

Thomas O. Larson Papers, 1909-1950

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Larson, Thomas O., b. 1874
Title	Thomas O. Larson Papers
Dates	1909-1950 (inclusive) 1909 1950
Quantity	2.5 linear feet of shelf space
Collection Number	MC 307
Summary	Thomas Larson operated a sheep ranch near Choteau, Montana, and served in the Montana legislature. Collection (1912-1948) includes correspondence, financial records, legal documents, speeches, and subject files.
Repository	Montana Historical Society, Research Center Archives Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives 225 North Roberts PO Box 201201 Helena MT 59620-1201 Telephone: 406-444-2681 Fax: 406-444-5297 mhslibrary@mt.gov
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Thomas O. Larson was born in Norway on November 27, 1874, the second of nine children of Ole and Annie Larson. The family moved to the United States in 1880 and settled on a farm in Benton County, Minnesota. In the summer of 1895 Thomas opened a small store at Burton in Teton County, Montana. The following two years he operated a stage line between Collins and Choteau. He then went into ranching, raising cattle, horses, sheep, and wheat on a desert land claim half way between Choteau and Bynum. He was involved in the Teton Co-operative Reservoir Company, the Brady Townsite Company, and the Brady Irrigation Company. He served two terms as president of the Montana Wool Growers Association, and one term as president of the Montana Livestock Production Credit Association. Larson was also active in Republican politics. He served as assessor of Teton County from 1900 to 1904, was in the state Senate from 1911 to 1921 and from 1927 to 1937, and ran for the U.S. Senate in 1936. While in the Legislature, Larson sponsored the bill splitting Teton County into three counties; introduced the first Blue Sky Law, regulating the sale of stocks; and helped establish the 19th Judicial District. Larson was active in several fraternal orders, including the Masons, the Knights Templar, the Helena Consistory of the Scottish Rite, the Algeria Shrine Temple, the Red Cross of Constantine, and the Royal Order of Jesters. Larson married Helen Stowe in 1902. They had two daughters Alva Gertrude and Harriett Helen. Alva married Wilfred Armstrong, who succeeded Larson in managing the ranch; Harriett married the noted Choteau author A.B. Guthrie Jr. Thomas O. Larson died March 18, 1958.

Content Description

Papers consist of incoming correspondence (1912-1950), concerning politics, sheep raising, and fraternal activities; scattered outgoing correspondence (1917-1945); court papers (1918-1930); financial records (1910-1950) consisting primarily of county taxes, receipts, livestock shipments and inventories, wool production figures, and promissory notes; legal documents (1913-1943) primarily concerning land leases; maps and plats of Larson land holdings; printed material; and speeches concerning political campaigns and history. In addition, there is a subject file (1909-1946) focusing on politics and ranching matters. This file includes folders on several companies, in which Larson held an interest, including the Birch Creek Water Company, the Brady Irrigation Company, the Brady Townsite Company, and the Teton Co-operative Reservoir Company. It also includes files on Larson's leasing of grazing land on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, including lists of Blackfeet tribal allotment holders. There is also a file on the Sun River elk herd, including reports on the condition of the herd. Miscellaneous material includes certificates and membership cards, fraternal order materials, humor and poetry, a booklet of the Sun River Sanitarium Association, and other items. Clippings include reviews and announcements for A.B. Guthrie Jr.'s *The Big Sky*, and a scrapbook (1936) of clippings concerning Larson's race for the U.S. Senate.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

by series

Acquisition Information

Acquisition Information:
available upon request

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection

Biographical Material

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 1	Obituaries	1958

Incoming Correspondence

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1 / 2	E.R. Alquist	1917, 1939-1941
1 / 3	A (correspondents include Will Aiken, Mary Alderson, American Legion of Montana, Anti-Saloon League of Montana)	1917-1921, n.d.
1 / 4	Ballie Buck (illustrations transferred to museum)	1937-1939
1 / 5	B (correspondents include M.E. Baatz, Lora Bailey, Arnold G. Baker, A. Beardslee, Biographical Encyclopedia of America, Arnold A. Boe [in Norwegian], J.C. Boettcher, J.G. Boswell Company, Hugh W. Buchanan, Clarence Bucher, W.J. Butler)	1914-1942
1 / 6	William Cowgill (re sale of ranch)	1922-1924, 1939
1 / 7	C (correspondents include J.J. Cain, B. Castberg, John W. Coburn, George Coffey Jr., Consistory Shrine Temple Association, Convent of the Good Shepherd, Ransom Cooper, W.H. Corry, Kenneth D. Creveling, P.H. Crossen, W.C. Curtis)	1915-1942
1 / 8	Day and Hansen Security Company	1922-1925
1 / 9	Joseph M. Dixon (includes campaign material and report of investigating committee re charges he made re oil tax)	1920-1921, 1930
1 / 10	D (correspondents include Henry Davidson, Glenn T. Davis, Julia DeWitt)	1915-1930
1 / 11	John E. Edwards (re Bank of Commerce, Forsyth)	1916. 1920
1 / 12	E (correspondents include George Ebner, T.S. Eidem, R.T. Ellis, Grace V. Erickson)	1916. 1920
1 / 13	James W. Freeman	1915, 1927-1933
1 / 14	F (correspondents include Mrs. J.F. Fait, R.M. Farrington, A.J. Findley, First National Bank of Conrad, First National Bank of Fairfield, First National Bank of Great Falls, L.A. Foot, Charles A. Franks, Frary and Burlingame, Frye and Company)	1917-1934
1 / 15	Galusha, Higgins and Galusha, accountants	1950

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1 / 16	Great Western Sugar Company (re decision not to build sugar factory near Choteau)	1916-1917
1 / 17	G (correspondents include W.N. Gaines, Harry R. Gallaway, W.W. Gamble, A.C. Grinde, F.H. Gilcrest Farm Companies, W.H. Gorham, Great Falls Breweries Inc., Great Northern Railway Company, John J. Greene, A.A. Grorud, A.B. Guthrie Jr., J.W. Gwinn)	1915-1941
1 / 18	Charles W. Helmick	1915-1916
1 / 19	J.E. Hult	1913-1914
1 / 20	H-I (correspondents include Hallowell, Jones and Donald; J.A. Hanlon Company, E.G. Hartfield poem-letter; R.M. Hattersley; John A. Havey; Stuart Hazlett; M.J. Healey; R.P. Heren; David Hilger; Hirshberg Brothers; T.J. Hocking; L.F. Howard; H. Homer Hullinger; International Refining Company; Ives and Smith)	1913-1946
1 / 21	Mrs. T. Jorame [in Norwegian with translation]	1920
1 / 22	J-K (correspondents include C.B. Jackson, E.E. Jackson, C.P. Johnson, Kyle Jones, W.D. Jones, Arthur Jordan, E.L. Jourdonnais, F.S. Kalberg, Cornelius F. Kelley, J.M. Kennedy, W.P. Kenney, C.H. Kester, Ira M. Kiley, Wally Kingsbury, J.C. Kinney, S. Kittilson, John Krause, Henry Kurtz)	1912-1942
1 / 23	L (correspondents include O.M. Lanstrum, E.M. Larson, Scott Leavitt, Dan Ledgerwood, E.E. Leech Land Company, Lewis Grain Company, Nettie C. Lewis, Dan Lindseth, Jerome G. Locke, A.O. Longmuir, Henry Love)	1917-1933
1 / 24	Thomas A. Marlow (re Teton Co-operative Reservoir Company, Brady Irrigation Company)	1915-1917, 1925
1 / 25	Masonic Grand Master of New York (against any alliance with Ku Klux Klan)	n.d.
1 / 26	Montana Land Dept./Dept. of State Lands and Investment	1913-1914. 1933-1934
1 / 27	Montana Livestock Finance Corporation (includes inspection of ranches)	1922

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1 / 28	Montana... (includes Montana Board of Barber Examiners, Montana Cowboys, Montana Senate, Montana Grain Inspection Dept., Montana Stockgrowers Association, Montana Wool Growers Association)	1922-1933
1 / 29	M (correspondents include George W. Magee, D.F. Mains, Malone and Truchot, Duncan Martin, Valerie A. Matthews, R.E. McAllister, T.D. McCain, Washington J. McCormick, E.H. McDonnell, Kenny McKnight, F.A. Meagher, T.A. Meagher, Menomont Exploration and Development Company, Louis Momberg, G.E. Monkman, John Moore, J.C. Morgan, C.F. Morris, Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company, Henry L. Myers)	1913-1941
1 / 30	David H. Nelson (re purchase of land)	1918-1930
1 / 31	Northern Pacific Railway Company (includes Agricultural Development Agent E.F. Benton; Freight Agent Howard Ellsworth)	1924, 1938
1 / 32	N (correspondents include National Geographic Society, Anna E. Nett)	1915-1916
1 / 33	Frank A. Oulton (re ranch and Bynum affairs)	1912-1914, n.d.
1 / 34	A.K. Prescott (includes affidavit by W.H. Scott about their contract)	1909-1918
1 / 35	P (correspondents include Marcia L. Patterson, Lewis Penwell, P.A. Peterson, J.A. Phillips, Ray R. Porter, T.H. Pridham, E.O. Prince, Producers Co-operative Commission Company, Robert H. Proudfoot)	1912-1943
1 / 36	Republican Party	1919-1937
1 / 37	Carl W. Riddick, U.S. Congressman	1921-1923
1 / 38	R (correspondents include Elmer R. Reynolds, L.R. Rieder, C.B. Roberts, D.H. Roberts, Nancy Russell re memorial statue for Charles M. Russell, Robert Ryan)	1916-1929
1 / 39	S (correspondents include St. Joseph's Parish, George O. Sanford, Scandinavian Erickson for Governor Club, Fred Schoensigel, Sidney J.W. Sharp, Shell Oil Company, Sherburne Mercantile Company, John L. Slattery, Pete	1912-1944

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Snelson, Harry R. Snyder, George Sollid, S.V. Stewart, Tom Stout, G.W. Streeter)	
1 / 40	Teton County (includes County Commissioners, Superintendent of Schools)	1917-1933
1 / 41	T-V (correspondents include Teton Service Company, Texas Company, J.N. Thelen, Gust Thompson, L.G. Torkelson, M.F. Trask, Trinity Lutheran Church, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Internal Revenue Service, University of Montana Agricultural Experiment Station, F. Van Orsdel)	1913-1942
1 / 42	N.P. Walters (re detective business and re Algeria Shrine and Royal Order of Jesters)	1915-1924
1 / 43	W-Y (correspondents include E.C. Waldron, Thomas J. Walsh, Arthur "Punk" Ward, Mrs. J.W. Ward, O.S. Warden, Washington Trust Company, J.R. Watkins Company, Simon Weil, T.B. Weir, A.J. West, Daniel Whetstone, B.C. White, Williams and Pauly, Winslow and Company, William N. Wright, J.E. Young)	1912-1941

Outgoing Correspondence

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
2 / 1-5	Miscellaneous [scattered]	1917-1945

Court Papers

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
2 / 6	Affidavit of weapons ownership: World War I	1918
2 / 7	J.E. Hodgskiss vs. Hugh Bowers complaint (re William Hodgskiss Estate)	1930
2 / 8	Thomas O. Larson vs. Ruth Fitzsimmons et al. complaint (re Stemple Mining District claim)	1922

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2 / 9	Agnes Baart Radcliffe et al. vs. Roman Catholic Bishop of Helena et al. brief (re Joseph A. Baart Estate; T.O. Larson was one of defendants)	n.d.
2 / 10	[Unidentified case] brief (re amending constitution)	n.d.

Financial Records

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
2 / 11	Bills [scattered]	1915-1934, n.d.
2 / 12	Financial statements	1921, 1944, n.d.
2 / 13	Hay production	1922, n.d.
2 / 14	Income tax files on employees	1940-1950
2 / 15	Larson Building account book (Alva Larson and Harriet Larson Guthrie)	1941-1946
2 / 16	Livestock inventories	1940-1944
2 / 17	Livestock shipments	1924-1942
2 / 18	Montana Unemployment Compensation Commission filings	1936-1946
2 / 19	Oil royalties on Beardslee-Swears farm	1925
2 / 20	Promissory notes	1910-1925
2 / 21	Receipts: Brady Irrigation Company	1916-1917, 1924
2 / 22	Receipts: life insurance	1912-1934
2 / 23	Receipts: state lands leases	1913-1934
2 / 24	Receipts: miscellaneous	1912-1941
3 / 1	C.J.B. Stephens, dentist, accounts	1919-1930

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3 / 2	Taxes and tax assessments: Lewis and Clark County	1924-1947
3 / 3	Taxes and tax assessments: Pondera County (T.O. Larson)	1920-1949
3 / 4	Taxes and tax assessments: Pondera County (other people, primarily William and James Cowgill)	1920-1925
3 / 5	Taxes and tax assessments: Pondera County (delinquent)	1922-1934
3 / 6	Taxes and tax assessments: Teton County (T.O. Larson)	1914-1949
3 / 7	Taxes and tax assessments: Teton County (Helen Larson, Alva Larson, Harriet Larson Guthrie)	1941-1949
3 / 8	Taxes and tax assessments: Teton County (other people)	1918-1949
3 / 9	Taxes and tax assessments: Teton County (delinquent)	1927-1924
3 / 10	Taxes and tax assessments: Toole County	1923-1932
3 / 11	Taxes: motor vehicles	1938-1939
3 / 12	Taxes: Internal Revenue Service claim and response	1943-1950
3 / 13	Wool production and cost statistics for Montana	n.d.
3 / 14	Wool shipments	1934, n.d.

Legal Documents

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
3 / 15	Agreements (includes Fred S. Doege, R. Wolden, Arnold Baker, John Sullivan, E.W. LeRoy and Delmer Clark, E.E. Jackson, George Thervin, Sun River Electric Cooperative)	1915-1929, n.d.
3 / 16	Deeds and bills of sale (includes Edward J. and Gertrude Hirshberg, W.W. Wright, James and Maria Heighton, D.P. Fabrick)	1920-1940

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3 / 17	Leases (includes Dept. of State Lands, Larson and Oulton, U.S. Forest Service, Day and Hansen Security Company, Frary and Burlingame, W.H. Babcock Company, Thacker Bond and Mortgage Company, Armada Company, J.B. Pontius)	1913-1934, 1942
3 / 18	Mortgages and release of mortgages (includes Walter H. Sanborn, C.H. Campbell and Son, Edward and Lucy Dennis, David H. and Maria H. Nelson)	1913-1918
3 / 19	Oil and gas leases (includes W.J. Johnson, California Petroleum Corporation, Oil Fields Lumber Company, Kenneth McKenzie, Louis D.M. Drumheller, Texas Company)	1923-1943
3 / 20	Miscellaneous (includes assignment, notice of water right on Spring Creek, livestock sales)	1916-1937

Maps

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
3 / 21	Land plats: Larson Ranch [one map in OVERSIZE FOLDER]	n.d.

Printed Material

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
3 / 22	Miscellaneous (includes catechisms in Norwegian and in English, "How to Fly a Piper Cub" [airplane], "The Chancel Club Cook Book")	1889-1945

Speeches

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
3 / 23	Campaign speeches (race for U.S. Senate)	1936

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3 / 24	"The Spirit of Washington in the late war"	n.d.
3 / 25	Miscellaneous (includes talk on Teton County history, speech note cards, fragment about trade with Canada)	1918, 1930?

Subject Files

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
4 / 1	Agricultural Adjustment Administration	1933-1934
4 / 2	Wilfred Armstrong (re military service)	1946
4 / 3	Birch Creek Water Company (includes bylaws, assignment of stock, correspondence)	1939
4 / 4-5	Blackfeet Indian Reservation grazing leases (includes permits, names of allotment holders, correspondence, production figures, maps)	1930-1946, n.d.
4 / 6	Brady Irrigation Company (includes stock pledge, receipt)	1909, 1915
4 / 7	Brady Townsite Company (includes plat maps, taxes, sales lists) [maps in OVERSIZE FOLDER]	1914-1925
4 / 8	Federal Land Bank of Spokane (includes correspondence, receipts, notices)	1929-1937
4 / 9	First National Bank of Great Falls (re mortgage)	1932-1939
4 / 10	Free school text book law (text of bill, memos, financial statistics)	1932-1933?
4 / 11	Legislature (includes report of special committee to investigate the Liquor Control Board, 1939; status sheets, 1929; clippings)	1929, 1939
4 / 12	Liberty Loan and Red Cross (includes correspondence, statistics on town commitments)	1918-1919

Container(s)	Description	Dates
4 / 13-14	Montana Livestock Production Credit Association (includes mortgages, production figures, proposed bylaws, sample documents)	1934-1943
4 / 15	Montana Wool Cooperative Marketing Association (includes correspondence, statements of participation, contracts)	1930-1933
4 / 16	Montana Wool Growers Association (includes correspondence, minutes, shipping statistics, printed material)	1935-1941
4 / 17	Norwegian Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Martha visit to Montana	1939
4 / 18	Political (includes campaign materials, presidential electors' votes, lists of legislators) [campaign poster in OVERSIZE FOLDER]	n.d.
4 / 19	Ranch (includes correspondence, production statistics, etc.)	1940-1946
4 / 20	Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation (includes correspondence, contracts, loan statements)	1933-1934
4 / 21	Republican Party (includes letter, receipts)	1939
4 / 22	Ruth Dredger Manufacturing Company (includes correspondence, photo) [blueprint in OVERSIZE FOLDER]	1929
4 / 23	Selective Service Board appointment	1940-1941
4 / 24	Sheep and wool materials (includes production statistics, shearing tallies, shipments, etc.)	1937-1941
5 / 1	Sun River elk herd (resolution, reports)	1928-1930
5 / 2	Teton Co-operative Reservoir Company (includes agreements, correspondence, amendments to bylaws, stockholder list)	1915-1921, 1941
5 / 3	Water (includes correspondence with Robert Ryan, National Farm Loan Associations, Davis H. Nelson, Obert Peterson)	1937-1939

Miscellany

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
5 / 4	Carriage advertisements	1945
5 / 5	Certificates and membership cards (includes brand certificates, motor vehicle registration, hunting and fishing license, certificate of election as State Senator) [marriage certificate, Alva Larson birth certificate, Masonic certificates in OVERSIZE FOLDER]	1902-1927
5 / 6	Joseph M. Dixon speech (re history of Columbia River region, economic development, etc.)	1927
5 / 7	Fraternal order materials (includes membership cards and receipts for Royal Arch Masons, Knights Templar, A.F. & A.M., Red Cross of Constantine, etc.)	1925-1933
5 / 8	Humor and poetry	n.d.
5 / 9	Aagot Lian candidacy for state Senate	1926
5 / 10	Norwegian Relief Inc. receipt books (World War II)	1940
5 / 11	Ration books (World War II)	1943, n.d.
5 / 12	John B. Ritch "Saga of the Soogon: the Ballad of the Sheepherder's Quilt" [poem]	1940
5 / 13	Stock certificates (primarily oil and gas companies)	1917-1940
5 / 14	Sun River Sanitarium Association constitution and bylaws	n.d.
5 / 15	Miscellaneous (includes cattle inspections, booklet re McNary Haugen bill, Nonpartisan League card, announcement of meeting [possibly Ku Klux Klan], theater program, list of pallbearers for Kennie McKenzie, materials for sheep shed)	1916-1944

Clippings

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		

Container(s)	Description	Dates
5 / 16	A.B. Guthrie Jr. (includes The Big Sky reviews and ads; announcement of Harvard's Nieman Fellowship)	1944, 1947
Volume		
Vol. 1	Scrapbook (re campaign for U.S. Senate)	1936
Box/Folder		
5 / 17	Scrapbook (re campaign for U.S. Senate) [loose items removed]	1936
5 / 18	Miscellaneous (re politics, Alva Larson, John Maynard Keynes, state insurance act, state Liquor Control Board investigation, government spending, state agencies)	1911-1940

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Elk
 Friendly societies
 Grazing
 Norwegian Americans
 Oil and gas leases
 Petroleum industry and trade
 Sheep ranches--Montana
 Sugar beet industry
 Wool industry
 World War, 1914-1918--Home front

Geographical Names :

Blackfeet Indian Reservation (Mont.)
 Columbia River Basin
 Pondera County (Mont.)--Agriculture
 Sun River Game Preserve (Mont.)
 Teton County (Mont.)
 Teton County (Mont.)--Agriculture

10/05/2001



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