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Political priming: a study of the North Dakota Nonpartisan League, William Langer, and newspapers effect on the vote return

Sarah Ann Link

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Political Priming:
A Study of the North Dakota
Nonpartisan League,
William Langer
and
Newspapers Effect on the Vote Return

by

Sarah Ann Link

A Thesis
Submitted to the University of North Dakota
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For Graduation with Honors

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Introduction

North Dakota politicians have always represented a very complex population. Traditionally, elected officials' constituencies have held a variety of political views. Those holding office at the national level may be of one political affiliation, while the majority of the representatives at the state level are of the opposite party. In large part, this is the result of a complicated economic base which demands the representation of both the farmer and the businessman coupled with the unique foundations of North Dakota's political parties.

The struggle between these two economic groups is best exemplified in the political struggle that began around 1915. During this time, the Nonpartisan League, a political party which was intended not to put forth its own candidates, but rather to endorse a "farmers' candidate" from other parties, was formed. This party initially held fairly conservative agenda, but over time its ideology became more liberal, and eventually it merged with the Democratic party to become the primary "liberal" party in North Dakota. This change in the ideological roots of the party created a system in which the Republican and Democratic parties held similar ideological stances. Specifically, the Democratic party held more conservative leanings relative to that of the national party. Because the stances of the two parties were similar, candidates were allowed rather fluid movement from party to party in the North Dakota political arena.

The unique political parties that existed in North Dakota during this era coupled with the limited number of media sources available to provide political information, sets

the stage for a unique opportunity for the study of political priming. Political priming is the process by which the media sets the terms by which political judgements and choices are made. The media does so by promoting certain aspects of the political arena while ignoring others, the media sets the terms by which political judgements and choices are made.¹ This priming is based on the idea that people do not pay attention to everything. Their attention is highly selective; people only notice those things that are of special consequence to them.² Because of this fundamental limitation, the impressions that people form on various topics tend to be based on very few ideas. During the early and mid nineteenth hundreds, the newspapers were especially influential in setting both the political agenda and determining what aspects of a candidate and his or her campaign would be actively publicized; thus newspapers had the potential to be very influential in political races by priming the public.

Currently political priming primarily takes place via the television. In 1979, Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder began conducting a study of the effects of television and political priming on the American electorate as related to presidential elections. During this study, participants were questioned about their views on policy issues. They were then asked to view a series of news segments that had been predisposed toward a specific policy or view of a policy. The participants were then interviewed again and the responses from the two surveys were compared.

¹Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, News That Matters, Television and American Opinion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 4.

² Iyengar and Kinder, 64.

Iyengar and Kinder's study found that television coverage influences not only the standards that the American public applies to presidential performance, but also the standards that they apply to the character of the president.³ Furthermore, it found that people typically prefer to use intuitive shortcuts and simple rules of thumb. Because of this, people typically find themselves reliant on the information that is the most accessible. In this case the information has been provided by the television media.⁴

Iyengar and Kinder's study was an attempt to study a political culture that is influenced by more than just the television media. This is a culture that has been influenced by thirty second political campaigns, sound bites, newspapers, and "informative" news programs like Sixty Minutes and Dateline. All of these influences are easily accessible to the mass public, and in most cases all of these sources have watered down the issues to parallel the ever-shortening attention span of the American public. These multiple sources of information coupled with numerous others make it very difficult to prove the theory of priming in today's media culture. However, in the period that will be examined by this study, the sources of political influence are greatly reduced by a lack of technology. This lack of technology resulted in a society in which newspapers were the primary media source for most voters.

The period being studied is also ideal because of the formation of a new party faction. Because the Nonpartisan League was just being formed during this period, limited information about it existed; and therefore, the populous was rather untainted

³ Ibid., 80.

⁴ Ibid., 64.

when it was exposed to the media's reporting of the League and its ideology. As a result, this period of political activity becomes one that is ripe for the study of political priming.

A History of the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota

North Dakota farmers had stood by watching their hard earned profits trickle into the pockets of the businessmen for long enough. After years of feeling cheated at every market point, from the grain combine, to the railroads, to the banks, they had had enough. They were ready to fight back. With more than seventy percent of the state's population rural and ready for action,⁵ any fight waged by this population was guaranteed to draw the attention of the politically powerful.

For years, North Dakota's rural population had been dominated by a tightly organized group that controlled both the grain and railroad interests. These men not only ruled their respective markets, but they also held a tight control on the political climate of the state, seeking to aid the majority of their constituents, the farmers, only when it served to further the interests of business.

These men maintained control primarily by controlling the grain market. The Upper Midwest produces some of the finest wheat in the world, and therefore it would reason that the producers ought to serve to profit from it. However, in this case, the majority of the farmers were barely able to feed their families and keep up on the interest on their debts. The profits instead seemed to be going to the infamous "middleman" who in this case was a combination of "line elevators, terminal elevators, commission houses,

⁵ Robert L. Morlan, Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League 1915-1922 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), 3.

grain brokers, millers, speculators, and so on.”⁶

Because there were no terminal markets in North Dakota, farmers were forced to sell their products through the Minnesota exchanges. These exchanges were controlled by the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce which was an association of the big grain trades, grain terminals, and other businesses associated with grain trade which completely dominated the Minneapolis exchange. This commission was responsible for setting the market price of grain, and therefore in a sense, the Chamber not only dominated grain prices, but it also prevented groups like cooperatives that might have endangered their power from participating.

Furthermore, the Chamber not only controlled prices, but it also controlled a majority of the county elevators. These companies had all agreed to an iron-clad price-fixing agreement which eliminated any element of competition at this level of the market.⁷ This price fixing might not have been so bad had the prices risen and fallen with the supply and demand of the market; but, as one might expect, the prices miraculously fell just as the farmer was ready to sell his crop and rose when the crop was in the hands of the dealer.⁸

To further the plight of the farmer, the system of grading grain was very arbitrary. At the county level, the grain was graded by the elevator operator after the operator had run an “experienced” hand through the grain, but it was often inaccurately or falsely

⁶ Ibid, 5.

⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁸ Ibid., 13.

graded. Unfortunately the farmer had no way to dispute the grading process and was therefore forced to take the loss.⁹ The low grading practice was further escalated by the elevators when they began to mix lower grade grains with higher grade grains. This allowed the elevators to further profit from the grading system. And, while it might not seem like that big of a deal to mix a little wheat, when one looks at the shipping records of the elevators, another story is told. For example, one record of a Duluth elevator showed that the elevator received 99,711.40 bushels of No. 1 Northern wheat and it somehow shipped out 196,288.30 bushels.¹⁰

Another complaint raised by the farmers concerned dockage. When the grain was purchased, it was the general practice to dock it so much per bushel for impurities, dirt and other seed, regardless of whether they were present. The terminal operator, then screened these impurities out and sold them back to the farmer as feed. As a result, farmers were not only penalized for impurities that may not have existed, but the elevators also failed to pay farmers for valuable by-products of the grain.¹¹

Finally, the elevators were infamous for cheating the farmer when weighing the grain. The most common method was to simply use false weights when weighing in the grain. While the farmers were convinced that this practice was taking place, because there were no weight inspectors until 1919, the farmers were unable to challenge this practice. A second method of cheating the farmers when weighing the grain was to weigh

⁹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

¹¹ Ibid., 9.

the grain near the top of the elevator where a powerful suction fan was in place. It was said that this fan was to remove impurities like dirt and to keep the elevator dust free. However, the fan was also capable of removing a good quantity of wheat. Again these practices may not seem too terrible until one looks at the elevators records. One Minnesota elevator recorded shipping out over 51,000 bushels of grain more than it recorded receiving.¹² Such discrepancies resulted in the loss of thousands of dollars to the farmers.

The "dirty" practices of the elevators and the grain exchange were coupled with an equally dirty practice within the banking industry. Because a great many farmers lived on credit year round, the average North Dakota farmer was highly dependant on the local banker. Many of the farmers had acquired heavy mortgages and other start up fees which they had yet to pay off. Usury laws of North Dakota made it illegal for the banks to charge more than ten percent interest on farm loans. However, bankers commonly set the interest rate at the highest rate that the market would bare, commonly twenty-five to fifty percent. The farmer did hold some recourse in that he could refuse to pay the usurious rates and sue to recover twice the illegal interest paid. However, doing so would be somewhat like shooting oneself in the foot as it almost guaranteed a black-balling from future loans at nearly every bank.¹³

The aforementioned problems created a climate in which the citizens were ripe for organization and political action. This organization was to come in the form of A.C.

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ Ibid., 17-18.

Townley and eventually the Nonpartisan League. Townley saw North Dakota's answer in a new political party based not on an alliance to a general set of principles, but rather one in which each member had a definite stake in its success. Townley saw the socialist base, which was more strongly organized in North Dakota than in any other state, as having possibilities for the foundation of his new party. He felt the moderate platform which favored "state rural credit programs, state-owned mills and elevators, state insurance against diseases of plants and animals and against calamities and unemployment insurance for labor" was the ideal base for his new political party.¹⁴

Because of the unique, political culture that existed in North Dakota Townley recognized that his new party would have to be formed in a unique manner. He approached the Socialist party of North Dakota in an attempt to initiate a political program for non-Socialists who favored the platform of the party, but did not wish to join the party. The proposal was set such that farmers would pledge to vote and work for the candidates who supported the program. In addition, the farmers would pay one dollar a month to support the educational and campaign programs associated with the candidates. This "splinter" group was an instant success; however, at the January 1915 state convention the Socialist party voted to discontinue the program.¹⁵

Determined not to let his dream of a new political party die, Townley decided to form a Nonpartisan League that would attempt to control the primaries of one or both of the major parties, and therefore the candidates nominated. Townley quietly began to

¹⁴ Ibid., 22-23.

¹⁵ Ibid., 24.

express his ideas to a select few including A.E. Bowen and Fred B. Wood, both of whom would become soldiers in the Townley army. Once Townley had established a core group of supporters he had to bring his proposal to the masses. He would not, however, make the mistake of asking the farmers to elect him directly. He would instead propose a scheme that would, in time, capture the entire state government in an effort to reach the League's goals.

The goals of the Nonpartisan League, which were nearly identical to those of the previous group organized by the socialist party, included: "state ownership of terminal elevators, flour mills, packing houses and cold-storage plants, state inspection of grain and grain dockage, exemption of farm improvements from taxation, state hail insurance on the acreage tax basis and rural credit banks operated at cost." All of these things were espoused in the League's pledge and platform and were in no uncertain terms to be at the center of all of the League's political actions.¹⁶

In bringing this new party to the farmers, Townley and his associates felt that a one-on-one approach would be the most effective. On the first day of recruitment, Townley and Wood were able to contact nine farmers. During this first recruitment trip, Wood's Ford had been used for travel, but gas quickly ran out, and Townley realized the need for the organization to own and maintain its own transportation. In order to remedy this problem, Townley obtained the use of three Fords and a supply of gasoline by securing emergency notes from Wood and several neighbors. Using the Ford campaign, Townley was able to canvas the state, and the memberships began to roll in. One

¹⁶ Ibid., 26.

problem encountered by the recruiters was a lack of funds for membership dues. Often times the farmers were scratching to make ends meet as it was, and they were unable to spare the nine dollar membership dues. This dilemma resulted in a practice that was not new, but which the League later became famous for. This was the practice of post-dated checks for membership dues that were payable in October when the harvest was in.¹⁷

In large part, the Nonpartisan League was founded on a disassociation from the old party lines. The League accepted membership from members of all parties, being interested only in their willingness to support the candidates who were endorsed by the League. The only major difference between the League and the major parties was that the League maintained that it would not become involved in the realm of national politics.¹⁸ The leadership professed that the issues the party was concerned with were only issues relevant at the state level. However, some time later the party would become involved in politics at the state level in other states and it would contemplate involvement at the national level.

During its initial organization stages, the League and its organization was kept somewhat of a secret. When it did explode onto the political scene, the League was one of the most striking attempts to actually use the primary system seen to date. The League proposed to use this medium to gain control of the Republican party, the majority party of the state, in an effort to force it to truly reflect the desires of the majority of the voters.

Throughout this entire process, one of the most important messages professed

¹⁷ Ibid., 27-28.

¹⁸ Ibid., 32-33.

by the organization was that of organization. The leadership continually expressed to its membership that the League must remain organized if it were to lay the blame for the problems that the farmers were experiencing were it truly belonged, at the feet of "Big Business."

Townley felt that one of the most important elements for insuring that the membership remained focused and informed was the press. In an effort to ensure that the press was on his side, Townley established the *Nonpartisan Leader* in September of 1915. The *Leader*, as it would later become known, served three main purposes. It provided a means of providing the membership with direct news and information, it allowed the leaders to guide the actions of the members, and it provided a method for the leadership to combat the opposition that quickly arose from the primary parties.¹⁹

In response to articles run in the *Leader*, almost all of the city dailies and locals began to run articles in opposition to the League. However, these attacks did not attempt to deny the problems that had brought about the League, nor did they propose any solutions.²⁰ Instead, articles focused primarily on the socialistic base of the League.²¹ This type of attack was especially effective at this time as the United States was becoming critical of the socialistic regime of Germany, and it would continue to be effective later on as the country became involved in the World War.

Once the organization had been established, Townley knew that the farmers had to

¹⁹ Ibid., 36-37.

²⁰ Ibid., 42.

²¹ Ibid., 39.

become politically informed. However, he was uncertain if the farmers themselves could be organized in a local meeting. Because of this uncertainty, he scheduled the first farmer's meeting in a small remote town. When the appointed time for the meeting to start approached, only a few people were present. Never-the-less, Townley began to speak to those present. Slowly, farmers began to filter into the room and sit near the back of the room until the room was full. The next issue of the *Leader* carried a story professing the success of the meeting, and from that time on a League farmers' meeting could fill a hall almost anywhere in the state.²²

While the League had no intention of running its own candidates for office, it was necessary for it to establish how it would choose its "candidates." For the League, the most obvious method of handling the endorsements was a convention. It was suggested that each district select a delegate to attend the state convention. At that time, state candidates would be chosen. The first League convention was held in Fargo on March 29 and 30, 1916, and it was a huge success.²³

The League's selection of candidates at the convention was one which was somewhat unique to the party. At the convention, all of the candidates names were written on a blackboard, and then the merits and downfalls of each candidate were discussed. After the debate about the candidates, a vote was taken by the convention at-large. After the vote, those candidates receiving the largest number of votes remained on the blackboard ballot, and another vote was taken. This process of eliminating candidates

²² Ibid., 45.

²³ Ibid., 50-51.

continued until the appropriate number of candidates remained.²⁴

At the convention, delegates selected a multi-party (Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists) ticket headed by Republican Lynn Frazier for governor. Throughout the campaign season, a few of the opposition papers found it necessary to attack the League candidates personally; however, the majority of the papers recognized the futility of this. Therefore, they focused their attacks on the party leaders, charging them with subversion of funds, "strong arming" candidate selection, and seeking to control candidates with "secret pledges."²⁵

In response to the medias attacks, the League printed a copy of its pledge. The League also published the results of a private audit performed on its books. And finally the *Leader* published reports from those attending the state convention attesting to the democratic process of the convention.²⁶ Beyond the profession of its innocence, the League also worked to engage the support of the organized labor in its fight. With the support of a second group, several of the major newspapers endorsed the League program and its candidates.

This new found support, coupled with the existing support of the farmers proved to be enough to help Fraizer win the Republican primary.²⁷ While victory in the primaries was important, it did not give the League influence that it desired. What was more

²⁴ Ibid. 52.

²⁵ Ibid., 55-56.

²⁶ Ibid., 56-57.

²⁷ Ibid., 75.

important was a victory in the general election. With this in mind, the party set out on a series of speaking engagements in various communities. A majority of the speaking responsibility was shouldered by Townley and Fraizer, with other party leaders filling in when they were unable to make it. In order to ensure that the speeches would be well attended they chose all day farmers picnics as their forum. These picnics provided an incentive for the farmers to attend; however, organizers quickly learned that the farmers were really attending to hear the political speeches.

The Republican party's leadership was not going to stand idly by and allow their party to be overtaken by this new party. In an act of retaliation, the party began to encourage its members to cast their gubernatorial votes for Usher Burdick. The leadership also endorsed other candidates for other state offices. Burdick accepted the "nomination" but his campaign made it evident that his heart was not in the election. With few exceptions, the traditional Republican newspapers refused to support those candidates endorsed by the League. Instead they chose to cover only national politics or to refrain from any editorializing of the races, instead sticking to straight reporting.²⁸ Despite the efforts of the Republican party, the League succeeded in electing Lynn Fraizer governor in 1916 along with nearly every League candidate endorsed for state office. Great success was also achieved within the legislature, with the League securing 81 of 113 seats in the House and 18 of 25 (seats up for election) seats in the Senate.²⁹

During this first term in power, the League worked hard to push its political

²⁸ Ibid., 86.

²⁹ Ibid., 89.

agenda. The composition of the legislature would make it seem that the League would be able to pass legislation that was favorable to its agenda in the House. However, because the League did not have control of the Senate, its ability to pass legislation within the upper house depended upon how many of the previously seated senators could be convinced to follow the League platform. Despite the potential problems the League faced passing legislation, it did succeed in passing several pieces of important legislation. Some of this legislation included a state grain grading system, exemption of farm improvements from taxation, complete women's suffrage, state bank deposit guarantee laws, legislation which forbid discriminatory long and short haul rates by railroads, and state aids for rural education while continuing to support higher education.³⁰

Even with the success that was realized by the fifteenth legislative assembly, the papers that opposed the League were still skeptical. Many of the papers espoused that the League elected legislators were controlled by the "Czar Townley." The papers talked about how the League membership would caucus each evening to discuss how the legislators should vote on the measures that would come before them the next day. And, while it was true that the League leadership was highly influential in determining how the legislators would vote, the caucuses were also a place of discussion and debate among its members.³¹

Following this legislative session, the League would continue to be highly influential in North Dakota politics. Initially it maintained its "conservative" Republican

³⁰ Ibid., 106.

³¹ Ibid., 92-97.

roots, but in the 1930's the League's political ideology began to move towards that of the Democratic party and eventually in 1956 the League merged the Democratic party to become the primary liberal party in North Dakota. The League made several attempt to expand its influence to other states; however, the political climate of the other states was never quite right for the League to take root.³²

³² The information found in this section is also confirmed by Women on the Move by Pearl Andre, and Political Strife in North Dakota From 1920 - 1932 by E.C. Blackory.

William Langer's Political History

William Langer's political career began in 1914 with a run for county attorney of Morton County. During this campaign, the issues were highly dependant on the ethnicity of the candidates. Playing on his German heritage, Langer was able to secure his first victory. While serving as county attorney, Langer took aggressive stances on several controversial issues including illegal liquor establishments and the enforcement of school attendance. Langer's aggressive stances caused state leaders of the Nonpartisan League to notice him, and he was considered as a candidate for higher office.³³

During the 1916 election term, Langer accepted the Nonpartisan League's endorsement for the office of state attorney general. This endorsement afforded Langer new campaign resources; however, Langer also worked to establish his own network of political supporters, largely based on his German heritage. These networks, coupled with the resources available to Langer as a result of his association with the Nonpartisan League proved to be enough to secure the office.³⁴

Following his campaign for state attorney general in 1916, Langer ran for re-election in 1918. During this term, he became more involved in the Nonpartisan League, and the League became the most prominent party in the state. Initially Langer proved to be an ordinate supporter of all of the League's programs including the establishment of

³³ Theodore B. Pedeliski, "The German-Russian Ethnic Factor in William Langer's Campaigns, 1914-1940," North Dakota History, Journal of the Northern Plains, 64 (Winter 1997): 3.

³⁴ Ibid., 5.

state enterprises to rectify the problems faced by the farmers.³⁵

Langer's harmonious relationship with the League was to be short lived. In 1919, his relationship the League leader A.C. Townley soured, and Langer along with several other state officers who had been elected under the League's endorsement defected from the League. Langer and his cohorts then joined the Independent Voters Association, an anti-League association. Within this context, Langer worked to encourage German counties to vote against many of the League programs including education bills and the Bank of North Dakota.³⁶

Langer's political popularity would really be put to the test in the 1920 election, when he announced his candidacy for governor. He claimed to be running as a Progressive Republican, and he received the endorsement the Independent Voters Association. This shift in political association allotted Langer extensive resources including the support of the most wealthy political organization in the state. During this campaign, Langer once again called upon the support of the German population and he turned to the Catholic church for support. The support that Langer attempted to rally was not enough, and even with the endorsement of the Independent Voters Association, Langer failed to secure the Progressive Republican's nomination for governor.³⁷

Following his defeat in the quest for the office of governor, Langer returned to the private practice of law where he remained out of the political eye for sometime. Eight

³⁵ Ibid., 6.

³⁶ Ibid., 6-7.

³⁷ Ibid., 7-8.

years later, Langer was jokingly nominated for the office of state attorney general by the Nonpartisan League. Although Langer adamantly denied that he was seeking the office, ten days later at the Nonpartisan League's state convention, several of Langer's friends were able to convince League leadership that "Langer had seen the error of his ways and he wishes to return. His defection from the League was a misstep for which he has been penalized enough." While Langer did succeed in securing the League nomination for attorney general, his previous stance on illegal liquor establishments worked against him in this era of the revocation of prohibition. Langer was defeated in his quest for his former office by the Independent Voters Association candidate.³⁸

Although Langer had now returned to the League, his defeat in the 1928 election seemed to end any further political ambitions held by Langer. He did, however, busy himself in raising substantial funds to support the start up of a League newspaper. In addition, Langer proved his commitment to supporting the candidate that best exemplified the philosophy of the League by financially supporting the Progressive Republicans when it was to his tactical advantage, while publicly supporting Democratic candidates for both attorney general and U.S. Senate in 1930.³⁹

As a result of his truly nonpartisan viewpoint, the period of 1928-1930 found Langer associated with a large number of political groups including "the Nonpartisan League, the Progressive Republicans, the Democrats, the temperance organizations and a variety of German organizations." This diverse group of political acquaintances gave

³⁸ Ibid., 10-11.

³⁹ Ibid., 11.

Langer a large base to call upon when his political ambitions began to surface again. These ambitions were voiced in Langer's second run for North Dakota governor. At the 1932 state Nonpartisan convention, Langer received the party's nomination for governor; and, with the support of a highly diversified political base, Langer was able to secure the Republican nomination for governor and the November general election for governor.

Langer's first term as governor ran relatively smoothly, and while he had some legal difficulties during the initial months of his second term, it was about as eventful as any other incumbent governor's second term. Like those before him, he faced criticisms from opposition in an attempt to discredit him, but for the most part these charges did not affect his political popularity.⁴⁰

Two years after election to his second term as governor, Langer set his sights on a U.S. Senate seat. Langer lost to League endorsed incumbent Gerald P. Nye during the 1938 primary; but, he felt that the loss was narrow enough that he could still win the general election if he was able to maintain his base. While Langer was not only able to maintain his base from the primary, but to increase it by nearly seven thousand votes, he was not able to match the increase of forty thousand votes posted by his opponent, Nye.⁴¹

Following his defeat in the senatorial race, Langer again declared that he was uninterested in running for public office. However, when he was nominated by the Nonpartisan League for governor in 1942, he did not object too much. Unfortunately Langer fell ill during the primary campaign, and was forced to campaign almost solely

⁴⁰ Ibid., 15-16.

⁴¹ Ibid., 17.

through handwritten correspondence. In this race, it turned out to be enough. During the general election campaign, Langer put forth an all out campaign for office and was able to squeak out a victory, defeating his nearest opponent by only 3.1 percent of the vote.⁴²

Langer continued to be politically active in North Dakota for sometime, going on to win election to a seat in the U.S. Senate. During this time he found himself actively involved in a Nonpartisan League that was undergoing a split. There were many issues surrounding the potential League split. One of the issues was an effort to split the conservatives from the liberal, with those who were liberal maintaining their League identification. Within this split, Langer skillfully restrained from committing himself until the fight had all but subsided in 1956.⁴³

While Langer's political affiliations varied greatly throughout his political career, one thing always remained true, his commitment to the farmers. His affiliation with the League was questionable at time, but he always returned to the party that espoused this philosophy in large part as a result of a deeply rooted belief in the farmers and their rights.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., 18-19.

⁴³ Lloyd B. Omdahl, Insurgents (Brainerd, Minnesota: Lakeland Color Press, 1961), 247.

⁴⁴ The Information found in this section is also confirmed by The Dakota Maverick: The Political Life of William Langer, Also Known As Wild Bill by Agnes Green and William Langer: The Progressive Attorney General by Elaine Weber.

Description of the Study

In an attempt to prove that the newspapers' attitudes towards a candidate and the issues that he or she associates him or herself with affected the voters in the early and mid nineteen hundreds, two elections of the same candidate were examined. The first election examined was William Langer's bid for the office of North Dakota Attorney General in 1918. During this election Langer was an active member of the Nonpartisan League, but he was not closely associated with the League and its founders. In addition, the League, while strong, had yet to experience a long run of success in North Dakota politics. The second election examined was Langer's run for North Dakota governor in 1932. By this time the League had been able to capture the North Dakota state government several times in addition to limited success in other states; and, while he was associated with several other groups, Langer's association with the League was well known.

This study will focus on the general elections in which there were a limited number of candidates. While often times the majority of the debate about a candidate took place during the primary elections, the newspapers' coverage of the primary elections was very limited. Furthermore, an attempt to study the primary elections would have been complicated by the increased number of candidates as that would have most likely decreased the amount of political coverage allotted to each candidate. Finally, the increased number of candidates also meant that there were a number of regional candidates. An attempt to study all of these candidates on a statewide level would be nearly impossible.

However, even with these complications, it is important to note that the upcoming table 1 would have looked slightly different had the primary elections been examined, as Langer lost the primary elections in some counties that had high Langer vote returns in the general election. This might be explained by a split in the Republican party during the primary election.

In an effort to determine whether the newspapers' coverage of these two elections was influential or not, the state voting return for the two elections was examined. The county voting returns as reported in the Abstract of Votes were then examined and those counties where Langer's vote deviated from the state wide return by a percentage greater than ten were separated from those that fell along lines similar to the state returns. Within the counties that met the ten percent threshold (those that deviated by a percent greater than ten) all of the newspapers available from the North Dakota historical society were examined from September 1 through coverage of the election returns (in some cases this resulted in looking as much as a week past the election date). Articles found in the paper during this period of time that address William Langer, the Nonpartisan League or issues that were closely related to the League were then classified as to their attitude toward the Nonpartisan League, their attitude toward William Langer, whether the newspapers associated Langer with the League or not, and whether or not League and/or Langer stories appeared on the front page.

In classifying the newspapers attitudes towards the League, articles were coded positive, neutral or negative. In order for an article to be coded positive it had to express support for the League and/or a program that it supported. An example of this support

can be found in *The Courier News* on October 2, 1918. The caption of this article reads "U.S. Government to Tell People of Europe About Nonpartisan League," and the article then explain how exposing European nations to the Nonpartisan League will serve to show them the positive aspects of a government "of, for and by the people."⁴⁵

Those articles in which the papers took no stand either way, but rather simply reported the news of the League were coded neutral. The most prominent examples of such articles were found in the reporting of election results immediately following the election and in the reporting of upcoming League activities.

Those articles that were coded anti-League address the League and the issues that it supported in a negative manner. These articles primarily focused on calling the League and its members socialists, and later on attacking the economic development programs like the State Bank and the State Mill and Elevator that were promoted by the League. One of the most blatant example of this type of negative reporting was found in the *Napoleon Homestead's* coverage of the 1918 election. The headline in reporting the voting return read "Socialists Carry North Dakota," a remark that clearly holds negative connotations. The article then goes on to explain that under the cover of the Farmers' Nonpartisan League the Reds had succeeded in capturing North Dakota.⁴⁶

In classifying the newspapers attitudes toward William Langer the articles were classified as either positive, neutral or negative in much the same manner that the articles

⁴⁵ V.E. Michel, "U.S. Government to Tell People of Europe About Nonpartisan League," *The Courier News*, 2 October 1918, 1.

⁴⁶ "Socialists Carry North Dakota," *Napoleon Homestead*, 11 November 1918, 1.

were classified pertaining to the League. In order for an article to be coded positive within this category it had to express support for Langer and/or programs that he was highly associated with. An example of an article that would have received a positive rating can be found in the *Benson County Farmers Press's* coverage Langer's 1932 campaign rally in Maddock. The title of the article states "Langer Talks to 600 People With Genuine Interest." The article goes on to explain how Langer captivated the audience with his speech and his genuine concern for the farmer.⁴⁷

An article that would be classified as a Langer neutral article would be one in which the paper expressed neither a positive or a negative attitude toward the candidate. Like the League/anti-League categorization, article found in this category were primarily those reporting the election results, those alerting the public to Langer appearances, and those reporting on who the League had endorsed as candidates.

The final classification within the Langer category is that of negative. As with this classification within the League category, those article that express disapproval of or spoke negatively about Langer were coded negative. A prime example of this is found on the front page editorial of the *Gascoyne News*. The editorial is headline "Langer Ideas -- Tax," and it then goes on to describe Langer as a "pseudo Republican candidate for governor" and "a regular human vacuum cleaner."⁴⁸ Clearly such sentiments are not meant to be supportive of Langer's bid for the governorship.

⁴⁷ "Langer Talks to 600 People With Genuine Interest," Benson County Farmers Press, 16 September 1932, 1.

⁴⁸ "Langer Ideas -- Tax," Gascoyne News, 15 October 1932, 1.

While the first two categories contained a certain degree of subjectivity (in that one person might code an article neutral while another might feel that it held positive or negative sediments), the final two are fairly clear cut (the coding of these articles does not raise any questions). Within the classification of association, the articles were categorized as to whether they associated William Langer with the League or not. Those article that associated Langer with the League were coded positive and those that failed to associate him with the League were coded negative. Within the classification of front page, those article that were located on the front page of the paper were coded positive and those that were located else where in the paper were coded negative.

In examining the newspapers from this time period several difficulties were encountered. The primary difficulty found during the 1918 period was World War I. Because the war was coming to a climax during the same period of the election, a lot of coverage that would have otherwise been devoted to the election was devoted to the war effort. The declaration of peace also happened to coincide with the announcement of the election results and therefore the election results most likely did not receive the coverage that they otherwise would have. To a lesser degree, the influenza epidemic also affected the amount of political coverage found during the 1918 election.

The 1932 election examined found itself untouched by major events; however, because of Langer's heavy reliance upon his German heritage there were often article printed about him in German newspapers.⁴⁹ It was impossible to examine these articles as they are not available in English.

⁴⁹ Pedeliski, 3-6.

The Study and Its Results

The following table depicts the counties that exhibited a deviation from the state returns of more than ten percent. The table also shows the percentage that the counties' returns varied from the state returns.

Table 1

Deviation of Voting Returns by County⁵⁰

	High Deviation	Low Deviation
1918 Election	Grant (+12.7) Mercer (+11) Kidder (+13.7) Mountrail (+13.8) Logan (+16.5) Oliver (+12.9) McIntosh (+16.3) Renville (+15.7) McKenzie (+12.2) Sheridan(+17.8)	Cass (-16.8) Pembina (-15.8) Cavalier (-14.3) Stark (-12) Golden Valley (-15.3) Walsh (-13.2) Grand Forks (-17.6)
1932 Election	Adams (+17.8) McIntosh (+17.9) Benson (+13.6) McKenzie (+14) Bowman (+18) McLean (+ 10.7) Divide (+18) Mercer (+12.7) Eddy (+15.8) Oliver (+17.6) Hettinger (+11.4) Sheridan (+15.9) Kidder (+13.6) Sioux (+18.1) Logan (+11.1) Slope (+15)	Cass (-12.1) Stark (-10.2) Grand Forks (-12.6) Stutsman (-10.7) Ramsey (-14.1) Walsh (-30.6)

As the table indicates, the majority of the counties that had Langer voting returns that were lower than the state average were located in the eastern part of the state. In the 1918 election, the only counties that fail to meet this description are Golden Valley and

⁵⁰ The raw data for this table can be found in Appendix A.

Stark. Similarly, in the 1932 election, only one county, Stark, is not in the eastern part of the state. This distribution of the counties that reported low Langer returns might be a result of the higher proportion of industrial activity found in this part of the state and a depressed number of farmers in the area. This might also be a result of having two highly influential newspapers, the Fargo Forum and the Grand Forks Herald, which had very negative attitudes towards the Nonpartisan League, its programs, and its candidates.

The next table illustrates the results of the study from the 1918 election. All of the information has been translated into percentage of positive results. This allows the information to be more easily compared. The coding of positive, neutral or negative indicates whether percentage was greater than fifty percent, fifty percent or less than fifty percent respectively. The percentage of articles with positive results is indicated in parentheses. This percentage is followed by the number of positive articles and the total number of articles examined.

Table 2

1918 Study Results From Counties With High Langer Vote⁵¹

County	League Categorization	Langer Categorization	Association	Front Page
Grant	Negative (0 % - 0/5)	Negative (0% - 0/5)	Negative (20% - 1/5)	Positive (60% - 3/5)
Kidder	Negative (0% - 0/2)	Neutral (50% - 1/2)	Negative (0% - 0/2)	Neutral (50% - 1/2)

⁵¹The raw data for this table can be found in Appendix B.

Logan	Neutral (50% - 1/2)	Negative (0% - 0/2)	Negative (0% - 0/2)	Positive (100% 2/2)
McIntosh	No Articles Available	No Articles Available	No Articles Available	No Articles Available
McKenzie	Positive (100% - 3/3)	Negative (0% - 0/3)	Negative (0% - 0/3)	Positive (67% - 2/3)
Mercer	Negative (43% - 3/7)	Negative (0% - 0/7)	Negative (0% - 0/7)	Positive (57% - 4/7)
Mountrail	Positive (74% - 14/19)	Negative (0% - 0/19)	Negative (0% - 0/19)	Negative (32% - 6/19)
Oliver	Negative (0% - 0/2)	Negative (0% - 0/2)	Neutral (50 - 1/2)	Positive (100% - 2/2)
Renville	Neutral (50% - 5/10)	Negative (0% - 0/10)	Negative (0% - 0/10)	Positive (90% - 9/10)
Sheridan	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)

The above table illustrates the relationship between the Langer vote in counties the had a highest Langer percentage, and how the newspapers treated the League and Langer as well as whether Langer was associated with the League and whether the coverage was found on the front page or not.

In analyzing how the newspapers coverage of how the League was associated with the vote return for Langer, it would seem that negative coverage of the League did not affect the voters' perception of Langer. This may be explained by the low percentage of articles that associated Langer with the Nonpartisan League.

It would also seem that the newspapers coverage of Langer as a candidate did not have a large impact on the voting return as none of the counties that had higher than

average Langer returns also had greater than fifty percent of the articles expressing positive sentiments about Langer. One of the problems with this analysis is that because Langer was running for a state office that was not highly contested, there was a limited amount of coverage of his campaign.

Finally, it is interesting to note that in all but two of the counties exhibiting a high Langer return, the front page coverage of the League and/or Langer's candidacy was greater than fifty percent of the newspapers. This would seem to indicate that front page coverage allotted to the League and Langer may be associated with the amount of influence that the articles had. This information may indicate that the location of the article has more influence on the voter than the content of the article does.

Another factor that skews the results is that some of the articles that were coded mentioned only the League or only Langer. As a result, it was impossible to ascertain the articles attitude toward the unmentioned party. Because of this, it was necessary to classify those articles as neutral. These neutral classification resulted in a larger sample group than would have existed had only those articles mentioning the League been classified. The larger sample group served to skew the results of the study somewhat. This is a problem that will be exhibited throughout the remaining analysis of the data.

Table 3

1932 Study Results From Counties With High Langer Vote⁵²

County	League Categorization	Langer Categorization	Association	Front Page
Adams	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)
Benson	Negative (28% - 2/7)	Positive (71% - 5/7)	Negative (43% - 3/7)	Positive (100% - 7/7)
Bowman	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Negative (25% - 1/4)	Positive (75% - 3/4)	Neutral (50 - 2/4)
Divide	Negative (43% - 3/7)	Positive (86% - 6/7)	Negative (43% - 3/7)	Positive (100% - 7/7)
Eddy	Negative (0% - 0/5)	Positive (60% - 3/5)	Negative (0% - 0/5)	Positive (80% - 4/5)
Hettinger	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Negative (25% - 1/4)	Neutral (50% - 2/4)	Positive (75% - 3/4)
Kidder	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Neutral (50% - 2/4)	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Neutral (50% - 2/4)
Logan	Neutral (50% - 1/2)	Positive (100% - 2/2)	Positive (100% - 2/2)	Positive (100% - 2/2)
McIntosh	No Articles Available	No Articles Available	No Articles Available	No Articles Available
McKenzie	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)
McLean	Negative (20% - 2/10)	Neutral (50% - 5/10)	Negative (30% - 3/10)	Positive (100% - 10/10)
Mercer	Negative (29% - 2/7)	Positive (86% - 6/7)	Negative (29% - 2/7)	Positive (100% - 7/7)
Oliver	Negative (25% - 1/4)	Neutral (50% - 2/4)	Negative (25% - 1/4)	Positive (75% - 3/4)

⁵²The raw data for this table can be found in Appendix B.

Sheridan	Neutral (50% - 2/4)	Neutral (50% - 2/4)	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Positive (100% - 4/4)
Sioux	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)
Slope	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)

Like table 2, table 3 illustrates the relationship between the Langer vote in counties and his above average statewide vote, and how the newspapers treated the League and Langer as well as whether Langer was associated with the League and whether the coverage was found on the front page or not for the 1932 election.

It would seem that the newspapers coverage of Langer as a candidate did have an impact on the voting return during the 1932 election as only four of the counties that had higher than average Langer returns also had less than fifty percent of the articles expressing negative sentiments about Langer. It is highly likely that these results vary from those of the 1918 election because of the varying degree of exposure that the public has to the office (state attorney general versus governor) that Langer was running for.

Finally, it is interesting to note that in the 1932 election, in all but two of the counties exhibiting a high Langer vote, the front page coverage of the League and/or Langer's candidacy was greater than fifty percent. Again, this would seem to indicate that the amount of stories receiving front page coverage for the League and Langer did affect the amount of influence that the articles had.

In analyzing how the newspapers coverage of the Leagues affected the vote return for Langer in 1932, it would again seem that negative coverage of the League did not affect the voters' perception of Langer. There were a greater number of counties (four out

of ten verses eleven out of sixteen) that reported less than fifty percent of the articles with positive League reporting in the 1932 election. However, in the 1932 election, the positive coverage of Langer increased from no counties reporting greater than fifty percent of the articles with positive Langer sentiments in 1918 to seven of eleven counties in 1932. Finally, there seemed to be an increase in the percentage of articles that appeared on the front page of the newspaper in the 1932 election.

Table 4

1918 Results From Counties With Low Langer Vote⁵³

County	League Categorization	Langer Categorization	Association	Front Page
Cass	Negative (22% - 9/41)	Negative (2% - 1/41)	Negative (7% - 3/41)	Negative (40% - 6/41)
Cavalier	Negative (25% - 3/12)	Negative (0% - 0/12)	Negative (17% - 2/12)	Negative (25% - 3/12)
Golden Valley	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)
Grand Forks	Negative (13% - 7/52)	Negative (4% - 2/52)	Negative (8% - 4/52)	Negative (22% - 11/52)
Pembina	Negative (0% - 0/7)	Negative (0% - 0/7)	Negative (0% - 0/7)	Positive (71% - 5/7)
Stark	Negative (23% - 3/13)	Negative (8% - 1/13)	Negative (8% - 1/13)	Positive (54% - 7/13)
Walsh	Negative (25% - 3/12)	Negative (8% - 1/12)	Negative (8% - 1/12)	Neutral (50% - 6/12)

This next table illustrates the relationship between the Langer voting return

⁵³The raw data for this table can be found in Appendix B.

in counties with a low Langer vote and the way that the newspapers treated both the Nonpartisan League and William Langer. The table also depicts whether the papers associated Langer with the League or not as well as whether the League and/or Langer were allotted front page coverage or not.

In analyzing this data, it would appear that the newspapers were fairly successful in discouraging readers from voting for Langer by putting the League in a negative light. However, because the percentage of articles that associated Langer and the League is very low, it is possible that the voters did not associate the negative stories about the League with the Langer campaign. This is especially likely in the 1918 election because at that time Langer was not very well known, and therefore his political affiliation was not as well known. Because of this, it is unlikely that this had as much of an effect as an analysis of the first column of table 4 would indicate.

The negative portrayal of Langer in the papers would seem to be a better indicator of the weight of negative news coverage. In this case, the results seem to indicate that there is a relationship between the amount of negative coverage of the candidate and the voting returns. It may be that negative portrayals of a candidate and his or her party are more important and influential than positive associations.

Finally, the percentage of articles studied that appeared on the front page showed mixed results. While there was less front page coverage in those counties that exhibited a low vote return for Langer than there was in those exhibiting a high vote turnout, there were still counties that exhibited a fairly high percentage of articles located on the front page.

Table 5

1932 Results From Counties With Low Langer Vote⁵⁴

County	League Categorization	Langer Categorization	Association	Front Page
Cass	Negative (14% - 3/22)	Negative (27% - 6/22)	Negative (36% - 8/14)	Negative (36% - 8/14)
Grand Forks	Negative (15% - 5/33)	Negative (18% - 6/33)	Negative (39% - 9/33)	Positive (51% - 17/33)
Ramsey	Negative (0% - 0/6)	Negative (0% - 0/6)	Negative (17% - 1/6)	Positive (83% - 5/6)
Stark	Positive (100% - 1/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Negative (0% - 0/1)	Positive (100% - 1/1)
Stutsman	Negative (23% - 5/21)	Negative (43% - 9/21)	Negative (16% - 3/21)	Positive (84% - 3/21)
Walsh	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Negative (0% - 0/4)	Positive (75% - 3/4)

Like results from the 1918 election, the 1932 election would seem to indicate that the newspapers were fairly successful in swaying the voters away from the Langer camp both with a negative portrayal of the League and Langer. It would also seem that the high percentage of article located on the front page did not significantly increase the Langer vote in these counties.

The primary difference between the 1918 and 1932 elections was the number of times that the newspapers associated the League and Langer. The increased number of associations increases the importance of the newspapers' attitude towards the League. The increased association is very likely a result of an increase in both League and Langer

⁵⁴The raw data for this table can be found in Appendix B.

exposure.

It would then seem from the evidence presented that the newspapers were moderately successful in influencing the vote of its readers. The strongest influence seemed to be in those counties that voted against Langer and League policies. It is highly likely that the influence of political priming would have been more strongly exhibited if the circulation of the papers could have been used to weight the influence of each of the articles. The influence of the newspapers might have also been more strongly exhibited if the circulation of the *Leader* could have been determined and weighed as an influence. Finally, the skewing of the results as a result of the neutral classification served to dilute the affects of priming on the electorate. When all of these factors are taken into consideration, the results of the study appear to have more weight in supporting the original hypothesis that the newspapers were highly influential in the early and mid nineteen hundreds.

While there are many factors that influenced the Langer campaigns in 1918 and 1932, the newspapers were a highly effective way for those wishing to oppose Langer. Specifically they were highly effective in those areas in which the League and later the Democratic party did not have a stronghold. While it is impossible to comprehensively study the influence of the newspapers because of a lack of information available about newspaper circulation, the available information would lead one to believe that in the early and mid-nineteen hundreds, the newspapers were highly influential in priming the public.

The newspapers and the news media in general continue to be highly influential in

election outcomes. These information sources may be influential through their editorials, their coverage of lack of coverage of the candidate and his or her activities as well as with the placement of ads and articles relating to the candidate and the party.

Appendix A

Election Results by County

This table depicts the election results from North Dakota's 1918 attorney general's election and the 1932 governor's election. Within the table, those counties whose voting return deviate from the state returns by more than ten percent are bolded to make them easy to identify.

County	1918 Attorney General's Election		1932 Governor's Election		
	Langer	Woledge	Langer	DePuy	Omholt
Adams	70.0	30.0	72.6	27.4	00.0
Barnes	67.8	32.2	54.2	45.5	00.3
Benson	66.8	33.2	68.4	31.4	00.2
Billings	71.4	28.6	64.8	37.2	00.0
Bottineau	71.4	28.6	61.8	37.9	00.3
Bowman	67.9	32.1	72.8	17.2	00.0
Burke	72.2	27.8	56.3	42.0	01.7
Burleigh	57.1	42.9	54.5	45.2	00.3
Cass	46.6	53.4	42.7	56.9	00.4
Cavalier	49.1	50.9	51.5	48.3	00.2
Dickey	63.5	36.5	49.5	49.8	00.7
Divide	73.2	26.8	72.8	26.7	00.5
Dunn	67.5	32.5	59.0	40.7	00.3
Eddy	73.1	26.9	70.6	29.1	00.3
Emmons	70.6	29.4	56.8	42.8	00.4
Foster	58.5	41.5	51.4	48.6	00.0

Golden Valley	48.1	51.9	58.6	41.3	00.1
Grand Forks	45.8	54.2	42.2	57.4	00.4
Grant	76.1	23.9	61.8	38.1	00.1
Griggs	71.4	28.6	62.6	37.4	00.0
Hettinger	66.2	33.8	66.2	33.5	00.3
Kidder	77.1	22.9	68.4	31.4	00.2
LaMoure	72.6	27.4	56.3	43.7	00.0
Logan	79.9	20.1	65.9	34.1	00.0
McHenry	73.3	26.7	60.7	38.9	00.4
McIntosh	79.7	20.3	72.7	27.3	00.0
McKenzie	75.6	24.4	68.8	31.0	00.2
McLean	66.9	33.1	65.5	34.5	00.0
Mercer	74.4	25.6	67.5	32.2	00.3
Morton	66.2	33.8	56.0	43.8	00.2
Mountrail	77.2	22.8	59.1	39.2	01.7
Nelson	62.8	37.2	50.4	49.6	00.0
Oliver	76.3	23.7	72.4	27.6	00.0
Pembina	47.6	52.4	46.4	53.6	00.0
Pierce	66.0	34.0	53.9	46.1	00.0
Ramsey	54.2	45.8	40.7	59.3	00.0
Ransom	73.4	28.6	59.8	40.2	00.0
Renville	79.1	20.9	49.4	50.6	00.0
Richland	58.4	41.6	59.1	40.8	00.1
Rollete	70.1	29.9	60.5	39.1	00.4
Sargent	57.0	43.0	57.9	42.0	00.1
Sheridan	81.2	18.8	70.7	29.1	00.2

Sioux	59.1	40.9	72.9	27.0	00.1
Slope	70.1	29.9	69.8	30.0	00.2
Stark	51.4	48.6	44.6	55.4	00.0
Steele	72.2	27.8	63.3	38.7	00.0
Stutsman	60.0	40.0	44.1	55.9	00.0
Towner	71.3	28.7	59.2	40.7	00.1
Traill	57.5	42.5	57.0	43.0	00.0
Walsh	50.2	49.8	24.2	75.7	00.1
Ward	56.6	43.4	47.2	52.3	00.5
Wells	72.2	27.8	62.6	36.2	01.2
Williams	68.8	31.2	58.9	39.4	01.7

Appendix B

Classification of Newspapers

This table depicts the results of the study. Within the first two columns, the number of times that the studied newspapers categorization of the League and Langer were positive, neutral or negative. The third column indicates whether the articles associated Langer with the League and the fourth column indicates whether the article was found on the front page or not.

County	League	Langer	Association	Front Page
Adams 1932	1(+)	1(-)	1(+)	1(+)
Benson 1932	2(+) 4(n) 1(-)	5(+) 2(n)	3(+) 4(-)	7(+)
Bowman 1932	3(n) 1(-)	7(+) 2(n) 1(-)	3(+) 1(-)	2(+) 2(-)
Cass 1918	9(+) 9(n) 23(-)	1(+) 35(n) 6(-)	3(+) 38(-)	6(+) 9(-)
1932	3(+) 13(n) 6(-)	6(+) 8(n) 8(-)	8(+) 14(-)	8(+) 14(-)
Cavalier 1918	3(+) 3(n) 6(-)	11(n) 1(-)	2(+) 10(-)	3(+) 9(-)
Divide 1932	3(+) 4(n)	6(+) 1(n)	3(+) 4(-)	7(+)
Eddy 1932	4(n) 1(-)	3(+) 2(n)	5(-)	4(+) 1(-)
Golden Valley 1918	1(-)	1(n)	1(-)	1(+)
Grand Forks 1918	7(+) 14(n) 31(-)	2(+) 46(n) 4(-)	4(+) 48(-)	11(+) 39(-)
Grand Forks 1932	5(+) 21(n) 7(-)	6(+) 21(n) 6(-)	9(+) 24(-)	17(+) 16(-)
Grant 1918	4(n) 1(-)	5(n)	1(+) 4(-)	3(+) 2(-)
Hettinger 1932	3(n) 1(-)	1(+) 2(n) 1(-)	2(+) 2(-)	3(+) 1(-)
Kidder 1918	2(n)	1(+) 1(n)	2(-)	1(+) 1(-)

1932	3(n) 1(-)	2(+) 2(n)	4(-)	2(+) 2(-)
Logan 1918	1(+) 1(-)	2(n)	2(-)	2(+)
1932	1(+) 1(n)	2(+)	2(+)	2(+)
McIntosh 1918	None Available	None Available	None Available	None Available
1932	None Available	None Available	None Available	None Available
McKinzie 1918	3(+)	3(n)	3(-)	2(+) 1(-)
1932	1(+)	1(+)	1(+)	1(+)
McLean 1932	2(+) 8(n)	5(+) 5(n)	3(+) 7(-)	10(+)
Mercer 1918	3(+) 3(n) 1(-)	6(n) 1(-)	7(-)	4(+) 3(-)
1932	2(+) 5(n)	6(+) 1(n)	2(+) 5(-)	7(+)
Mountrail 1918	14(+) 1(n) 4(-)	19(n)	19(-)	6(+) 13(-)
Oliver 1918	2(n)	1(n) 1(-)	1(+) 1(n)	1(+) 1(-)
1932	1(+) 2(n) 1(-)	2(+) 2(n)	1(+) 3(-)	3(+) 1(-)
Pembina 1918	3(n) 4(-)	7(n)	7(-)	5(+) 2(-)
Ramsey 1932	6(n)	5(n) 1(-)	1(+) 5(-)	5(+) 1(-)
Renville 1918	5(+) 5(n)	10(n)	10(-)	9(+) 1(-)
Sheridan 1918	1(+)	1(n)	1(-)	1(+)
1932	2(+) 2(n)	2(+) 2(n)	2(+) 2(-)	4(+)
Sioux 1932	1(n)	1(n)	1(-)	1(+)
Slope 1932	1(n)	1(n)	1(-)	1(+)
Stark 1918	3(+) 4(n) 6(-)	1(+) 12(n)	1(+) 12(-)	7(+) 6(-)
1932	1(+)	1(n)	1(-)	1(+)
Stutsman 1932	5(+) 15(n) 1(-)	9(+) 10(n) 2(-)	3(+) 16(-)	16(+) 3(-)
Walsh 1918	3(+) 3(n) 6(-)	1(+) 11(n)	1(+) 11(-)	6(+) 6(-)
1932	4(n)	3(n) 1(-)	4(-)	3(+) 1(-)

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