

Curator's Choice

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS have marked Minnesota's civic life for more than a century and a half. Documented in the Minnesota Historical Society's collections are some 3,000 election buttons and badges worn to influence friends, acquaintances, and strangers.

Displayed in this visual panoply are badges and buttons from these contests: William H. Harrison's successful Whig Party bid in 1840 (light blue ribbon); Abraham Lincoln's campaign of 1860 (very rare double-sided ferrotype lapel pin with the reverse showing Lincoln's running mate, Hannibal Hamlin); Republican Benjamin H. Harrison's 1888 election (tricolor ribbon); William Jennings Bryan's Democratic People's Party bid, probably from 1900 (hand-colored portrait);



PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER LATNER/MHS

William McKinley's Republican victory in 1896 (endorsed by the Sound Money Club of Winona) and in 1900 (with Theodore Roosevelt as his youthful running mate); Woodrow Wilson's successful 1912 Democratic campaign; Herbert Hoover's victorious Republican-party bid in 1928 (gold elephant); Republican Alf Landon's defeat in 1936; pro- and anti-Franklin Delano Roosevelt efforts, probably in 1940; Richard Nixon's unsuccessful 1960 run against John F. Kennedy; Barry Goldwater's Republican loss in 1964 (scientific term AuH₂O); and the distinctively Minnesotan "Scandinavians for Ronald Reagan" 1984 victory.

Minnesota's presidential favorite sons include two 1968 candidates, Eugene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey. In 1984 Walter Mondale (with the support of his popular wife Joan) ran unsuccessfully against Ronald Reagan. Topping the nation's list of indefatigables is South St. Paul's Harold E. Stassen, who campaigned more than a half-dozen times for the Republican nomination. This button dates from his 1948 run for the White House.

Perennial Communist Party candidate Gus Hall from Cherry, Minnesota, ran in four presidential elections: 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1984. These efforts are not yet represented in the Society's collection.

—CLAUDIA NICHOLSON/MHS



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles, however, for individual use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#).