

Guide to the Gordon Nielsen Papers, 1950-1984

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Overview of the Collection

Repository:

Special Collections & Archives
McIntyre Library
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
P.O. Box 4004
105 Garfield Ave.
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004
(715)-836-2739
<http://www.uwec.edu/Library/archives/info.htm>

Reference Code: USGZE UHC375

Accession Number: 21-004

Collection Number: University Historical Collection 375

Creator: Gordon Nielsen

Title: Gordon Nielsen Papers

Dates: 1950-1984

Quantity: 1.2 linear feet (3 archives boxes)

Location of Collection: B6/3c

Languages: Collection materials are in English.

Summary: Account books and federal/state income tax returns of a family farm run by Gordon Nielsen in Rice Lake, WI.

Biographical/Historical Note

The Nielsen Family Farm was a dairy farm located in Rice Lake, WI. It was originally owned by Henry Nielsen, who acquired the land in 1900. He died in 1936, and his wife, Sophia Nielsen, inherited the farm. After Sophia Nielsen's death in 1953, her estate was divided amongst her six children and one of her sons, Henry Gordon Nielsen, took over the operation of the farm. During the latter years of the 20th century, agriculture in Wisconsin was in a tumultuous state. The rise of agribusiness coincided with the decline of family farms as the market for food shifted into vertically integrated supply chains. Farm income was rising to a record height, with income tripling from 1971 to 1973. (Gill, *Rise and Decline of the Family Farm in Central Southern Wisconsin... p. 15*) This was due to the farm bubble of

the early 1970s, which was caused by Nixon changing the dollar to a floating exchange rate system, as well as a wheat and grain deal with the Soviet Union having dramatic effects for prices across the entirety of the US agricultural market. Yet, at the same time, the Nielsen farm lost around \$3,000 in income from 1970 to 1971. Their income continued to dwindle in the years following due to less dairy and cattle sales, even as farm income was rising nationwide. The records show that Gordon Nielsen attempted to mitigate this through investment in capital gains such as securities, which he would receive annual dividends for. Around 1973, Gordon Nielsen chose to retire. He spent his later years living off securities and other capital gains which he had invested in during his time as a farmer. The '76-'77 notebooks show rent income rather than cattle/milk income. After that, his only income is miscellaneous income.

Content Description

This collection consists of financial documents and tax records from 1950-1984, the bulk of it is from the 1950s-1970s when H. Gordon Nielsen ran the farm. These include itemized notebooks for every year which detail income and expenses, including farm sales and employee wages. The notebooks continue past the 1970s, ending in 1984. Although they no longer recorded farm income, they recorded miscellaneous income such as income from trusts and securities. The tax records include both federal and state tax returns. Also included are documents pertaining to the estate transfer of Sophia Nielsen after her death to Gordon Nielsen in 1953. These documents include correspondence, notarized legal documents, and itemized appraisals of the estate's cash value. The records provide a broad overview of the economics of a sample small-scale dairy farm in northern Wisconsin during the 20th century.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information: Donated to the Special Collections & Archives, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire by Andrea Gapko in August 2020.

Access Restrictions: Collection is open to the public.

Use Restrictions: Researchers are responsible for using in accordance with 17 U.S.C.

Preferred Citation: Gordon Nielsen Papers, 1950-1984. UHC375. Special Collections & Archives. McIntyre Library. University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. Eau Claire, WI.

Processing Note: Processed by Adler Orr in 2020.

Arrangement: By series.

OCLC #: 1245967690

Subjects

Personal Names:

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

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Gordon Nielsen, 1919-1999.

Sophia Nielsen, 1877-1953.

Corporate Names:

Nielsen Family Farm (Rice Lake, Wis.)

Subject Terms:

Agriculture—Wisconsin—Rice Lake—History.

Dairy farms—Economic aspects—Wisconsin.

Dairy farms—Wisconsin—Rice Lake.

Geographical Terms:

Rice Lake (Wis.)—History.

Detailed List of Contents

Series 1: Estate Material

Correspondence, affidavits, estate valuations, and other notarized documents concerning the estate of Sophia Nielsen.

Dates: 1953

Extent: 0.04 cubic feet (1 folder)

| Container | Contents | Dates |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Box/Folder 1/1 | Correspondence | 1953 |
| Box/Folder 1/2 | Financial appraisals and bills | 1953 |
| Box/Folder 1/3 | Legal documents | 1953 |

Series 2: Farm Records

Accounting notebooks that document the Nielsen farm's income and expenses as well as income tax returns, both state and federal.

Dates: 1950-1984

Extent: 1.2 cubic feet (3 archives boxes)

| Container | Contents | Dates |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Box/Folder 1/4 | Accounting records | 1950-1951 |
| Box/Folder 1/5 | Accounting records | 1952 |
| Box/Folder 1/6 | Accounting records | 1954-1955 |
| Box/Folder 1/7 | Accounting records | 1956-1957 |
| Box/Folder 1/8 | Accounting records | 1958-1959 |
| Box/Folder 2/1 | Accounting records | 1961 |
| Box/Folder 2/2 | Accounting records | 1962-1963 |
| Box/Folder 2/3 | Accounting records | 1964-1965 |

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|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Box/Folder 2/4 | Accounting records | 1966-1967 |
| Box/Folder 2/5 | Accounting records | 1968-1969 |
| Box/Folder 2/6 | Accounting records | 1970-1971 |
| Box/Folder 3/1 | Accounting records | 1972 |
| Box/Folder 3/2 | Accounting records | 1973-1974 |
| Box/Folder 3/3 | Accounting records | 1975-1976 |
| Box/Folder 3/4 | Accounting records | 1977-1978 |
| Box/Folder 3/5 | Accounting records | 1979-1980 |
| Box/Folder 3/6 | Accounting records | 1981-1982 |
| Box/Folder 3/7 | Accounting records | 1983-1984 |