

Finding Aid to the Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club Records

Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club (Fargo, N.D.)

Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club records, 1964-1998

.2 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 333

[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 the Club, 1999 (Acc. 2541)

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

Copyrights: The Institute owns the copyrights.

Citation: [Identification of item]. Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club Records, MS 333, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

The Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club was organized in 1898 at Fargo, N.D. and held formal dinner dances for many years in the ballroom of the Waldorf Hotel in Fargo, then the most sumptuous hostelry in the community, but no longer in existence. In later years the events were sited at the Harvest Hall of the Fargo Holiday Inn. The members of the organization were all men who could invite female partners to their evenings. The original purpose was to enable single men to meet single ladies, so the original couples were unmarried. Members who married still participated, but as they had forsworn bachelorhood, were humorously titled Benedicts, after famed traitor Benedict Arnold, and hence the name of the organization. In the early years the couples arrived in horse drawn carriages, the ladies in elegant gowns, the gentlemen in white tie, tailcoat, silk hat, and white gloves. Dancing would continue until two or three

o'clock in the morning followed by a breakfast. Several dances were held during the year. More recently, there has been a formal gourmet several course dinner (instead of the morning breakfast), followed by an evening of cotillion dancing in which partners traded off according to a color coded system. In later years, B&B events have been held only once or twice a year, a Fall cocktail party and a formal New Year's Eve dinner and dance. The ladies continued to wear fine gowns, though generally of simpler design than the early examples; the men, no longer in white tie and tails, wore black tie and black dinner jackets (vulgarly known as "tuxedos.") The membership in B&B was by invitation only and had a restricted number. The fee per couple for the New Year's Eve party varied but has been around \$140 in the later years. In 1998 the membership stood at 202, mostly couples but with around a dozen singles. Of these, 52 couples and 2 singles were listed as inactive members, which list included Governor and Mr. Edward Schaefer. Though the early membership appeared to be limited to men, the recent lists have been mostly married couples. The singles are men, except for a Susan and a Lynn (?), so at least one female single in the list. In more recent years the organization was also somewhat less restrictive in membership. Of the total membership, it was common for half, or somewhat less than half, to participate on any given occasion.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club records consist of five series: Meeting Minutes, Membership, Financial, Historical, and Subject Files.

The [Meeting Minutes Series](#) of the board of directors of the Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club contain only a few items from five years between 1979 and 1995. There were undoubtedly a far greater number of meetings over the years, though how frequent is not altogether clear. In the later years the club generally had only two events: a Halloween dance and a New Year's Eve dance. At least in these later years, the board probably only met once or two or three times at most. The minutes preserved in this file, include ones from 1979, 1989, 1991, 1994 and 1995.

The [Membership Series](#) is much more complete, not to say voluminous, consisting of membership lists over many years in various formats. But this series also does not go far back in the history of the club. The Membership Series lists are from 1964 to 1998.

The [Financial Series](#) includes what appear to be annual statements covering most of the years from 1985 through 1995.

The [Historical Series](#) contains a few newspaper clippings over the years in which the club is mentioned and a letter.

The [Subject Files Series](#) contains an assortment of varied memorabilia primarily invitations and programs for the club's dances, and a guest book of attendees at what may have been the last two dances held by the club in 1998.

SEPARATION RECORD

Color print of attendees of the 1998, 100th year Bachelors and Benedicts Dance Club
(separated from the manuscript collection and processed as Photo 51.228)

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid
	Meeting Minutes Series
1/2	Minutes 1979, 1989, 1991, 1994, 1995
	Membership Series
1/3	Membership files 1964 – 1987
1/4	Membership files 1988 – 1998
	Financial Series
1/5	Statements 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995
	Historical Series
1/6	Newspaper clippings and letter
	Subject Files Series
1/7	Memorabilia
1/8	1998 guest book