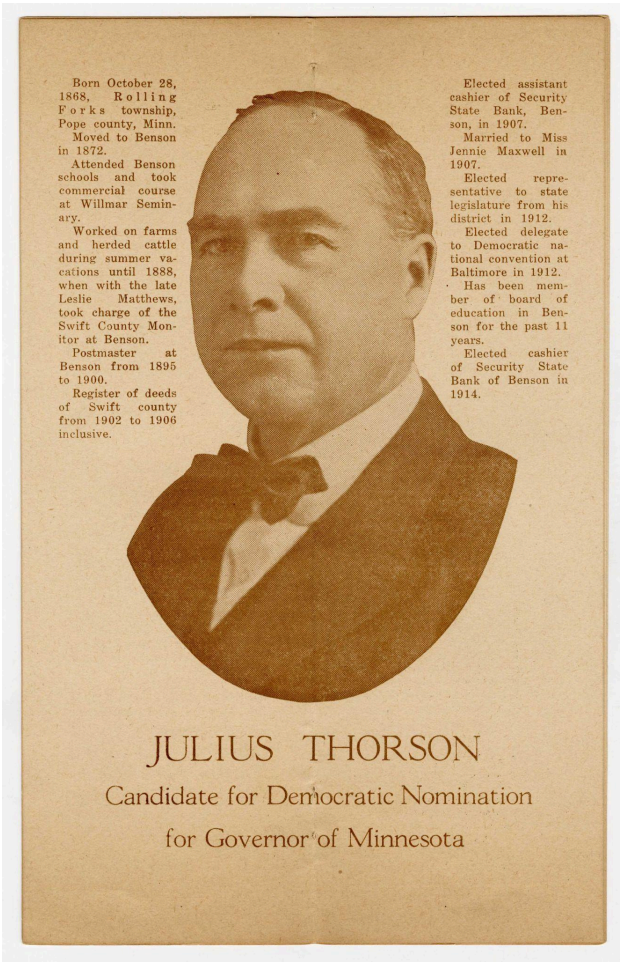


Image from the Knut Gjerset Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
No Copyright - United States.

Born in Rolling Forks Township, Pope County, 1866. After finishing schooling in Benson, he took a business course at the Willmar Seminary. He became editor of the Swift County Monitor. From 1902-1906, he was register of deeds of Swift County. In 1912, he was elected representative to the state legislature. He was president of the Democratic State Central Committee. In 1916, he was candidate for the lieutenant Governor on the Democratic Ticket, and in 1920 the candidate for Governor. In 1926, he was elected mayor of Benson.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Edward J. Thye

26th Governor of Minnesota, 1943-47 (Republican)
31st Lieutenant Governor, 1939-1943
U.S. Senator, 1947-59

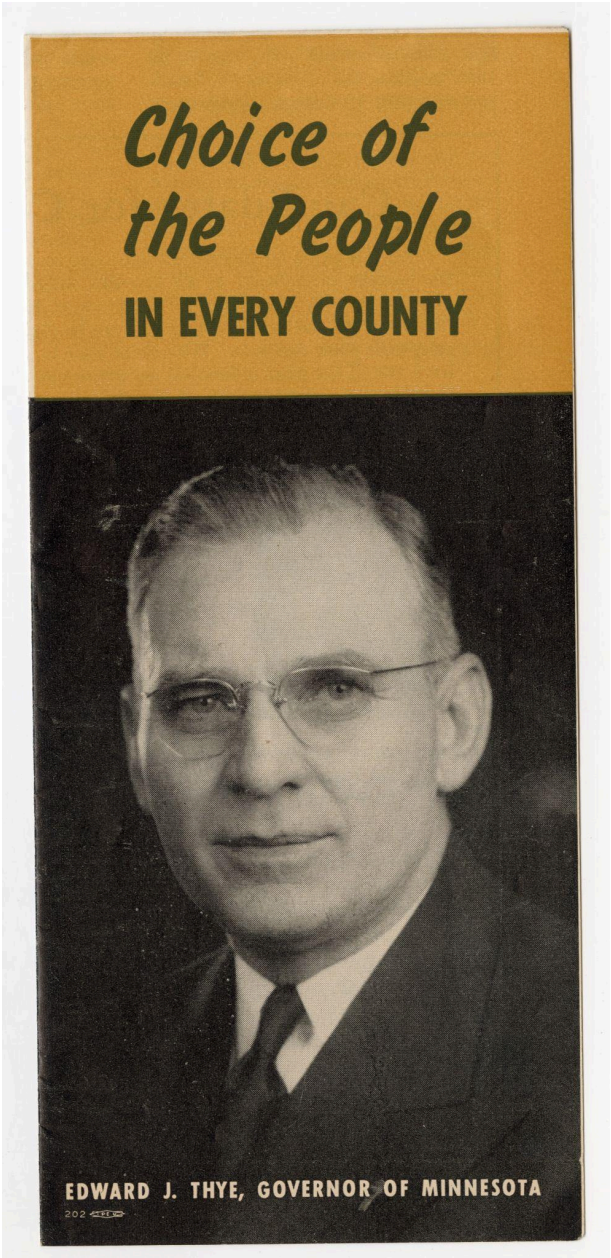


Image from the Edward Thye Papers. Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.
No Copyright - United States.

Born in Frederick, South Dakota, 1896. Thye served in World War I, and returned home to work at the Deere & Webber. Thye held various positions from serving the town council of Sciota and Sciota school board, president of the Dakota County Farm Bureau, director of Twin City Milk Producers Association, and others. Thye was elected the 31st Lieutenant Governor under Harold Stassen in 1942. When Stassen resigned to served the navy, Thye succeeded him as governor. He was reelected until 1947 when he was elected as U.S. Senator – defeating Henrik Shipstead and Theodore Jorgenson.

Resources:
Edward J. Thye Papers (P0386)
Theodore Jorgenson Papers (P0716)
Carl G.O. Hansen (P0543)

Clara Ueland

Suffragist



Born in Akron, Ohio, 1860. In Minneapolis, she worked as a schoolteacher before marrying Andreas Ueland. Starting in the 1890s, she campaigned for women to serve on the Minneapolis School Board. In 1913, she founded the Equal Suffrage Organization of Minneapolis (both male and female members). She later went on to be president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association.

Carl C. Van Dyke

Congress, Democrat



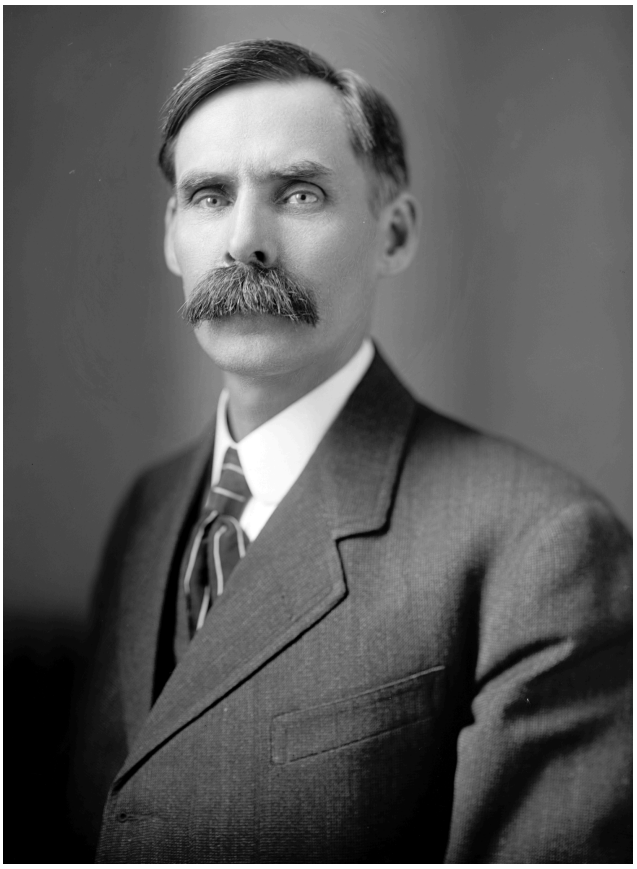
Portrait of Carl C. Van Dyke, U.S. Government Printing Office. Public Domain.

Born in Alexandria Minnesota, 1881. Served with the St. Paul Company in the Spanish-American War. While in government service, he studies law. From 1911-1914, he represented government employees in Washington. In 1914, he was elected to represent the Fourth Congressional District. He was reelected in 1916 and 1918.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)

Andrew Volstead

Congress, Republican



Portrait of Andrew Volstead. Library of Congress. Public Domain.

Born in Goodhue County, Minnesota in 1860. Educated at St. Olaf College. Practiced law in Grantsburg, Wisconsin, and Granite Falls, Minnesota. In Granite Falls, he served as the city attorney and mayor. For 40 years, he served as county attorney for Yellow Medicine County. He was elected to the 58th Congress in 1902 and was a member of the 7th Minnesota District til 1923. He served as chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the House, wrote the 18th amendment to the Constitution, was the author of the "Volstead Act" for federal prohibition, and co-authored the Capper–Volstead Act – which enabled farmers to form cooperatives without fear of prosecution under the Sherman Antitrust Act. He was defeated by Ole J. Kvale in 1922.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Olaf Norlie Papers (P0561)

Knud Wefald

Congress, Farm-Labor



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Born in Norway in 1869. Emigrated in 1887. Lived in Hawley, Minnesota, where he worked in the lumber industry. When he lived in Moorhead from 1929-1930, he was the editor of Normanden – a Norwegian language newspaper published in Fargo, North Dakota. He represented Clay County in the lower branch of the Minnesota Legislature in 1813 and 1915. He represented the Ninth Minnesota District in the House of Congress in the 68th and 69th Congresses. He was appointed Executive Secretary of the Commission of Administration and Finance in 1931. After he resigned he ran for Railroad and Warehouse Commissioner (Farm-Labor) in 1932 and was elected for six years.

Resources:
Knut Gjerset Papers (P0683)
Knud Wefald Correspondence (P1308)
Olaf Norlie Papers (P0561)
Martin T. Annexstad Sr. Scrapbook (2023/019)