

# William Langer: Attorney General, Governor, and United States Senator

**William Langer is a prominent politician in North Dakota history. While governor, Langer was convicted of fraud and conspiracy and removed from office. More than a year later, the conviction was overturned, and Langer served as governor again in 1937. This pathfinder will lead researchers to several resources available at the North Dakota State Archives highlighting the political career of William Langer.**

## Archival Collections

### 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, Non-partisan League, the Langer for Governor campaign (1920), and the investigation of the Home Building Association and other state industries.

### 10118 Robert Byrne Papers

Correspondence, subject files, publications, notes, minutes of the State Planning Board (1934-1935), and newspaper clippings relating to business and political activities, McCabe Methodist Church, Ida P. Lee, NYA, William J. Bryant, William Langer, Alta J. Land, and Sr. M. Inez Hilger.

### 10121 Burr Family Papers

Reverend and Annie Burr's biographical and obituary material, correspondence, financial and real estate papers, academic works, sermons and theological material, notebooks, and photographs. Correspondence, diaries, manuscripts, speeches, genealogical material, scrapbooks, publications, newspaper clippings, diplomas, certificates, broadsides, printed material, transcripts of testimony and other court documents relating to the Langer Trial (1934), ephemera, and photographs, relating to Alexander G. Burr's activities, family life, and career as an attorney at Bottineau, district judge at Rugby, and Justice of the ND Supreme Court.

### 10190 Will Family Papers (Box 4, Folder 18)

The primary creator of the collection was George F. Will Sr., and the bulk of the papers reflect Will's interest in North Dakota archaeology, dendrology, ethnobotany, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara people, and the history of Bismarck (N.D.) and the Northern Plains.

## Useful Search Guidance

### Subjects

- The Nonpartisan League

### People

- William Langer, 1886-1959

### Locations

- Casselton, 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

*Two If By Sea: William Langer's Private War Against Winston Churchill*

Wynona H. Wilkins — *North Dakota History* Vol. 41 Issue 2

#### **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.

#### **11126 Ardell Tharaldson Papers**

Papers consist of correspondence, writings and research on ND political figures, the NPL, William Langer, ND Federal Judges, legal issues concerning Native Americans and the environment, the ND AFL-CIO, correspondence and papers of Hon. William A. Falconer, the papers from James Jungroth's 1974 bid for the U.S. Senate and subsequent office files of Jungroth. Tharaldson was the author of Patronage, a book published in 2002 dealing with histories and biographies of ND's federal judges. The collection was donated by Pam and Jay Crawford on May 25, 2012. Posts from Tharaldson's blog, "Political Prairie Fire" were printed and added to the collection.

#### **11145 Robert Vogel Papers**

Papers consist of the working files of Robert Vogel, which focus on William Langer and the NPL for Vogel's 2004 book Unequal Contest: Bill Langer and his Political Enemies, but also include laws, court cases, and miscellaneous topics. Files contain a combination of research materials, copies of primary and secondary sources, writings, and notes by Vogel. The original order as created by Vogel was retained. Dates noted for each folder reflect the dates that Vogel collected and used the material, not the creation date of the original source material. Collection includes the files of Robert's father Frank A. Vogel which cover NPL, political material and Langer.

#### **11202 Arnold Holden Film Collection**

Footage of Sen. William Langer, Bills Mills, and Harold Schafer.

#### **11247 Ben Meier Papers**

Consists primarily of Meier's speeches, and includes correspondence with William Langer, certificates, a resolution, newspaper clippings and a portrait of Meier. Meier served as North Dakota Secretary of State from 1954-1988.

#### **20089 William Langer Papers**

Papers consist of school report cards, a letter to R.H. Landon, St. Paul, and a petition from farmers in Logan County requesting that Langer address the problem of obtaining parity value of loans on wheat.

#### **20216 Leslie C. Hulett Reminiscences**

Photocopy of Hulett's reminiscences of the William Langer trial in 1934.

#### **20538 Citizens Committee for Justice Records**

Collection Copy of The Leader subscription form used by Langer to obtain contributions from his governmental appointees, a newspaper clipping, and a letter (Continued on next page)

sent to employees in state agencies and institutions requesting contributions to support Langer's appeal of his conviction of solicitation for money from federal employees for political purposes.

#### **20719 Non-partisan League Records**

A copy of a letter distributed to state employees recounting NPL achievements and urging support for William Langer's candidacy for the U. S. Senate.

#### **21240 Emil Jahnel Papers**

Letter from Senator William Langer about the Nonpartisan League, offering assistance to Emil Jahnel and asking for a photograph of himself. Jahnel apparently wrote to Langer criticizing the Nonpartisan League (NPL). In addition to the letter is a printed Christmas card with the North Dakota flag and a statement that illustrates Langer's belief in non-interventionism.

#### **21401 Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation Food Shortage Collection**

Resolution of the governing body of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians regarding a critical food and clothing supply shortage on the reservation during the winter of 1949-1950. The collection contains correspondence and telegrams between staff of the North Dakota Department of Instruction, Representative Usher L. Burdick, William Langer, Milton Young and others about getting supplies to the reservation. A Bismarck Tribune article is also in the collection; it describes the food shortage situation from the perspective of C. H. Beitzel, Superintendent of the Turtle Mountain and Fort Totten Reservation.

#### **21521 August R. Geving Papers**

Two letters from Governor William Langer to August V. Geving, Jamestown, ND, regarding conditions and issues for postal and railroad workers in North Dakota.

#### **21554 Mrs. N. B. Peterson Papers**

Consists of a resolution introduced by Mrs. N. B. Peterson and adopted at the November 10, 1938 meeting of the Townsend Club No. 9. The resolution was to show appreciation for the humanitarian effort of Governor William Langer in sponsoring a bill to provide a workable pension plan for the elderly of North Dakota.

#### **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. 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.

## Books

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*Langer of North Dakota: A Study in Isolationism, 1940-1959*

1979 - Glenn H. Smith

Call Number: 327.73 Sm57

*Debate Relative to the Seating of Wm. Langer as U.S. Senator from State of North Dakota; March 9, 1942 to March 17, 1942*

1942 – Congressional Record

Call Number: 328.72 Un4c

*Before the United States Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, Seventy-seventh Congress: Petitioners of North Dakota v. William Langer, Brief for Petitioners*

1945 – submitted by Edward R. Burke, O.R. McGuire, H.C. Lowry

Call Number: 328.73 Un4e

*The Nonpartisan League; Its birth, Activities and Leaders*

1920—William Langer

Call Number: 329 L263

*The Farmers Union - A Bulwark Against Monopoly and Against Communism*

1951 – Speech by Hon. William Langer, of North Dakota With Remarks by Hon. Milton

R. Young, of North Dakota, Hon. Hubert H. Humphrey, of Minnesota, Hon. James E.

Murray of Montana, Hon. Edward J. Thye, of Minnesota in the Senate of the United

States, Thursday, September 7, 1950 and Wednesday, May 2, 1951

Call Number: 334.683 L276f 1951

*John W. Scott, et al. on Behalf of Themselves and all other Taxpayers of the State of North Dakota, plaintiffs, vs. Lynn J. Frazier, William Langer and John N. Hagan, Acting as the Industrial Commission of North Dakota, et al., Defendants: Supplementary Brief*

*on Behalf of the Industrial Commission on Motion to Dismiss the Complaint*

1919 – William Lemke, solicitor for defendant, Industrial Commission of North Dakota;

Frederick A. Pike, of counsel

Call Number: 342.784041 L5546jo 1919

*The Dakota Maverick: The Political Life of William Langer, Also Known as "Wild Bill" Langer*

1975 — Agnes Geelan

Call Number: 920 L263

*Langer, William*

N.D. Governors Subject File

## Online Resources

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### William Langer

State Historical Society of North Dakota website

### 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

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### [Expulsion Case of William Langer of North Dakota \(1942\)](#)

United States Senate website

### [William Langer Papers](#)

University of North Dakota website

## State Archives

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



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