

**Collection Name:**

Waldemar Theodore Ager papers, 1874-1943

**Collection Number:**

P0601

**Extent:**

5.2 cubic feet (13 archives boxes)

**History/Biography:**

Waldemar Theodor Ager was born in Fredrikstad, Østfold, Norway to Martinius Mathiesen Ager and Marie Fredrikke Mathea Johnsdatter Stillaugesen. Martinius first emigrated to the United States by himself, starting a tailoring business. Eventually, Ager and the rest of the family joined Martinus in Chicago. In Chicago, Ager worked for the Norwegian-language newspaper, *Norden*. His newspaper career flourished when he moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and was offered a job at a Norwegian temperance newspaper called *Reform*. Ager became editor from 1903-1941. Ager was a leader in the prohibition movement. He helped organize total abstinence societies and Good Templar lodges across the Upper Midwest. Ager remained a teetotaler his entire life.

In addition to his newspaper career, Ager also wrote six novels and collections of short stories. Among his best known books are "Paa drikkeondets Konto" (1894), "Kristus for Pilatus" (1910), "Oberst Heg og hans gutter" (1916), "Paa veien til smeltepotten" (1917), "Gamlelandets sønner" (1926), and "Hundeøine" (1929).

See also "The Problem of Cultural Identity in the Works of Waldemar Ager, Simon Johnson, and Johannes B. Wist," a PhD dissertation by James P. Nelson, University of Washington, 1990.

**Scope and Content:**

The papers of a Norwegian-born journalist, author, and lecturer include clippings, articles, correspondence, manuscripts of books, poems, programs, records, sketches, and stories dealing with subjects such as Norwegian culture and heritage, Americanism, memorials to Norwegians in America, and temperance.

Among the correspondents are Carl F. Berg, Arne K. Berger, L. W. Boe, H. A. Eckers, John O. Evjen, Ruth Fjeldsaa, Sigurd Folkestad, Einar Haugen, John Heitmann, H. R. Holand, Simon Johnson, Arne Kildal, Lars Lillehei, E. L. Mengshoel, Jon Norstog, Torkel Oftelie, K. Prestgard, D. G. Ristad, Mrs. O. E. Rølvaag, Johan Selnes, T. A. Siqueland, Edvard Skille, Charles C. W. Storck, J. L. Urheim, and Alexander Wiley.

**Access Rights:**

This collection is open for research.



### Bibliographic Citation:

[Indicate the cited item here]. Waldemar Ager Papers. Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Biographical miscellany, 1891-1945
1	2	Correspondence, 1914-1937 Includes copy of "Braud Og Druvor," by Idar Handagard (Stavanger, 1924).
1	3	Correspondence, 1937-1943
1	4	Programs, 1893-1929 Includes the 1905 Den Norske Studentersangforenings Amerikafærd tour of 1905 [group that encouraged St. Olaf Band to tour Norway in 1906]; Many May 17th, Norway's Independence Day, programs and flyers.
1	5	Programs, 1930-1941 Many May 17th, Norway's Independence Day, programs and flyers; large poster for Labor Day celebration featuring the Iola Band, Peterson's Orchestra of Wausau, Eli Rice, Bolwell Orchestra of Manawa, Phillip La Follette of Madison, William J. Ager, ball game between Waupaca vs. Manawa.
1	6	Lecture tour of Norway clippings, 1934
1	7	Ager lectures clippings, 1925-1940
1	8	Clippings, 1912-1982
1	9	"Glimpses into my Grandfather's Scrapbooks," by Barbara M. Bergh, 1956 Student paper.
1	10	"Memories" by Camilla Ager, undated Mrs. William Cameron, Waldemar's sister.
2	1-2	Sketches and stories, undated
2	3	Articles and poems, undated
2	4	Articles, undated
2	5	Articles and poems., 1912-1940 Sneve, Dommersnaes, Norstog, and others.
2	6	Correspondence and clippings, 1929-1931 Hundeøine, "I Sit Alone"
2	7	Book reviews clippings, undated. Hundeøine, "I Sit Alone."
2	8	Clippings, correspondence, and book reviews., 1894-1941 Hundeøine, "I Sit Alone."
2	9	Marcus Thrane miscellany, 1897-1949
2	10	Det Norske Selskab correspondence and clippings 1912-1924



2	11	Reform mailing list, 1941
2	11-13	Articles, undated Some articles are incomplete.
3	1	Navnet manuscript, 1934
3	2	The Name Tremendous, A Dream Picture from the Great War, 1934
3	3	Notebook, 1891 Inside note: "Waldemar Ager was 22 when he started this book--apparently intended as a gathering place for words of wisdom, inspiration, etc., gleaned from reading. Also includes some poems by his sister Camilla.
3	4	Protokol, Eau Claire Norske Sangforening, 1872-1874
3	5	Subscription lists, Arbeiderens (Eau Claire, Wis. Publication), 1886-1889
3	6	Record book, En bok om aaret klubben, 1929-1931
3	7	Huldredans og Bakmeiser, undated Note: apparently an attempt at writing a novel for publication and never used
4	1	The "Other" W.T. Ager, 1915
4	2	Temperance clippings and scrapbook, 1915
4	4	Temperance articles and poems, undated
4	5	Norwegian-American Temperance Movement, 1903 Includes Ager's "Af holdssagens historie i De forenede stater" (Afholdsvennernes Aarbog, 1903, pp. 3-25).
4	7	Stories, undated
4	8	Poems and songs, S.O. Møst, undated
4	9	"Norden" articles by Ager, 1928-1930 1928 December, 1929, January 29, 1929 April-May, 1929 November, 1930 December.
4	10	Subscription records, Afholds-bladet (published in Chicago), 1884-1888
6	1	On occasion of his 50th Birthday, 1919 Correspondence
6	2	1903-1914
6	3	1915-1941
6	4	Norwegian-American writers, 1903-1936
6	5	Norwegian-American newspaper editors, 1911-1920
6	6	Camilla Ager, 1902-1920
6	7	Sigurd Folkestad, 1909-1924
6	8	Olav Kvisgaard, 1913
6	9	Simon Johnson (Hillsboro, N.D. and Decorah, Iowa), 1904-1917
6	10	Jon Norstog, 1912-1918
6	11	Nordahl Rolfson, 1917
6	12	Johan Selnes, 1913-1918
6	13	O.S. Sneve, 1896-1910



- 6 14 St. Olaf Knighthood, 1923-1940
- 6 15 Nordmanns Forbundet, 1911-1934
- 6 16 "Budstikken" 1883 manuscript by K. Sandberg, 1883
- 6 17 Samfundet for Norske sprog og Kultur, 1911-1937
- 6 18 Article in "Fredrikstad Blad" by Sverre Ullnaess, 1975
- 6 19 Miscellaneous items, 1889-1973  
Including testimonial from Kristiania, 1884; and letter from Tor Helgeson; and manuscript by N.J. Sørensen. Added Dec. 19, 2011: clipping scrapbook (mostly authored by W. Ager, c. 1889); booklet, "Christoffer Andersen Garmager Smelter and Farmer: A Family History of His Ancestors and Descendants," by Ole Garmager (1957, translated by Conrad Garmager, 1972-73); several published poems by Nick Sundal (1960-64); funeral program for Jens Eilertsen, Oct. 5, 1929; address (presumably by W. Ager, "Social Reform legislations in Norway"; letter from J.N. Kildahl, St. Olaf College, Jan. 14, 1905; marriage announcement of Esther L. Nelson and Harold F. Cyaas (Sept. 1, 1928)
- 6 20 Scrapbook, 1975  
Compiled by his son, Trygve for his children.
- 7 1 Temperance Society records, 1892-1896
- 7 2 Fremad Publishing Company records, 1902-1929
- 7 3 Article by Clarence Kilde, 1976  
"Editor Ager a Norwegian Advocate" part of a souvenir edition published by Eau Claire "Leader-Telegram."
- 8 1-3 Volumes of photos, 1890-1940  
'Pictorial Life of Waldemar Ager" compiled by Clarence Kilde. Includes family history notes.; added additional photos donated by Borgny Ager, Oct. 2011. Images include: Wedding photo of Rev. Nils Elissen Wikre; postcard from H.R. Holand; unidentified man working in shoe factory (cobbler), 1925; Mr. and Mrs. Skjördalsvold, L.F. Tromdal; J.J. Skordalsvold; group from Chetek, Wis., including Martin Carlson, c. 1910; Haakon and Ragna Johnson (cousins of W. Ager); Scandinavian temperance collage with "Protect the home. Down with the saloon" featuring: Gustav Eide, O. Br. Olson, William Ager, F.L. Tronsdal, O.S. Sneve, J.J. Skordalsvold, E.E. Lobeck, J.L. Nydahl, Theo. S. Reimestad, Adelsten Berge, Anna Qvale Andersen, O. Lokensgaard, K.T. Thorvildsen, B.B. Haugan, H.P. Rud, K. Lokensgaard; Sofie and Laurits Stavnheim; group photo of the Det Norkse Selskap in Minneapolis, Jan. 28, 1903. Identified: Hjalmar Rued Holland, F.L. Tronsdal
- 9 1 Ager bibliography, 1877-1983



9	2	Genealogy, undated
9	3	Ager chronology, undated
9	4	Birthplace and childhood and notes, 1983
9	5	The home at Gressvik, Norway, 1871-1975
9	6	Records from Chicago, undated
9	7	Photographs of homes, undated
9	8	Gurolla Blestren Ager (Mrs. Waldemar Ager), 1936-1951 Includes letters written by Gurolla to Magne Ager, 1936-1951, typescript copies made by Eyvind Ager, 1977.
9	9	Temperance Societies, minutes, clippings, 1892-1983
9	10	Time tables (railroad) used by Ager, 1941
9	11	Christmas cards, undated Includes three copied items from O.E. Rølvaag.
9	12	Trip to Norway, 1914
9	13	Scrapbook of trip to Norway, 1914
9	14	Prize-winning essay, "Omkring Hundreaarsfesten" for the Norse-American Centennial, 1925
9	15	First Norwegian Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, programs, 1914-1976
9	16	Invitation to visit Norway, 1933 Includes clipping.
9	17	Ager at age 65 clippings, 1934
9	18	17th May speech, Duluth, Minnesota, 1938
9	19	Death clippings, 1941
9	20	Memorial monument, 1945
10	1	"Paa drikkeondets konto," review, 1897
10	2	"Presten Conrad Walther Welde," reviews, 1911
10	3	Hans C. Heg memorial monument clippings and photos, 1916
10	4	"Det vaeldige navn" review by O.E. Rølvaag, 1923
10	5	"Gamlelandets Sønner," 1926-1983 Includes reviews and review of Trygve Ager's translation of "Sons of the Old Country" (1983). Includes an article on Ingeborg Viko, "Billy the Cook" (1952).
10	6	"Hundeøinene," review, 1929 Includes letters and clippings concerning the translation of "I Sit Alone."
10	7	Ager's short stories and poems translated by Eyvind Evans, 1976-1978
10	8	Ager's speech, "The Library of the Future," undated
10	9	Ager's letter of sympathy to Mrs. Tangjerd, 1925
10	10	Copies of Ager's ad as agent for Norwegian American Line, undated
10	11	Photographs of locations where "Reform" was published, undated



- Includes several photographs donated by Borgny Ager. Includes photographs of Ole Olson of the Reform newspaper.
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| 10 | 12 | "Reform" and Fremad Publishing Co. clippings, 1917-1929  |
| 10 | 13 | "Normanden-Reform" lawsuit, 1920   |
| 10 | 14 | "Reform" discontinued, 1941  |
| 10 | 15 | "Skandinaven" discontinued, 1941   |
| 10 | 16 | Copies of Ager's "Amerika brev" to Folkestad, undated  |
| 10 | 17 | "Kvartalskrift" April 1913 issue and clippings, 1913   |
| 10 | 18 | Olav Kvisgaard articles about Ager, 1961   |
| 10 | 19 | Dorothy Skårdal article on Norwegian-American literature., 1981  |
| 10 | 20 | Christmas programs & Miscellaneous clippings about Ager, 1919-1981   |
| 10 | 21 | Ager Miscellaneous clippings, 1931-1982  |
| 11 | 1  | Copy of O.E. Rølvaag-Eugene F. Saxton letter, sent to Ager by Rølvaag, 1927  |
| 11 | 2  | W. Ager-O.E. Rølvaag correspondence, 1924-1931<br>Photocopies.   |
| 11 | 3a | O.E. Rølvaag's letters to Trygve Ager regarding the translation of "Their Father's God," 1929-1931   |
| 11 | 4  | Jennie Rølvaag and Waldemar Ager letters, 1932-1938  |
| 11 | 5  | Clippings about O.E. Rølvaag, 1927-1931  |
| 11 | 6  | Letters to Ager's children to Kilde, 1954-1975<br>Includes "Summary of notes from an interview with Eyvind Ager, May 13, 1975." (10 p., typescript).                         |
| 11 | 7  | Hildur Ager Nicolai letters and an essay, "The Passing of Waldemar Ager," 1977-1981  |
| 11 | 8  | Clarence Kilde articles, 1975-1976   |
| 11 | 9  | Letters to H. Koht, A. Garborg, Olav Midthun, 1909-1939<br>Originals at Oslo University.   |
| 11 | 10 | Materials received by Kilde from Doris Vogt-Eriksen, Nordmanns-Furbundet, in Norway, 1909-1929<br>Includes copies of book reviews and other articles regarding Ager.         |
| 11 | 11 | Article in Norway by and about Ager, 1900-1934   |
| 11 | 12 | Kilde's notes on Ager's papers, 1975-1984  |
| 11 | 13 | Student paper on Ager by Jean Ducat, 1972  |
| 11 | 14 | Øyvind T. Gulliksen article, 1993<br>"Heritage and Renewal: W.A.'s Theology," (Nordic Conference Papers, series 3, volumes 12-14, July 1993, pages 59-75d).                  |
| 11 | 15 | "Paa veien til smeltepotten (On the Way to the melting pot)," 1994<br>Translation by Harry T. Clevén. Madison, Wis., Prairie Oak Press, 1995. (in St. Olaf College Library). |
| 11 | 16 | Miscellaneous, 1907-1917   |



Includes Ager's "Den anden side" (Kvartalskrift, 1907); Ager's "Da Graagaasen trak mot syd" (Jul i Vesterheimen, 1917); Peer Strømme's article, "Symra" (1907). Added January 11, 2010 (folder 16A) handwritten addresses and notes including the Norwegian American Temperance Movement; May 17 celebration; Constitution Day;

- 12 Notes, drafts and materials used in preparation of Einar Haugen's "Immigrant Idealist: literary biography of Waldemar Ager, Norwegian American (NAHA, 1989), 19280-1930  
A file for nearly every chapter, often including photocopies of newspaper and periodical articles (many from Ager's papers), drafts, manuscript notes, etc. One file of photographs. NB: In St. Olaf Library collection: James P. Nelson. "The Problem of Cultural Identity in the Works of Ager, S. Johnson and Wist," Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Washington, 1990. See article on Ager in the new edition of "Norsk Biografisk Leksikon."
- 13 Books, 1894-1995
- 14 Books, 1910-1923

### Rokke Name index

Aasgaard, Johan Arnd.	Bavid, Amalia	Cousins, Marshall
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Rønning, Nils N.	Stoa, J. E.	Ullnæss, Sverre P. M.
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