Descriptive Summary
Title: Andrae B. Nordskog papers
Date (inclusive): 1903-1962
Date (bulk): 1920-1961
Collection Number: WRCA 058
Extent: 0.5 linear feet (1 box)
Repository: Rivera Library. Special Collections Department.
Riverside, CA 92517-5900
Languages: The collection is in English.

Provenance
Donated to the Water Resources Collections and Archives by Mrs. Gertrude Nordskog in 1962.

Access
Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
[identification of item], [date if possible]. Andrae B. Nordskog papers (WRCA 058). Water Resources Collections and Archives. Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Biography
Andrae B. Nordskog (at first named Arne Andreas Nordskog) was born the son of Norwegian settlers in Story City, Iowa, in 1885. As a youth, he worked as a reporter for his home town newspaper. He became an expert in telephony and electronics and established the first two wireless telegraph stations in Iowa when he was 24 years old. He turned his inventive talent to the railroads moved west to Seattle to work on them, inventing an improved block signal device, which he patented in Washington.

Nordskog was also an accomplished singer. He joined the Seattle Grand Opera Company in 1914 and two years later was the leading tenor with the Knickerbocker Light Opera Company in Los Angeles. In 1921, he became general manager of the recently inaugurated Hollywood Bowl. He soon allied music with his other interests and, while running a lucrative voice training school, he was able to buy equipment from a free-lance recorder and start the first phonograph recording factory on the West Coast. He opened branch offices of Nordskog Records in Santa Monica and Los Angeles. Beginning in the spring of 1922, Nordskog Records produced New Orleans jazz records, which have since become collectors' items, including early recordings by Edward "Kid" Ory and his band. By 1923, Nordskog's catalogue included names like Cyclonic Eva Tanguay, Virginia Wald, Abe Lyman, Harry Green, and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Industrial Chorus.

In 1923, Nordskog fell victim to a crooked banker, lost his business, and turned his attention to civic and financial reform. At first, he wrote articles for community newspapers, while still earning income as a voice instructor. His main targets were the telephone companies, which were charging unfair rates. In late 1926 he began publishing the Los Angeles Gridiron, a small weekly newspaper. The first issues focused on such reform efforts as reduction of telephone rates, paving of streets, installation of storm drains, and development of city parks. He followed this newspaper with the publication of The New America Magazine and Our Nation Magazine.

In August 1931, Nordskog was invited by William Hope (Coin) Harvey to attend the formation of the Liberty Party at Monte Ne, Arkansas, which had for its main plank "honest coinage according to the Constitution." Nordskog was nominated unanimously as the party's candidate for Vice-President of the United States, and in that capacity he toured the nation giving public speeches for that party. In 1932, at the convention of six independent political parties which were amalgamated into the Liberty Party, held in Kansas City, Missouri, Nordskog was again nominated for that party's vice-presidential candidate.

Demands for his writings on the subject of "honest coinage" and "governmental finance" compelled Nordskog to author and self-publish several books on these subjects, among which were Spiking the Gold, or, Who Caused the Depression, ... and the Way Out (1932), Spike the Bonds (1933), and We Bankers vs. Four Financial Fascists (1936). He was also authorized by
the California State Board of Education to teach the subjects of "The Science of Money" and "Governmental Finance" to adult classes in all high schools in the state.

In the late 1920s/early 1930s, Nordskog's chief interest was in the area of southwestern water issues. He was president of the Southwest Water League and conducted public meetings in cities throughout Southern California. In 1927, he became interested in the escalating dispute between the city of Los Angeles and the residents of the Owens Valley. He began publishing articles and editorials in the Gridiron championing the valley's cause and criticizing the city. He obtained radio time on station KGEF and accused Los Angeles Department of Water and Power officials of corruption and incompetence. In early 1928, Nordskog went to Washington, D.C. and visited the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation offices, where he obtained permission to transcribe documents and correspondence. Nordskog used this material to write a 540-page manuscript entitled Boulder Dam in the Light of the Owens Valley Fraud, which "linked the then pending construction of Boulder Dam with the Owens River Aqueduct as a seamless conspiratorial plot dating back to 1904 (Hoffman, 1982)." Nordskog was unable to interest a major publisher in the manuscript and considered publishing it himself. However, the Great Depression made it unfeasible. Then, in March 1931, a state senate committee began investigating Los Angeles' role in Inyo County.

Nordskog condensed his manuscript into a lengthy letter and submitted it to the committee. Although it did not influence the committee's recommendations, it did impress the committee sufficiently to be ordered read into the legislative journal and 1,500 copies printed as a 28-page pamphlet entitled, Communication to the California Legislature Relating to the Owens Valley Water Situation. In 1955 he reworked the manuscript again, this time calling it Water is Plentiful. Like its predecessor, this manuscript also was never published.

Andrae Nordskog died in 1962.

Biographical Sources:


Collection Scope and Contents
Correspondence, notes, news clippings, etc., related to Nordskog's water interests. Includes materials related to "water frauds" in the Owens Valley (including notes and an outline for his unpublished manuscript on the Owens Valley controversy), the Los Angeles Aqueduct, Boulder Dam, San Gabriel Dam, sea water conversion, California water problems, the Feather River Project, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the Colorado River, etc.

Related Collections
Andrae B. Nordskog Papers, 1906-1986. California State University, Northridge. 15 lin. ft. (33 boxes). Summary: Articles, booklets, correspondence, news clippings, statements, speeches, and writings related to Nordskog's interest and activity on public utilities, music, transportation, California water issues, Federal Reserve Banks, and electoral college reform.
Andrae B. Nordskog Papers, 1919-1964. Minnesota Historical Society. 1.25 cu. ft. (2 boxes, and 1 v. shelved loose). Summary: Correspondence, clippings, printed items, and miscellany reflecting Nordskog's varied career and interests, primarily in California. There are data on his career as a concert artist and music instructor; the operation (1921-1960) of his Nordskog Phonograph Recording Company, Los Angeles; plans to abolish the electoral college system in electing U.S. presidents (1931-1961); Nordskog's candidacy for U.S. vice-president on the Liberty Party ticket (1931-1932); banking and monetary reform, especially Nordskog's lawsuit (1933-1934) against the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco to release gold deposited there; telephone rates and franchises in southern California (1925-1958); his service (1924-1926) as chairman of the Southern California Rate and Traffic Commission; and provisions for an adequate water supply for Los Angeles (1928-1961) stemming from his presidency of the Southwest Water League. Includes manuscripts Boulder Dam in the Light of the Owens Valley Fraud and Water is Plentiful.

Collection Number
Collection number updated February 2019. Legacy collection number was NORDSKOG. This change was part of a project in 2018/2019 to update the collection numbers for collections in the Water Resources Collections and Archives.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Subjects
Southwest Water League
Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Calif.)
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Calif.)
Boulder Canyon Project (U.S.)
Feather River Project (Calif.)
Jakobsen, B. F. (Bernhard F.)
Fox, Charles Kirby, 1883-
Colorado River (Colo.-Mexico)
Los Angeles Aqueduct (Calif.)
Owens Valley (Calif.)
Saline water conversion
San Gabriel Dam (Calif.)
Water resources development -- California, Southern
Water rights -- California -- Owens River Valley
Water-supply -- California -- Los Angeles

Water Frauds 1903-1937

Owens Valley 1903-1931?
Box 1, Folder 1
Owens Valley correspondence, etc. 1920-1927
"Form for The Great Battle for Water," 1931?
Scope and Contents
Outline with page references, for Nordskog's manuscript on the Owens Valley water controversy.

Box 1, Folder 2
Raw notes and coding system of documentation 1931?
Copies of letters, etc. 1903-1931?
Scope and Contents
Holograph and typescript copies of letters concerning the U.S. Reclamation Service, Owens Valley, Los Angeles, and all the people involved.

Box 1, Folder 3
Box 1, Folder 4
Boulder Dam 1927
Box 1, Folder 5
Boulder Dam 1927
Scope and Contents
Correspondence from E. C. LaRue, hydraulic engineer, and news clipping.

Land and Water Frauds 1930-1949
Box 1, Folder 6
Land and water frauds 1930
Scope and Contents
Correspondence with Williamson S. Summers, etc.
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Southwest Water League minutes 1931 October 6  
| Scope and Contents  
| Includes discussion of Fred C. Finkle's report on the H. A. Van Norman-Edison Company conspiracy. |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Water frauds 1935  
| Scope and Contents  
| Correspondence with Koebig and Koebig, Consulting Engineers, transcripts of the Los Angeles County Grand Jury, etc. |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Millard F. Peyton vs. City of Los Angeles, et al. 1937  
| Scope and Contents  
| Re water rates fixed by the Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power. |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Water taxes 1938  
| Scope and Contents  
| Fragment of a letter to Everett James, February 15, 1938. |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | News clippings 1931-1949  
| Forks Site Project, San Gabriel River 1927-1955 |

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| Box 1, Folder 12 | San Gabriel Dam 1938  
| Scope and Contents  
| Correspondence and Nordskog's testimony before the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | J. C. Williamson, Carl A. Shorb, and E. D. Martindale vs. Los Angeles County Flood Control District, 1931-1938  
| Scope and Contents  
| Legal documents, transcripts, correspondence, etc. |
| Box 1, Folder 14 | Los Angeles County Flood Control District vs. Fisher, et al. 1936-1940  
| Scope and Contents  
| Legal documents, transcripts, correspondence, etc. |
| Box 1, Folder 15 | News clippings 1933-1939 |

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| Box 1, Folder 16 | B. F. Jakobsen 1927-1955  
| Scope and Contents  
| Correspondence, letters to the editor, articles, plays, etc., related to the expulsion of B. F. Jakobsen from the American Society of Civil Engineers over his role in the San Gabriel Dam scandal. Includes a copy of Jakobsen's *Ethics and the American Society of Civil Engineers* (Los Angeles, April 1955). |
| Box 1, Folder 17 | News clippings 1955  
| Sea Water Conversion 1948-1961 |

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Box 1, Folder 18  **Sea water conversion 1948-1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, clippings, articles, radio addresses, etc. Includes materials related to Raymond V. Darby and Maxim Silencer Company of Hartford, Conn.

Box 1, Folder 19  **Reclamation of used water 1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, clippings, etc.

**Feather River Project 1959-1961**

Box 1, Folder 20  **Feather River Project 1959-1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, etc., related to the Feather River Project, particularly related to the role of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

**California Water Problems 1937-1962**

Box 1, Folder 21  **County-of-origin 1959-1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, etc., related to the "county-of-origin problem" and other various California water problems. Includes discussion of Nordskog's "open letter" to William E. Warne, Director of the Dept. of Water Resources.

Box 1, Folder 22  **Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Colorado River 1937-1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, etc., related to the Colorado River Aqueduct, costs of Colorado River water, etc.

Box 1, Folder 23  **Four-year terms for MWD directors 1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence related to Assembly Bill 1586, which would provide for a limit of 4 years for terms of directors of the Metropolitan Water District of California.

Box 1, Folder 24  **Charles Kirby Fox and the Colorado Delta 1959-1962**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, news clipping, etc., related to the proposed publication of a book by Fox entitled "The Colorado River and Southwestern Water Studies". Includes a synopsis of the manuscript.

**Miscellaneous 1957-1961**

Scope and Contents
Letters to Ruth (Maxwell) Denny and Sen. Kerr, in which Nordskog details his involvement in the Owens Valley controversy and discusses his efforts to publish his manuscript.

Box 1, Folder 26  **Santee County Water District 1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, news clippings, etc.
| Box 1, Folder 27 | **William Mulholland 1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, chiefly with William E. Warne, Director of the Dept. of Water Resources, regarding Mulholland's status as "one of the world's greatest engineers." |
| Box 1, Folder 28 | **Biographical 1959-1961**
Scope and Contents
Miscellaneous correspondence, etc. Includes "Biographical Sketch of Andrae Nordskog", which Nordskog compiled and sent to William E. Warne. See also the WRCA Biography File on Nordskog. |
| Box 1, Folder 29 | **Miscellaneous 1960-1961**
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, news clippings, etc. Includes some non-water topics. |
| Box 1, Folder 30 | **News clippings 1957-1961**
Scope and Contents
Miscellaneous clippings, many related to topics represented above (sea water conversion, water taxes, etc.). |