

## Finding Aid to the Fargo N.D. Homes Photograph Collection

### Fargo, N.D. Homes Photograph Collection, 1910s – 1960s

ca. 7000 photographic prints

ca. 7930 film negatives

Collection number: Photo 2007

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### OVERVIEW

**Links:** Finding aid to the [W. J. Lane Co. Photograph Collection](#) (Photo 2069)  
Finding aid to the [W. J. Lane Co. Manuscript Collection](#) (Mss 276)  
Finding aid to the [Arneson Family Photograph Collection](#) (Photo 2042)  
View collection in [Digital Horizons](#).

**Access:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

**Provenance:** Donated by H. R. Arneson, 1993 (Acc. 2336), and Fargo-Moorhead Heritage Society, 1988 & 1993 (Acc. 2229 & Acc. 2332).

**Property rights:** The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

**Copyrights:** Copyright to this collection is held by the Institute for Regional Studies.

**Citation:** Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU, Fargo (item number)

### PROVENANCE

William J. Lane founded the W. J. Lane Co. in 1902, a firm dealing in real estate loans and insurance. The company was incorporated in 1916. Prior to his dealings in real estate, Mr. Lane and briefly operated his own photography studio, and this likely influenced his usage of the photography to help sell and appraise real estate in the Fargo, N.D. and the surrounding area. The earliest photographs in this collection were likely taken about 1913. In 1931 W. J. Lane died, and the company was taken over by Harry R. Arneson, Sr. The usage of photographs to sell and appraise real estate was continued by Mr. Arneson. After World War II, Harry R. Arneson was joined in the business by his son Harry R. Arneson, Jr. who established his own appraisal company of Harry Arneson, Jr. and Associates around 1954. This business was based out of the W. J. Lane Co. offices. In 1972, the firm became the Arneson Company operated by Harry

Arneson, Sr. and his son, Harry, Jr. After Harry Arneson, Sr. died in 1973, Harry Arneson, Jr. appears to have continued his appraisal business as well as the Arneson Company until his death in 1997.

At some point in time the Arnesons donated some of the home negatives and photographs to the Fargo Heritage Society. For a time the organization assisted researchers seeking historical imagery of their property, providing copies when requested. In 1988 and again in 1993, the organization decided to donate approximately 1786 negatives and 8 linear feet of Fargo Home photographs to the Institute for Regional Studies. In 1993 Harry Arneson, Jr. donated the remainder of the Fargo Homes negatives to the Institute, housed in a vault in the basement of the former W. J. Lane Co./Arneson Co. building at 609 N. P. Avenue.

The Institute for Regional Studies staff undertook the monumental task of sleeving, cross referencing, and inventorying the negatives and prints. An in-house Access database to the Fargo Homes negatives and photographs was developed.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Fargo Homes Photograph Collection** provides a rich record for the built history of Fargo, N.D. Through these photographs and negatives the researcher gains a sense of popular architectural design in this community, and how it evolved from the 1910s to 1950s. The collection is arranged in two series: **Negatives Series** and **Photographic Prints Series**.

The **Negatives Series** is arranged numerically under the order originally created by the W. J. Lane Co.. The numbering scheme follows a pattern of a primary number, followed by a secondary number separated by a dash. There are approximately 6 to 10 negatives under each primary number. These numbered negatives measure 3 ½ x 6 inches in size.

The numbers appear to follow the order for which the images were taken. An approximate breakdown by decade follows the following negative numbers:

Negatives 1 to 230 = 1910s  
Negatives 231 to 320 = 1920s  
Negatives 321 to 497 = 1930s  
Negatives 498 to 800 = 1940s  
Negatives 801 to 1141 = 1950s

There were 2419 unnumbered negatives, most of which appear to be from the late 1950s and early 1960s; however there are a few that appear to be taken in the early 1910s, likely before the numbered series starts. These early negatives can be identified based upon their smaller size of 3 ½ x 4 ½ inches. There are also a small number of 120 mm negative likely taken in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

The majority of the negatives in this collection feature house and building exteriors, however as the company also dealt with insurance matters, photographs were taken of automobile accidents and fires. Also recorded were major events such as the Central High School fire in Dec. 1916 (negs. 101-4 to 101-10), Charles Lindbergh Day in 1927 (negs. 297-1 to 297-4), Main Avenue bridge demolition in 1936 (negs. 401-1 to 401-6), visit of Norway's Crown Prince Olav in 1939 (neg. 482-01 to 486-06), Northwest Airlines crash near Moorhead, Minn. in 1941 (548-1 to 548-5), the Flood of 1943 (576-2 to 588-4), V. J. Day in downtown Fargo (652-1 to 653-6), Blizzard of Feb. 1946 (negs. 658-03 to 665-6), Fargo's Diamond Jubilee in 1950 (810-1 to 810-6), Earle Hotel Fire in 1951 (negs. 863-2 to 866-3), Flood of 1952 (negs. 872-1 to 876-6), Fargo Grain Terminal Elevator collapse in 1955 (negs. 1021-1 to 1021-4), and the

1957 Fargo Tornado (negs. 1127-1 to 1133-6 & 1139-1 to 1139-6). Besides Fargo and Moorhead, there are some negatives for properties in neighboring communities. They are Alice, Casselton, Christine, Colfax, Davenport, Fort Ransom, Harwood, Klotten, Luverne, Page, Valley City, Wahpeton, Walcott, West Fargo, Wheatland, and Wild Rice in North Dakota; and Barnesville, Breckenridge, Dilworth, Felton, Glyndon, Hitterdal, McIntosh, Perley, Rustad, Ulen, and Wilton in Minnesota.

A number of the non-home related negatives can be found in several other collections, those being the Arneson Family Photograph Collection (Photo 2042), the W. J. Lane Co. Photograph Collection (Photo 2069) and the Cass County Historical Society Photograph Collection (Photo 2070). These images are easily identifiable in these collections by their 3 ½ x 6 inch size and formatted negative number hand written on the borders or back sides of the photographic prints.

The **Photographic Prints Series** is arranged by address, first by street or avenue, followed by house or building number. The photographs are strictly house and property photographs. Severe water damage is evident on a large portion of these photographs. The photographs with north side Fargo addresses are in much better condition and thus received some archival processing. The south half of Fargo is in very poor condition. The negative identification number is evident on most, allowing easy cross reference with the original, clean negative. On the back of some of the early prints, the primary segment of the negative identification number is handwritten in Roman Numerals. A smaller number of Moorhead, Minnesota properties, along with Comstock, Dilworth, Felton, Glyndon and some Minnesota lake property are also found in the this series.

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| 2   | Neg. 44 – 77            |
| 3   | Neg. 78 – 116           |
| 4   | Neg. 117 – 157          |
| 5   | Neg. 158 – 202          |
| 6   | Neg. 203 – 236          |
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| 8   | Neg. 278 – 340          |
| 9   | Neg. 341 – 405          |
| 10  | Neg. 406 – 470          |
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| 13  | Neg. 611 – 681          |
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| 15  | Neg. 743 – 808          |
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| 19  | Neg. 979 – 1032         |
| 20  | Neg. 1033 – 1087        |
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22 Neg. 2080 – 2419

**Photographic Prints Series**

23 Edgewood Dr. through 3<sup>rd</sup> Street N., Fargo  
24 4<sup>th</sup> Street N. through Broadway, Fargo  
25 Roberts Street N. through 10<sup>th</sup> Street N.  
26 11<sup>th</sup> Street N. through 35<sup>th</sup> Street N., Fargo  
27 N.P. Avenue through 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue N., Fargo  
28 Mills Avenue through 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue N., Fargo  
29 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. through Forest Avenue, Fargo  
30 Moorhead streets, north and south  
31 Moorhead avenues, north and south, Dilworth, Comstock, Felton, Glyndon &  
Lakes property  
32 West Fargo, Hwy 81, Colfax, Walcott, Wheatland & Misc.  
33 South avenues, Fargo (unprocessed)  
34 South streets, Fargo (unprocessed)