Finding Aid to the
Fargo, North Dakota Postcard Collection

Olin, Ronald, collector
Fargo, N.D. Postcard Collection, [190- - 200-]
1,260 postcards & photographic postcards
Collection number: Photo 2001

OVERVIEW

Links: View images on Digital Horizons

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

Provenance: Donated by Dr. Ronald Olin, 2004 (Acc. 2728).

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

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

BIOGRAPHY

Ronald Olin was born at Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1935. He received his B.S. and M.D. medical degrees from the Manitoba Medical College in Winnipeg, graduating in 1959. From 1960 to 1964 he was a fellow in internal medicine at the Mayo Clinic of Rochester, Minn. He practiced medicine at Fargo Clinic & MeritCare in Fargo, N.D. from 1964 until retiring in 1988.

One of Dr. Olin’s long-time interests has been postal history. He was a charter member of the North Dakota Postal History Society formed in 1983. Dr. Olin has published numerous articles on North Dakota postcards and postal history in such publications as LaPosta, Dakota Collector of the Dakota Postal History Society and the Twin City Postcard Club’s journal. Although interested in Dakota postal history, Dr. Olin also has collected extensively in postcard images of North Dakota cities and towns. Dr. Olin is retired and lives in Fargo.
SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Ronald Olin Postcard Collection comprises over 1,200 postcards documenting Fargo, N.D. The postcards in the collection date mainly from the early to mid-twentieth century, although there are also postcards from throughout the later part of the twentieth century. Their hey-day of postcards was from 1907 to 1915. Most of the cards in the collection were commercially produced and represent well-known Fargo buildings, monuments, and views. A small number of the cards, though, document town life, including street scenes. In addition to documenting the built landscape of Fargo as it existed during the last hundred years, some of these images may not exist in any other format.

Some of the cards were produced privately and are in fact photographs that have been printed onto postcard paper. These were created by individuals for the consumption of their own small circle of family and friends, although some were mass-produced and sold in retail stores. Such postcards are called ‘photographic postcards.’ The two types of postcards are integrated in this collection.

Postcards are not only visual records. Many of the postcards were in fact mailed and so contain written messages, stamps, and postmarks. The backs of the cards were also printed with information about the publisher, captions describing the image, and ornamentation. The printed text, along with the stamp and postmark, can help to date and place the manufacture and use of the cards. Alternatively, the captions and written messages contain a wealth of information that can be used to learn about the postcard’s image or to illuminate the attitudes and interests of the past.

The Olin Collection organization follows generally Dr. Olin’s original groupings, although they have been organized into five series: Downtown Fargo, Buildings, Businesses, Topical and North Dakota State University. Researchers should consult the Contents Listing for a detailed folder-by-folder breakdown of the collection.

Downtown Fargo is the most heavily documented area of the city in this collection, with the heaviest emphasis on the major commercial streets of Broadway, Main Avenue (formerly Front Street), N.P. Avenue and First Avenue North. The Downtown Fargo Series also includes aerial views, elevated views and panoramic views. In addition to general views of the streets, there are images of specific buildings that are arranged by address and so noted in the contents listing. For some, the business or building name is also noted.

The Buildings Series organizes postcards by type of building, such as churches, city and federal buildings, hospitals, hotels and motels, and schools. Most of the building types are subdivided by the specific church, hotel, school, etc.

The Businesses Series contains a small number of images of specific businesses that are scattered across Fargo. These have been organized alphabetically by the name of the business. These also are newer postcards, published in the second half of the twentieth century and printed in color.

The Topical Series includes a very diverse collection of images. This series contains those images of a more social nature, documenting town life. This series also includes humorous postcards, ‘Greetings from Fargo’ cards, montages, and an impressive collection of view books that contain multiple views of Fargo. Other categories include delivery vehicles, disasters, events, golf courses, Hector Airport, monuments & statues, parks, people, radio stations, and quite a number of Great Northern and Northern Pacific railway depot and train scenes. A number of images attributed as located in Fargo or of a building with the name Fargo, but not located in Fargo were grouped under ‘Faux Fargo.’
The North Dakota State University Series has been organized into two subseries: Buildings and Topical. The Building subseries are the most extensive and includes image of most of the main buildings on the campus, particularly from circa 1907 to the late 1910s. Also included in this subseries are aerals, photomontages, panoramic views, and monuments. The Topical subseries includes only ten postcards which are more of a social nature, with many including people or groups of people. All the topical images are actual photographic prints. Of particular interest are the postcards of the Student Life Train, Men’s Track and Field and the Military Band from World War era.

FILE.ITEM CONTENTS (No of images)

1 Finding aid

Downtown Fargo Series

2 Aerials (9)
3 Elevated views (5)
4 Panoramic views (9)
4a General views (3)
5 General downtown buildings (15)
5.1 American Life and Casualty Insurance Co.
5.2 Merchants National Bank and Trust Co.
5.3 Merchants National Bank and Trust Co.
5.4 Elks Lodge
5.5 Fargo Chamber of Commerce
5.6 Finch Brothers, importers of stations and mares
5.7 Forum Communications
5.8 Gate City Savings
5.9 Knerr Dairy Company
5.10 Pioneer Mutual Life (A.O.U.W.)
5.11 Pioneer Mutual Life
5.12 Pioneer Mutual Life
5.13 Sons of Norway
5.14 Walker Opera House
5.15 Walker Opera House

Broadway— (104)

6 General (4)
6.1 Broadway and First Ave. looking north / Broadway looking north
6.2 Broadway and First Ave. looking south / Broadway and First Ave.
6.3 Broadway and Second Ave. looking north / Broadway and N.P. Ave.
6.4 Red River Mall
7 South (Armory) (5)
8 Looking North from Main Ave. (29)
9 Looking South from N. P. Ave. (5)
10 15 – First National Bank (2)
11 22 – Edwards Building (2)
12 23 – First National Bank (1)
13 Looking North from N.P. Ave. (18)
14 Looking South from First Ave. (2)
15 56 – Pirie’s Café (1)
65 – Fargo Café (1)
67-69 – Roger’s Art Store & M.R. O’Neill Hardware (1)
Looking North (from First Ave.) (5)
Looking South from Second Ave. (5)
102 (Straus interior) (2)
114-118 (Black Building) (3)
124 (Economy Drug interior) (1)
200 block (3)
219 (Ted Evanson Men’s Wear)
301-324 (2)
302 (R & G. Bootery interior) (2)
309 (Club Cigar Store interior) (1)
314 (Fargo Theatre) (5)
313 (Scherling Studio interior) (1)
319 (Y.W.C.A.) (1)
401-431 (1)
509 (Ford Motor Co.) (2)
North (3)
Main Avenue— (27)
101 (Dakota Monument)
500 block (2)
520-524 (Fargo National Bank) (3)
600 block looking west (10)
600 block looking east (3)
606 (Fargo Drug interior) (1)
618 (Monson Trunk Co.—largest trunk in world) (2)
618-624 (deLendrecie) (3)
700 block (Waldorf Hotel) (2)
708 (Waldorf Pharmacy interior) (1)
N.P. Avenue— (23)
General (1)
117-121 (J.I. Case Building) (1)
201 (Fargo Marble & Granite Works) (1)
424 (Corwin-Churchill Co.) (1)
500 block (12)
502-506 (Greyhound Bus Station) (1)
600 block (3)
611 (Orpheum Theatre) (1)
619 (Bridal Shop window display at night) (1)
648-650 (Robb-Lawrence Building) (3)
First Avenue North— (17)
General views (8)
301 (Fargo Ice Cream & Cider Co.) (1)
632 (Y.M.C.A.) (5)
635-637 (Pioneer Life building) (2)
800 (International Harvester Co.) (1)
Roberts Street— (6)
General views (2)
107 (Dawson Insurance) (2)
112-114 (A.O.U.W.) (3)
Buildings Series

59    Cass County Courthouse (19)
60    Children’s Museum at Yunker Farm (1)
61    Children’s Village (1)
62    Churches— (66)
   62.1-2 Christian Science (2)
   62.3    Elim Lutheran (1)
   62.4    First Assembly of God (4)
   62.5-8 First Baptist (4)
   62.9    First Christian (1)
62.10-14 First Congregational (5)
62.40-49 First Lutheran (10)
62.15-19 First Methodist (5)
62.20-32 First Presbyterian (13)
   62.33  Gethsemane Episcopal (3)
   62.36  Immanuel Lutheran (1)
   62.37-38a Olivet Lutheran (3)
   62.39  Pontoppidan Lutheran (1)
62.50-66 St. Mary’s Catholic (17)
63    Fargo City Buildings— (21)
   63.1-14 City Hall
   63.15-18 Civic Memorial Auditorium
   63.19-21 Fargodome
64    Federal Buildings— (19)
   64.1-11 Post Office (1st Ave.)
   64.12-18 Post Office and Federal Building (1st Ave.)
   64.19   Post Office (2nd Ave.)
65    Hospitals— (77)
   65.1-6 Dakota Hospital and Clinic
   65.6a-7 Fargo Sanitarium
   65.8-34 St. John’s Hospital
65.35-53, 75 St. Luke’s Hospitals and Fargo Clinic
   65.54   St. Olaf
65.55-74 Veterans Administration
66    Hotels and Motels— (68)
   66.1    Annex (1)
   66.2-3 Biltmore Motor Hotel (2)
   66.4    Bison (1)
66.5    Fargo House (1)
   66.6-24 Gardner (19)
   66.25-28 Graver (4)
66.29   Holiday Inn
   66.29a Jun’s Cabin Court (1)
   66.30-32 Metropole (3)
   66.33   Motel 6 (1)
66.34-35 Oak Manor Motor Lodge (2)
66.36-41 Powers (6)
   66.42-43 Prescott (2)
   66.44   Radisson (1)
   66.45-46 Town House Motor Inn (2)
66.47-48  Viking (2)
66.49-67  Waldorf (Earle) (19)
66.68  Washington House (1)
67  Lutheran Welfare Society of North Dakota (1)
68  Masonic Grand Lodge and Masonry (28)
69  North Dakota Children’s Society (1)
70  St. John’s Orphanage (1)
71  Schools (72)
71.1-11  Aakers Business College (11)
71.12  American Business College (1)
71.13-14  Agassiz (2)
71.15  Ben Franklin (1)
71.16-21  Central High School (6)
71.22-31  Dakota Business College (10)
71.32-43  High School (12)
71.44  Horace Mann (1)
71.45-47  Interstate Business College (3)
71.48  Longfellow (1)
71.49-57  Oak Grove (9)
71.58  Longfellow (1)
71.59-70a  Sacred Heart Academy (13)
71.71  Shanley High School (1)
71.72  Woodrow Wilson (1)
72  Svee Memorial Children’s Home (1)

**Businesses Series** (16)

73.1  Bergstrom & Crowe Furniture Co.
73.2  The Bowler interiors
73.3  Bronk’s Package Store
73.4  Cities Service Oil Co. (Bill Alexander’s Service Station, 1016 Front St.)
73.5  Congress Inc., 601 15th Street North
73.6  Crane & Ordway Co. interior
73.17  Federal Land Bank Association, 26 North University
73.7-8  Iver’s Funeral Home (2)
73.9  Kroll’s Diner
73.10  Otto’s Grocery interior
73.11  Shotwell Nursery green house (?)
73.12  Union Storage & Transfer Co.
73.13-15  West Acres Shopping Center
73.16  Western States Life
73.17  Federated Land Bank Associations
73.18  Stadium Club Restaurant and Lounge

**Topical Series**

74  Agriculture (13)
74.1-5  Binding grain (5)
74.6-12  Threshing (7)
74.13  Farm house (1)
75  American Legion Honor Roll plaque (1)
76  Aviation—Ordinance Dept flights, 1919 (4)
77  Baseball (4)
78  Candidates for election (7)
    J. Walter Olson, for City Commission
    Ed Schafer for governor
    Jo Ellingson, for N.D. House of Representatives
    Tim Flakoll, Blair Thoreson, Byron Clark for N.D. Legislature
    Brad Wimmer for Park Board
    Birch Birdick for Cass County State’s Attorney
    Yes on Measure #2
79  Delivery vehicles, automobiles & horses (5)
    Fargo Laundry delivery wagon
    Luger Furniture delivery wagon
    Automobiles
    Hart Motor Express
80  Disasters (4)
    Bristol & Sweet fire
    Red River flood near Fargo College
    Hail storm in business district
    Fire scene
    Red River Flood – April 2006
81  Dogs (6)
82  Events (12)
    North Dakota National Guard encampment, 1910
    Temporary hall for Billy Sunday visit
    B.P.O.E.
    Prince Gustav of Sweden visit, 1926
    Parade on Front Street
    Big Iron 10th anniversary
83  Fairgrounds (13)
84  Fargo College (25)
85  ‘Faux’ Fargo (4)
    Carnegie Library
    Gardner Hotel
    Fargo Theatre, Sycamore, Ill.
    Store front advertising Pride of Dakota flour, Fargo Mill, Fargo, N.D.
86  Fine Arts Club—Adv. postcards for Coburn Players they sponsored, 1914 (8)
87  Forsberg House museum (3)
88  Golf courses (5)
    Edgewood
    Fargo Country Club clubhouse
89  Grand Army of the Republic (1)
90  Greeting postcards (87)
    Leather postcards
    With poems
    Humorous message or image
    Pennant with text in partial Dutch spelling
    Pennant postcards
    General
    New Year
    Easter
90.79 Thanksgiving
90.70-89 Christmas
91 ‘Greetings from Fargo’ (6)
92 Hector Airport (9)
93 Humorous (19)
93.1 People on wagon on street
93.2 Eagle over Broadway
93.3 Bear and people on Broadway
93.4-6 People behind boat prop
93.7-8 People behind barrel prop
93.9-10 People in air balloon basket prop
93.11 People behind wagon prop
93.12-19 People behind train prop
93.20-21 Metal postcards
93.22 People with cigars
94 Charles Lindberg (3)
95 Monuments, statues, etc. (25)
95.1-6 Indian statue on Broadway
95.7-8 Rollo statue
95.9-15 Henrik Wergeland statue, Island Park
95.16-18 Civil War monument, Island Park
95.19 Statue of Liberty
95.20-21 Sod Buster
95.22 Dedication to a Birthplace
95.23-24 Roger Maris, Lindenwood Park
95.25 “Pioneer Protection” mural, Pioneer Mutual
96 Montages (5)
97 Nursing homes (5)
97.1-2 Americana
97.3-4 Bethany
97.5 Villa Nazareth
98 Parks (46)
98.1-3 General
98.4-37 Island Park
98.38 Lindenwood
98.39-42 Oak Grove
98.43-46 River Drive
99 People (15)
99.1 Alf Amundson
99.2 W. Andrew
99.3-5 Mark Andrews family
99.6 C. A. Blix
99.7-12 Quentin Burdick
99.13 Fender Benders and Sherwin Linton
99.14 F. W. Johnson
99.15 John P. Nygaard
99.16 Edna Williams
99.17 Herman Fjelde
100 Public Library (6)
101 Radio stations (14)
101.1-4 KFGO
101.5-12a WDAY
101.13-14 Unidentified
102 Railroads—Great Northern (22)
103 Railroads—Northern Pacific (45)
103.1-7 Street side of depot
103.8-16 Trains and passengers (looking west)
103.17-21 Depot looking west
103.22-29 East side park, including Shotwell’s
103.30-42 West side park
103.43-45 People in front of Fargo Northern Pacific railroad car prop
104 Railroads—Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul (1)
105 Red River & Bridges (47)
105.1-24 General views
105.25-29 Bridges
105.30-31 Winter
105.32-40 Dams
105.41-46 Foot bridge and swimming area
106 Residential (15)
106.1-7 Street scenes
106.8-14 Houses
106.15 Bluemont Lakes
107 Restaurants (2)
108 ‘Showboat on the Red’ (1)
109 View Books (10)
109.1 Fargo-Moorhead
109.2 Greetings from Fargo, North Dakota / Souvenir folder of Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota
109.3 Miniatures, Fargo, North Dakota
109.4 Souvenir folder of Fargo, N.D.
109.5 Souvenir folder of Fargo, N.D.
109.6 Souvenir letter card from Fargo, North Dakota
109.7 Souvenir of Fargo, North Dakota
109.8 Souvenir post cards of Fargo, N.D.
109.9 Souvenir folder of Red River Valley of the North, Fargo, Grand Forks
109.10 [Untitled], ‘Compliments of Stone Piano Company’

North Dakota State University Series

Buildings— (125)
110 Aerials (9)
111 Photomontages (4)
112 Panoramic views (18)
113.1 Alba Bales House
113.2 Barns, Cow
113.3-4 Barns, Horse
113.5-9 Bentson-Bunker Field house
113.10-12 Bjornson Obelisk
113.13 Burgum Hall
113.14-20 Ceres Hall
113.21-22 Chemistry Building
113.23-24 Churchill Hall
113.25-26  Engineering Center  
113.27-36a  Campus entrance  
113.37-41  Francis Hall  
113.42  High Rises  
113.43-44  Library  
113.45-46  Ladd Hall  
113.47-48  E. Morrow Lebedeff Hall  
113.49  Little Country Theatre  
113.50  Loftsgard Hall  
113.51  Mechanical Arts & Old Engineering  
113.52  Memorial Union  
113.53-59  Minard Hall  
113.60  Morrill Hall  
113.61  Music Education Building  
113.62  Northern Crop Science Laboratory (USDA)  
113.63-76  Old Main  
113.77-82  Putnam Hall (formerly Carnegie Library)  
113.83  Shepperd Arena  
113.84-89  South Engineering  
113.90  Theta Chi Fraternity  
113.91  Van Es (Old)  
113.92-93  Y.M.C.A.  

Topical— (10)  
114.1  Winter scene at main entrance  
114.2  Crack gun squad, at Panama-Pacific Exposition, San Francisco, 1915  
114.3  Military Band, First Contingent, NDAC Training Detachment  
114.4  ROTC student in uniform (unidentified)  
114.5  Pres. John H. Shepperd in horse-drawn buggy  
114.6  Student Life Train, 1913  
114.7  Students—Group, circa 1906  
114.8  Track and Field, Men’s—Pole vault, ca. 1907-1912  
114.9-10  Greeting postcards