

Finding Aid to the Gardar Homemakers Club Records

Gardar Homemakers Club

Gardar Homemakers Club Records, 1926-1985

2.25 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 269

[History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

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

Provenance: Donated by Gardar Homemakers Club, Marcella Melstad, 1997 (Acc. 2486).

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HISTORY

Cecilia Eylofson organized the Gardar Homemakers Club in the fall of 1926. Mrs. Eylofson served as the organization's first president and Mrs. J.G. Havedson served as first secretary. The homemakers club performed a variety of services to the local community and they participated in a variety of activities.

The homemakers held regular meetings in order to both socialize and participate in training sessions. The woman would select leaders to attend various training sessions held by the state Extension Service. These leaders would then return to the club to teach the other members what they had learned. The topics covered ranged from cooking, to sewing cloths, to refinishing furniture and laying linoleum. Anything

that a housewife could do to improve her family's home life was a potential project for the homemakers. When the women weren't busy learning how to care for their families, they spent time socializing. The scrapbooks are filled with memorabilia from plays and dinners attended by the homemakers.

The homemakers were involved in the local 4-H organization and often served as leaders and mentors to the children that participated in the 4-H program. Both organizations, the 4-H and the homemakers club, were affiliated under the North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service.

Some of the most important work accomplished by the homemakers was the numerous fundraisers they sponsored. They held fundraisers such as special lunches, rummage sales, bazaars, and carnivals, with the proceeds donated to causes such as community improvement. The homemakers often spent money repairing a local church where they sometimes held meetings. They donated money to the Red Cross, and they sent money to the Good Samaritan School (a crippled children's home in Fargo, N.D.). They "adopted" a girl from the School for the Blind in Grafton, N.D. They would visit her and send her presents on occasion. The homemakers also used their fundraising proceeds to send Christmas presents to local children and also to ill community members.

The women in the Gardar Homemakers Club also participated in local history projects. They assembled one scrapbook pertaining to the Icelandic Centennial in 1978 as many of the Homemakers and others in their community were descendants of immigrants from Iceland. This was a celebration of the founding of Icelandic towns in Northeastern North Dakota. In the 1930s the homemakers collected "Pioneer Mother" stories. The women in the club recorded stories and information from their mothers and grandmothers whom had originally come from Iceland including a few from Norway. These stories vary widely from a basic listing of the pioneer woman's children and grandchildren to detailed stories of the ordeals the mothers went through to come to the Gardar region and make a home.

The last meeting of the Gardar Homemaker's Club was held in August of 1985. The remaining seven members voted to drop out of the Extension Club, but to continue on as the Gardar Friendship Club.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Gardar Homemaker's Club Records** consist of seven series: Meeting Minutes, Treasurer's Ledgers, Major Project Record Books, Project Instructions and Illustrations, Pioneer Mothers Biographies, Subject Files, and Scrapbooks.

The [Meeting Minutes Series](#) consists of one folder of loose documents from the 1930s to 1973 and also several bound, secretary's books. The secretary's books range from 1928 to 1977 and include lists of members, attendance records, and the minutes from meetings.

The [Treasurer's Ledgers Series](#) includes two ledgers that cover the years 1957-1983.

The [Major Project Record Books Series](#) consists of booklets ranging from 1929 to 1953 and include information as to what projects were completed by what members. The projects cover a variety of topics

such as: installing linoleum, refinishing furniture, sewing, and various cooking and kitchen management projects.

The [Project Instructions and Illustrations Series](#) includes some project manuals and instruction booklets from the years 1930-1933. These were produced by the North Dakota Cooperative Extension through the NDAC and covered a variety of topics such as: refinishing furniture, remodeling closets, sewing, dying clothing, and methods for cleaning clothing such as dry cleaning.

The [Pioneer Mothers Biography Series](#) consists of biographies taken by club members of their immigrant mothers and grandmothers during the late 1930s. Although a few of these women came from Norway, a majority of them were from Iceland. The biographies range from incomplete listings of the children and grandchildren a woman had to lengthy recounts of stories and experiences of settling in a new country.

The [Subject Files Series](#) contains information about the homemakers such as the club correspondence and two cultural arts scrapbooks detailing specific ways the club involved themselves in cultural issues. The homemakers set up booths at the local fair and the subject files include some fair booth scorecards that were created by the booth judges. There is a notebook listing the library records of the club. The library was acquired from a previous club some of the members had belonged to. The homemakers maintained and added to this library as a service to its members. The subject files also include officer and membership lists, some organizational information consisting of pamphlets from the state Extension Service directing procedures and ceremonies of the homemakers. The subject files also includes newsletters, newspaper clippings, press releases, and some recipes and cooking pamphlets used by the homemakers in some of their training sessions.

The [Scrapbooks Series](#) includes a variety of information covering the club's activities from 1926 to 1985. One scrapbook is a listing of the officers from 1926 to 1949, one scrapbook is devoted to some of the projects the homemakers participated in, and one scrapbook is about the Icelandic Centennial in 1978. Three scrapbooks contain general information about the homemaker's club from 1947 to 1985. These include photographs, yearly programs, and newspaper clippings. Some of the later scrapbooks, those from the 1980s, include meeting minutes and membership lists.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Historical material, and Finding aid
	Meeting Minutes Series
1/2	1934-1973
1/3	1928-1933
1/4	1933-1938

1/5	1939-1944
1/6	1944-1949
1/7	1949-1954
1/8	1954-1959
1/9	1959-1964
1/10	1964-1969
1/11	1969-1974
2/1	1974-1977

Treasurer's Ledger Series

2/2	1957-1970
2/3	1970-1983

Project Records Series

2/4	1929-1938
2/5	1938-1953

Project Instructions and Illustrations Series

2/6	1930-1933
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Pioneer Mothers Biographies Series

2/7	A-G
2/8	I-Z

Subject Files Series

2/9	Correspondence, 1938-1974
2/10	Cultural arts scrapbook, 1975-1976
2/11	Fair booth scorecard, 1970-1971
2/12	Library records, 1934
2/13	Officer and membership lists, 1926-1972
2/14	Organizational information
2/15	Newsletters, 1941, 1946, and 1970
2/16	Newspaper clippings
2/17	Press releases, 1933, 1971-1972
2/18	Recipes and cooking pamphlets

Scrapbooks Series

3/1	Projects, 1928-1930
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3/2	Officers, 1926-1949
5/1	Icelandic Centennial, 1878-1978
	General—
4/1	1947-1969
5/2	1970-1981
5/3	1981-1985