

**Collection Name:**

Lars Fletre papers, 1847-2011

**Collection Number:**

P1108

**Extent:**

6.0 cubic feet (13 archives boxes and 1 flat box)

**Biography/History:**

Lars Olavson Fletre, born in Voss, Norway on June 22, 1904, was the third youngest of nine children born to Olaf Oddson Fletre and Kristine Olsdatter Kvårmo. The Fletre home was filled with creativity: Odd was a painter and architect, Olav and Anders played Hardanger fiddle, Inger played langeleik, and Lars was fascinated with drawing. After taking evening courses at Voss Technical College, Lars immigrated to Chicago in 1923 with his brother, Odd, who originally emigrated in 1912. From 1925 to 1931, Lars attended the Chicago Art Institute and had his debut exhibit in "The 43 Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture" at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1931. Before returning to Norway in 1933, Lars exhibited in numerous galleries in Chicago and Brooklyn.

When Lars returned to Norway, he married Helen Svensson, whom he first met while in Chicago when she was on a trip in 1932. From 1932-1954, they lived in Norway. Lars worked as a designer, engraver, and decorator for the Hadeland Glassverk factory in Jevnaker from 1941 to 1950. In 1950, he started Vossevangen Stonecarving and made several big monuments. During World War II Lars and Helen lived in Norway with their three children: Anita, Oddgier, and Valborg. Helen and Lars lived in Jevnaker where she founded a chapter of *Foreldrelaget* and taught private English, German, and French lessons.

After the Fletre family returned to Chicago in 1954, Helen and Lars were active in many clubs, including DeLiSa (Det Litteraere Samfund), Chicago Norske Klub, American Scandinavian Foundation, and others. In 1962 Lars founded the Vossing Art Studio on Diversy Parkway within walking distance from the family home. In this studio, Lars worked alone to create his various sculptures. At the Vossign Art Studio, Lars sculpted two versions of *Jesus Healing the Sick*: One for the Mountain Chapel in Mjølfjell and the other for the Norwegian Lutheran Hospital in Chicago. After being admitted to that hospital years later, he discovered the sculpture was not on display in the chapel room as originally anticipated. Today, the sculpture is located at the Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, Iowa.

**Scope and Content:**

The Lars Fletre collection contains correspondence, clippings, notes, records, manuscripts, and other documents of a Norwegian-born sculptor and woodcarver. The letters between Lars and Helen, written in English, span from 1932 to 1934 and document the time from when they met in Chicago until their marriage. The correspondence covers their mutual interest in art, literature, poetry, and politics; how they dealt with the difficult times of the depression; and their optimistic hopes for the future.

**Access Rights:**

This collection is open to research.

**Bibliographic Citation:**

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

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	1	Biographical data, 1906-1977
1	2	Exhibits in Chicago, 1929-1931
1	3	On Fletre's art, 1929-1954
1	4	Tributes, 1960-1977
1	5	Drawings and sketches, undated
1	6	Photographs, 1906-1977
1	7	Monument at Rømoen, 1956
1	8	Ludvig Holberg monument, 1935 Includes photographs.
1	9	Lars Osa monument, 1964-1967 Includes photographs.
1	10	Knute Rockne monument, 1962
1	11	Sivle monument, 1951-1957 Includes photographs
1	12	Emigration from Vos, 1973
1	13	Certificates from Voss, 1847-1862
1	14	Vossings in Chicago, 1974
1	15	Church Restoration at Voss, 1911-1954
2	1	Exhibit in Bergen, 1954
2	2	Fletre to U.S., 1954 Includes items from Norwegian American Line.
2	3	Leikarringen Heimhug, Chicago, 1899-1960
2	4	National Carvers' Museum, Colorado newsletters, 1975-1976
2	5	Postcards from Norway, 1904-1972
2	6	Fletre letters home, 1950-1959
2	7	Letters to E.O. Fletre, 1910-1957
2	8	Letters to Olav Fletre, 1961-1977

2	9	Correspondence, 1948-1957
2	10	Correspondence, 1962-1977
2	11	Letters to public figures, 1942-1977 Includes Pope Paul, Norwegian bishops.
		Correspondence
3	1	Dybwad-Brochman, B, 1942-1946
3	2	A. Duve, 1948-1949
3	3	E. Espeland, 1961-1966 Includes a photograph of Espeland in front of his home.
3	4	Sydney Harris, 1961-1973
3	5	Alv Jørnevik, 1962
3	6	Kunstneriske oppgaaavor, 1951-1954
3	7	Leif Ericson Society, 1967
3	8	Axel I.B. Møller, 1945-1946
3	9	H.W. Rohde, 1954
3	10	H. Smedsrud, 1953-1966 Includes photos of the Chicago Norkse Teater.
3	11	Ullestad family, 1962
3	12	Vossevangen Steinhoggeri, 1954
3	13	Vossevangen Steinhoggeri, 1951-1955
4	1	Vikings, Vinland map--clippings and comment, 1931-1970
4	2	Letters to newspapers and clippings, 1955-1975
4	3	Negatives of snapshots and film, undated
4	4	Miscellaneous notes, undated Includes genealogy notes from Genesis to Snorre Sturlasson & Tjodolf.
4	5	Miscellaneous notes, undated
5	1	Articles and speeches, 1960-1973 Includes: "The Festival," (1960); "A Day of Struggle with Horses" (undated); "The Universal Law of Cause and Effect" (undated); "Will Western Civilization Survive?" (1973); "Art" (undated).
5	2	"Fiat Lux Norvegica," 1946
5	3	"Den gode skogvokter," undated
5	4	"Guttestreker eller," 1956
5	5	"Hysteria Unfounded," 1972
5	6	"Lat skura--eller 'tenkja sig om'," 1966
5	7	"Why is Man Advancing so Slowly?," 1966
5	8	Lecture on art at DeliSa, 1949
5	9	Miscellaneous manuscripts, 1921-1969 Includes: "Christmas Memories from Childhood" (undated); "Farvel til Voss" (undated); "eit par ord" (undated); "Paying Pricefall: A New Economy--A New Sociology" (undated); "Thomas Paine"

		(1969); "Art and Cocktails" (undated); "The Robbery at Neighborhood Inn" (undated); "Ei bok" (1921)
5	10	Manuscripts, 1940.
5	11	Untitled manuscript and notes, undated
5	12	"Apogee 9: A collection of poetry and prose by the members and friends of the Third Unitarian Church of Chicago." dedicated in the memory of Lars Fletre, 1979
6	1	Account Books (Norway), 1952
6	2	Social Security (Norway), 1951-1977
6	3	Lease (Norway), 1950
6	4	To Samfundspartiet, Norway, 1947
6	5	Business records, United States, 1965-1972
6	6	Bildende Kunstners Hjelpfond, 1972-1977
6	7	Life Insurance (Norway), 1955-1971
7	1	Pocket diaries, 1942-1945
7	2-7	Correspondence, clipping, and notes as Fletre arranged them in packets each year, 1939-1944
8	1-5	Correspondence, clipping, and notes as Fletre arranged them in packets each year, 1945-1949
9	1-5	Correspondence, clipping, and notes as Fletre arranged them in packets each year, 1950-1956
9	6	Norwegian newspapers, 1877-1878, 1897
9	7	"Barnehjemmet" periodical, 1874 Story: "Billeder fra Amerika."
9	8	Correspondence with Knut Hesstvedt and "A new Heaven and a New Earth," 1946-1948
9	9	"Fornuftten" (newspaper published by Hesstvedt), 1946 January-1946 July
9	10	"Norske Front" by Trygve Wyller, and Fletre article on atomic bomb, 1941-1947
10	1	Bergen Kunstforening, 1944
10	2-3	Norske Kunstforening, 1947-1960
10	4-5	Norske Billedhogsforening, 1962-1977
10	6-7	Bildende Kunstnernes Forening, 1951-1977
10	8	Withdrawal from State Church, Norway, 1941
10	9	Certificates, travel permits, passports, 1944-1977
10	10	Greeting cards, 1971-1975
10	11	Bank books, union cards, correspondence, 1916-1949
11	1	Herman Wildenvey letter, 1948-1950 Includes newspaper clipping "Wildenvey, Top Poet of Norway is Here to 'Rediscover America,'" (Minneapolis Tribune, 1949).
11	2	Newspaper items by and about Lars Fletre, 1962-1974
11	3	Materials for "Vinland," 1958
11	4-6	Poems, essays, notes, 1943-1974

11	7	Vossing correspondence Society, 1973-1977
11	8	Recommendations, 1934, 1936
11	9	Various documents, 1953-1974
11	10	Accident, 1973-1975
11	11	"America Letter" from Anders Fletre (uncle of Lars Fletre), 1883
11	12	Family correspondence, 1857-1973
11	13	Valborg Fletre Linn, 1949-1977
11	14	Oddgeir Fletre, 1921-1967
11	15	Lars Fletre death, 1977
11	16	Helen Fletre personal, 1973-1976 Personal data and articles.
11	17	Exhibit at Voss, Norway, 1984 Includes "Lars Fletre--Chronology."
12	1-8	Lars Fletre and Helen Svensson correspondence, 1932-1934 Original letters.
13	1-3	Lars Fletre and Helen Svensson correspondence, 1932-1934 Original letters.
13	4	"Dawn: Letters from Lars Fletre to Helen Svenson – from Helen Svenson to Lars Fletre, June 2, 1932-August 10, 1934" compiled by Valborg Linn, 2011
13	5	Gamalt frå Voss, 2018
13	6	Biographical information
14		Lars Fletre Chicago scrapbook, 1923-1933