

Minnesota State University, Mankato,

Memorial Library, Southern Minnesota Historical Center.

Kessel, Abbas, 1918-1987 and Miner-Kessel, Ruth, 1920-2017 Collection,  
1939 - 2000

SMHC Manuscript Collection 250

**Kessel, Abbas, 1918-1987 and Miner-Kessel, Ruth, 1920-2017. Collection, 1939-2000. SMHC Manuscript Collection 250. 3 Archives Boxes, 3 Hollinger Boxes, 1 Oversized Box, 5 cubic feet.**

**ABSTRACT:**

The Abbas Kessel and Ruth Miner-Kessel Collection consists of three parts, that of Dr. Abbas Kessel, his wife Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel, and their combined personal and professional materials. The Abbas Kessel part of the collection is made up of documents dating back to his school days in England. The majority of the collection comes from his time as a professor at Mankato State University (1966-1985). There are notes from texts and classes, personal and professional letters, photographs and a diary. The Ruth Miner-Kessel portion of the collection is similar to her husband's. There are personal entries chronicling Abbas Kessel's decline in health, academic resources from her time teaching at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater, photos, and letters that document her activism and political engagement. The shared portion of the collection includes their creative works including poetry, art, music, and documentation of Kessel's death and legacy.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**

Dr. Abbas Kessel was a political science professor at Mankato State University for nineteen years (1966-1985). One monumental moment for Kessel during his tenure at MSU was during the early 1970s after the Kent State shootings when an antiwar protest occurred in downtown Mankato at the site of the Blue Earth County draft board. During the rally, which was becoming ever more hostile, with some intending to burn draft records, Kessel stood and began to speak in order to calm the protestors down, a moment photographed. After these events, the professor continued to engage with students, discussing anti-war sentiments but urging a peaceful approach. His passion for ethics and social welfare was strong and is exemplified in his work. After Kessel retired in 1985, Mankato State University established a lecture series the same year and the Kessel Peace Institute which has been named after him.

In 1984, Dr. Kessel married his long-time friend of thirty years, Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel. Dr. Miner-Kessel was a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater and taught there from 1958 until 1985. She was an active political advocate with a particular commitment to social justice. In the late 1970s she participated in the Democratic National Midterm Conference as a delegate, and later, she served on the Whitewater city council for six consecutive years. After Dr. Abbas Kessel's passing, Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel was heavily involved in his remembrance efforts. She advocated and supported the creation of the Kessel Peace Institute and Kessel Lecture Series.

Biographical note compiled from the collection and these sources:

[Kessel Peace Institute at Minnesota State University, Mankato](#)

[Kessel Lectures, Political Science Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato](#)  
[Obituary, Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel](#). Nitardy Funeral Homes, 2017.

[Lass, William E. Minnesota State University, Mankato 1868-2018: A Sesquicentennial History. Mankato: Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2018.](#)

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

The Abbas Kessel and Ruth Miner-Kessel Collection is separated into three series and multiple sub-series. The series are entitled: Dr. Abbas Kessel, Dr. Abbas Kessel and Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel, and Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel.

**Dr. Abbas Kessel Series**

**Letters and Correspondence:** This sub-series consists of both personal and professional letters to and from Dr. Kessel. The majority of the letters are correspondence between Dr. Kessel and media sources (newspapers, academic journals, and TV stations). Another part of this series is letters from friends and family dating back to the 1940s and 1950s. These letters go far beyond Dr. Kessel's years at Minnesota State University and offer a great glimpse into his personal life. It includes letters from Dr. Kessel to Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel before the couple got married on August 25, 1984.

**Academic Writings:** The academic writing sub-series is the largest portion of the Abbas Kessel Collection. The series is mainly made up of academic papers and course notes on numerous topics. In addition to essays of his own creation, the series also includes works that Dr. Kessel reviewed, some of the papers including the professor's notes.

**Newspaper Clippings:** Dr. Kessel wrote prolifically, especially to news outlets. Many of the articles he wrote correlate with his academic writings. He was also an avid contributor to the newspaper's opinion column and letter to the editor. This series contains most of his contributions to newspapers.

**Class and School Documents:** As a political science professor at Mankato State University, Dr. Kessel accumulated many academic materials over the years. This series is made up of personal notes, syllabi, and tests for many of Dr. Kessel's classes, along with employment and university program information.

**Chair Designs:** One of Dr. Abbas Kessel's interests outside of academia was designing and building his own furniture. The chair designed by Dr. Kessel was one of his most accomplished builds. He was able to patent it and tried to sell it to companies across the country over the years. The series contains letters, designs, and pictures of the chair that he built and patented. Unfortunately, Dr. Kessel was unable to sell his chair design to any company.

**Abbas Kessel Personal Documents:** This sub-series is made up of documents from Dr. Kessel's personal life. This includes transcripts, journals, diplomas, retirement information, pictures, and passports. The sub-series includes sensitive materials, and some have restrictions on their access. Those that are not restricted offer an in-depth-look at Dr. Kessel's personal life and his journey to become a United States citizen.

**Miscellaneous:** This sub-series contains items that do not easily fit into the other categories. Many of the items in this sub-series come from newsletters, conventions, and some of Dr. Kessel's notes. This series also contains lecture announcements, documents pertaining to his interests, various reports he saved, and other items from Dr. Kessel's life.

### **Dr. Abbas Kessel and Ruth Miner-Kessel Series**

**Art and Creative Works:** Dr. Kessel and his wife were avid collectors of art works, music enthusiasts, and writers of poetry. Neither were artists themselves but appreciated the subject. Items from their collection were shown at numerous exhibits around the country. Both partners were also avid fans of classical music. Dr. Kessel oversaw a concert series, and Dr. Miner-Kessel arranged chamber music recitals at her home, fondly referred to as "Picasshaw." This series offers pictures, letters, and concert programs. More often defined by their admiration for the fine arts, poetry was one exception in which they were the creators; their compositions over the years are included in this series.

**Abbas Kessel Death and Legacy:** This is a shared sub-series as Dr. Kessel and Dr. Miner-Kessel have equal involvement and have both contributed materials. Dr. Kessel passed away in 1987 of Leukemia. This series contains documents which follow the progression of his disease. There are letters to and from doctors, a diary that Dr. Abbas Kessel kept, and documentation of the remembrance efforts that his wife did much to advance. This series works to highlight the life of the scholar and the legacy he has left behind.

### **Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel Series**

**Letters:** This sub-series of the collection contains personal and professional letters. Many of the letters came from friends and family around the time of Kessel's illness and death. There is also extensive correspondence coming from the offices of politicians with senders including congressmen, senators, representatives, and vice presidents.

**Activism and Political Activity:** Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel was politically engaged and constantly wrote to politicians about issues she felt were important in addition to serving on the Whitewater city council. Despite the many responsibilities she held, she also took on many personal activism projects which are included in this collection. This series of documents is important to the collection because it emphasizes just how much Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel was involved in the world around her.

**Personal Documents:** This series contains many personal pieces of Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel's life. It contains family background, an interview, resume, pictures, and a diary. The included documents offer a better look at just who Dr. Miner-Kessel was and her relationships with Dr. Abbas Kessel, neighbors, and many others.

**Academic and University Documents:** Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel was a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater. A lot of her time was put towards

the beautification of the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater campus. She sought to improve the campus by building gardens and planting trees. In addition to these records, this series also includes class notes, academic writings, and other contributions to her university.

**Miscellaneous:** This series contains many documents from Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel that do not really fit into any of the other series. There are personal notes, academic reports, and a few of Dr. Miner-Kessel's papers.

**RESTRICTIONS:**

The Abbas Kessel and Ruth Miner-Kessel Collection have a few restrictions on personal items that belonged to Dr. Kessel and his wife.

**COLLECTION CITATION:**

This collection should be cited as:

Kessel, Abbas, 1918-1987 and Miner-Kessel, Ruth, 1920-2017 Collection. Collection, 1939-2000. SMHC Manuscript Collection 250, Southern Minnesota Historical Center, Memorial Library, Minnesota State University, Mankato.

**ACQUISITION:**

The Kessel Peace Institute donated this collection in February 2013.

**PROCESSED BY:**

Josh Smith processed this collection in October 2014.

Kayla Brinkman updated this collection in September 2021.

**RELATED COLLECTIONS:**

[College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Collection, 1961-Ongoing. MSU Archives Collection 29, University Archives, Memorial Library, Minnesota State University, Mankato.](#)

[Video Services. Collection, 1985-ongoing. MSU Archives Collection 110, University Archives, Memorial Library, Minnesota State University, Mankato.](#)

**LCSH SUBJECT HEADINGS:**

Political Science

Mankato State College

Protest, culture, and society

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

SMHC Manuscript Collection 250	Box	Folder
Dr. Abbas Kessel		
Letters and Correspondence		
Art Letters, 1981-1987 and Undated	1	1
Cuban Developments and Crisis, 1962	1	2

Henry Kissinger Letters, 1971	1	3
Letters to Ruth, 1957-1982 and Undated	1	4
Letters to The Editor and Other Article Submissions to Newspapers and Magazines 1, 1948-1970	1	5
Letters to The Editor and Other Article Submissions to Newspapers and Magazines 2, 1971-1975	1	6
Letters to The Editor and Other Article Submissions to Newspapers and Magazines 3, 1976--1986	1	7
Personal Letters, Includes to Ruth, 1986 and Undated	4	5
Personal Letters, 1986-1987	1	8
Political Correspondence, 1982-1986	4	6
President Nixon's Escalation of The Vietnam War, Undated	1	9
Professional Letters 1, 1948-1969 and Undated	4	7
Professional Letters 2, 1970-1987	1	10
Tip O'Neill Letter, March 12, 1986	1	11
<b>Academic Writings</b>		
A Perspective on the Future, Undated	1	12
Academic Writings, 1950s	1	13
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Academic Writings, 1970s	1	15
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Academic Writings 2, Undated	1	19
Academic Writings 3, Undated	1	20
Academic Writings 4, Undated	1	21
Crises in the Congo, 1964	1	22
Notes on World Events Issue and the Veto and The Troika, Kessel Lecture, 1961	1	23
Political Science 101: Intro to Politics, 1982-1985	1	24
Political Science 211: International Relations, 1982-1983	1	25
Political Science 301: Environmental Politics Class Outline, Spring, 1985	1	26
Political Science 401: World Politics, Course Notes, Course Material, 1983-1984	1	27
Political Science 415: Middle East, Course Materials and Notes, 1976-1985	1	28
Political Science 415: Middle East, Course Materials and Notes, 1983-1984	1	29
Political Science 420: International Law, Course Notes, 1967-1968 and Undated	1	30
Political Science 420: International Law, Course Notes, 1968-1982	1	31
Political Science 440: American Foreign Policy, Course Notes, "WWII," Undated	1	32

Political Science 440: American Foreign Policy, Course Syllabus, Assignments, Notes, 1983	1	33
Political Science 494: Pro-Seminar on Multinational Corporations, 1983	1	34
Reviewed Work: "Common Heritage of Mankind," United Nations, Undated	1	35
Reviewed Work: "Committee on Foreign Affairs," 1982	1	36
Reviewed Work: "Congo," forward by Carter Davidson, 1960	1	37
Reviewed Work: Graduation Address by Jane F. Earley, 1985	1	38
Reviewed Work: "Intercollegiate Athletics: An Examination From Within" by Joe Walsh, Undated	1	39
Reviewed Work: In The Supreme Court of the United States, October term, 1970	1	40
Reviewed Work: Kessel's Criticism of John Scott's "A U.S. Policy For The Middle East," 1956	1	41
Reviewed Work: National Planning Conference, The Legislation and Planning Program by Clifford J. Campbell, May 10-14, 1959	1	42
Reviewed Work: Papers Reviewed by Kessel, 1972-1975	1	43
Reviewed Work: "Prescribing Drugs For The Aged and Dying" by Ron Yezzi, Undated	1	44
Reviewed Work: The Monroe Doctrine, The Abrogation of the Platt Amendment, Undated	1	45
Reviewed Work: "The Myth of the Isolated Self In Manfred's Siouxland Novels" by Robert C. Wright, Undated	1	46
Reviewed Work: Robert R. Schutz's "Discrimination by Income," Undated	1	47
United Nations Lecture Outlines, Readings, and Paper, Undated	1	48
Watergate and All That, October 16, 1973	1	49
<b>Newspaper Clippings</b>		
Newspaper Articles 1982 and Undated	7	3
Newspaper Articles 1970s	7	4
Newspaper Articles 1980s	7	5
Original Newspaper Copies	7	8
<b>Class and School Documents</b>		
A Paralegal Program at Mankato State University: A New Program Proposal, January 16, 1985	1	50
A Tentative Proposal for a Series of Lectures, 1966	1	51
Abbas Kessel Minnesota State College Employment Information 1966-1974	1	52
Abbas Kessel, Speech on "The Anarchy of the State System," cassette and CD duplicate, February 4, 1985	2	1
American Association of University Professors Moratorium, 1969	2	2
Articles for Foreign Policy Class, Spring 1976	2	3

Dr. Ambrose, 1975-1976 and Undated (Restricted)	2	4
Introduction to Kessel Retirement by Scott Shrewsbury, Undated	2	5
Introduction to Politics, 1984	2	6
Kessel Academic Review, May 18, 1976	2	7
Kessel Lecture Announcements, April 11, 1973, and January 28, 1975	2	8
Kessel Lecture Audio Tape About World Outlook on the Year 2000 and The Reduction of Inequalities, Undated, Possibly Between 1983-1985, (About 50 mins of audible audio)	2	9
MSU, C.I.A, February 1980	2	10
Nixon Petition, April 10, 1972	2	11
Political Science Department, Undated, 1969-1972	2	12
Revision of International Relations Major, 1969	2	13
Social Science Notes, Undated	2	14
Teaching and Class Notes, Undated	2	15
Thoughts on Curriculum, 1971	2	16
Reminiscence: A Valedictory Lecture Delivered by Kessel, May 31, 1985	2	17
<b>Chair Designs</b>		
American Furniture Mart Buyers Guide, June-December 1969	2	18
Chair Designed by Kessel, Correspondence, 1972	2	19
Chair Designed by Kessel, Patent Information and Correspondence, 1969-1981	2	20
Chair Pictures and Diagrams, Undated	2	21
Chair Plans, Undated	2	22
Pictures of Chair, Undated	2	23
<b>Abbas Kessel Personal Documents</b>		
Address Book, Kessel, Undated	2	24
Abbas Kessel Foreign Legalization Document, July 11, 1939	7	7
Abbas Kessel Personal Documents, Immigration, Naturalization, and Social Security, 1945-1987 (Restricted)	4	1
Abbas Kessel Transcripts, Diploma, and Personal Records, 1956-1957 (Restricted)	4	2
Illinois Institute of Technology Diploma, 1951	2	25
Kessel Pictures With Grace, June 1952	2	26
Kessel Retirement, 1984-1985	2	27
Kessel-Miner Wedding, August 25, 1984	2	28
Pictures, 1952-1986	2	29
Pictures of Abbas Kessel, 1985 and Undated	2	30
University of California Diploma, September 7, 1947	7	1
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
A Chronology of Health-Related Federal Legislation on Environment, 1970-1980	2	31
A.I.O.C. Operations In Iran Map, Undated	7	2
Book, Possibly Written in Persian, Undated	2	32



Domestic Communications Aspects of The Middle East Crisis, July, 1967	2	33
Flowers, Undated	2	34
IFO Update, August 26, 1981	2	35
International Coins, Undated (Restricted)	2	36
Kessel Speech Announcement, December 3, 1970	2	37
Miscellaneous and Notes, Undated and 1977-1978	4	3
Notes on Gardening, Undated	2	38
Notes on World Events, 1958 Vol. XXXV No. 1, 1958 Vol. XXXV No.16, 1962 Vol. XXXIX No. 9, 1966 Vol. XLIII No. 5, 1966 Vol. XLIII No. 7	2	39
People For Peace, 1948	4	4
The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Undated	2	40
Time Kessel Cover, Undated	2	41
U.S. Acceptance of Compulsory Jurisdiction Under The "Optional Clause", Morgenthau's Evaluation of Balance of Power, Undated	2	42
1980 Olympic Hockey Team and Politics, 1980	2	43
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Health Diary, 1984-1987	2	61
History of the Concept of A Peace Institute at Mankato State University, April 21, 1995	2	62

Interlock Vol. VI No. 1, "Kessel-A Gentle man, A man of Peace." Winter 1993	2	63
Kessel Internet Page, Undated	2	64
Kessel Illness Letters, 1985-1987	2	65
Kessel Lecture: Capital Punishment, October 10, 2000	2	66
Kessel Lecture Mailing List, March 6, 1987	2	67
Kessel Medical Records, 1985-1987 (Restricted)	2	68
Kessel Institute for The Study of peace and Change, Undated Foundation News Vol. 3, March 1993, Letter to Ruth Miner-Kessel, July 25, 1994	3	1
Kessel Death and Remembrance, 1984-1987	3	2
Letters to Packard Foundation Regarding the Kessel Peace Institute, 1996	3	3
VHS and DVD of Kessel Lecture by Jim Carnes, Undated	3	4
<b>Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel Series</b>		
<b>Letters</b>		
Alan Brodie and Will Information, 1987-1989	3	5
Chang'AA Mewti Letter and Pictures, 1999-2000	3	6
Correspondence with Iranian Relatives, 1992-1996 and undated	3	7
Letters 1, Undated	6	1
Letters 2, 1957-1987	6	2
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Letters from Government Officials, 1990-1991	3	8
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Diary, 1973-1977	3	25
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Miner Family Financial History, September 8, 1968, Ruth Miner Biography, Undated	3	28
Mrs. Meta Bissett Records 1, 1984-1985	3	29
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Planner, 1995	3	32
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Travel Journals, 1996	3	36
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America in Prosperity, Depression, and World War II, 1919-1945 by Pearl Forbes (Experiences of Dr. Ruth Miner), 1988	3	38
Campus Beautification, 1978 and Undated	3	39
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Impeachment A History, by Dr. Ruth Miner-Kessel, 1998	3	42
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Past Notes, Computer Classes, September 1995 Onward, 1995-1996	3	44
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Fax to Scott Shrewsbury, Mary 17, 1996	3	51
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