

Finding Aid to the Ransom County Trust Company Records

Ransom County Trust Company (Sheldon, N.D.)

Ransom County Trust Company Records, 1899-1949

121 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 764

[History](#)

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OVERVIEW

Links: [Abstracts to business case files](#) compiled by Rev. A.A.A. Schmirler

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

Provenance: Donated by Frank E. Shaw, 1956 and Thomas Pierce, 1957 (Acc. 764, 855).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Ransom County Trust Company Records (Mss 764), Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

The Ransom County Immigration Society was established in 1888 at Sheldon, N.D. Its initial purpose was the promotion of immigration and the development of lands in the immediate locality of Sheldon. It was incorporated in 1898 with the officers being F.W. Froemke, president; P.W. Froemke, vice president; Thomas Pierce, vice president; Ed Pierce, secretary and attorney; Frank E. Shaw, assistant secretary; A.H. Lindemann, treasurer; and A.L. Opsal, assistant treasurer. The company was one of the largest real estate

firms in North Dakota and was instrumental in bringing hundreds of farmers from Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana to the state, settling on farms in Ransom, Cass, Sargent and other counties.

After the initial purpose of settlement of lands around Sheldon, the company focus changed to funds investment, farm management, farm lands, farm loans, insurance, and the handling of estates. The firm purchased a large tract of land in Foster County, N.D. circa 1908, establishing an office at Bordulac. It helped bring many farmers to that area.

On July 1, 1916 its name was changed to Ransom County Trust Company. At that time its assets and liabilities totaled \$664,353.00. The company continued into the 1940s, although the exact time it closed is not known.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Ransom County Trust Company Records** document the operation of a major North Dakota land company through an extensive collection of its business case files dating from circa 1899 to 1940s relating primarily to business transactions between the corporation and its customers. In addition there is extensive correspondence and business ledgers. The records provide an excellent insight into the economic and agricultural climate of the state during this period. The business case files abstracts (link provided above) written by Rev. A.A.A. Schmirler are an invaluable research tool in using this collection. Although they only cover roughly half of all the business case files, they provide an astonishing wealth of detailed information. Often he makes reference in the summaries to related case files or the same individuals. At times he also interjects his personal opinion regarding a person or business matter. The records have been organized into eight series: Corporate, Business case files, Topical, Correspondence, Financial records, Miscellaneous Financial records, and Frank Shaw.

The [Corporate Series](#) includes the minutes of the company directors, article of incorporation and bylaws. The time period covers from June 7, 1900 through 1933. In addition there is a stock register ledger that covers from 1913 to 1929.

The [Business Case Files Series](#) contain a wealth of detailed information regarding thousands of business transactions handled by the company. The content of each file varies, but many contain correspondence, land and property descriptions and inventories, legal documents. They also contain valuable information on the individuals involved, many of whom were living in other, eastern states and had invested in North Dakota farm land. It is clear through reading of the summaries prepared by Rev. Schmirler that the files document the many individuals who financial difficulties. The original order by case number has been retained and begin with number 801 and continue to file number 7151. Schmirler's abstracts cover from business case files 801 to 5036, although there are some gaps, particularly from files 4899 to 5037. Also some case files apparently were missing when the collection was received from the donor and which Schmirler notes in his summaries.

The company also used the same case file numbering to file other business related matters, as well as documents regarding local issues in Sheldon and nearby. These too were summarized by Rev. Schmirler and part of the abstracts.

There are two index volumes, no doubt used as an index to the case files by office staff, that lists the cases by title and the case file number. Whether they are complete for the entire case files is not known.

The [Topical Series](#) consists of miscellaneous business files found among the unorganized papers in the collection but centered around a subject. Thus they have been brought together into a single series, although the files are not well organized within each. Of particular interest would be the correspondence and other documents related to their land investments in Florida, early stock certificates, and a small series of farm contracts.

The [Correspondence Series](#) spans from 1907 to the 1940s, although the vast majority covers the years 1907 to 1917. It includes both incoming and outgoing letters. They document the general business affairs of the company, and thus not place in the business case files series. What distinguishes at least some of the general correspondence from the business case files is not known. There are also other supporting documents with the correspondence. The correspondence came to the archives in a file cabinet in which it apparently had been originally maintained at the office headquarters. Most of the correspondence is in general chronological order, although there are occasionally dated correspondence that is found in another year's files.

Most of the correspondence was not in file folders, thus its processed order reflects the original order as found in the filing cabinet. The correspondence that was in original folders has been retained as such, with the original file label used in the folder listing below. These files contain incoming and outgoing correspondence and other documents with the person or organization found on the label. No other years of correspondence were received from the donor, and thus their disposition is not known.

The [Financial Records Series](#) is a quite incomplete collection of various financial volumes to include journals, ledgers, cash journals, check registers and collection registers for the Ransom County Trust Company. The financial volumes which are not identified specific to the company have been organized into the [Miscellaneous Financial Records Series](#). They likely are related to the company or one of the many subsidiary companies or for individual corporate executives. The final series, **Frank Shaw Series**, consists of a long run of cash journals that are believed to be his, although there is no specific information with them to indicate such, other than some donor information. They do cover a long span of time, documenting in detail expenses and income.

The [Maps Series](#) includes a small number of items that were found scattered within the collection and withdrawn to allow them to be unfolded and better preserved in large-format folders and files. In addition a small number of photographs were scattered within the collection and have been withdrawn. They currently have not been processed as a separate collection.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid, and Historical information

Corporate Series

114/1	Minutes of meetings, 1900-1912
114/2	Minutes of meetings, 1913-1933
112/2	Stock register, 1913-1929

Box Business Case Files Series

1	801-952
2	953-1085
3	1086-1220
4	1221-1335
5	1336-1460
6	1461-1600
7	1601-1740
8	1741-1885
9	1885-1999
10	2000-2140
11	2141-2258
12	2259-2355
13	2356-2463
14	2464-2560
15	2561-2683
16	2684-2775
17	2776-2885
18	2886-3015
19	3016-3111
20	3112-3189
21	3190-3285
22	3286-3372
23	3373-3410
24	3411-3455
25	3456-3546
26	3547-3596
27	3597-3653
28	3654-3698
29	3700-3777
30	3778-3812
31	3813-3860
32	3861-3910
33	3911-3983
34	3984-4045
35	4046-4100
36	4101-4172

37	4173-4219
38	4220-4371
39	4372-4463
40	4464-4534
41	4536-4662
42	4663-4724
43	4725-4762 ¹ / ₄
44	4672 ¹ / ₂ -4839
45	4840-4902 ¹ / ₂
46	4903-4969
47	4970-5003
48	5005-5048
49	5049-5118
50	5119-5150
51	5151-5180
52	5182-5240
53	5241-5281
54	5282-5330
55	5331-5360
56	5361-5429
57	5430-5470
58	5471-5504
59	5505-5542
60	5543-5579
61	5580-5633
62	5634-5675
63	5676-5689
64	6590-5721
65	5722-5740 ¹ / ₂ (file 5740 at end of box 103)
66	5741-5770
67	5772-5797
68	5798-5854
69	5855-5886
70	5887-5924
71	5925-5980
72	5981-6024
73	6024A-6042
74	6043-6077
75	6077 ¹ / ₂ -6114
76	6115-6137
77	6138-6185
78	6185 ¹ / ₂ -6230
79	6230A-6275
80	6276-6323
81	6324-6374
82	6375-6414
83	6415-6474
84	6475-6501
85	6502-6527
86	6528-6573
87	6574-6631

88	6631½-5565
89	6657-6679
90	6680-6722
91	6723-6747
92	6748-6812
93	6813-6870
94	6870½-6883
95	6884-6930
96	6931-6951
97	6954-6999½
98	7000-7025
99	7026-7046
100	7048-7087
101	7088-7126
102	7127-7151
103/1-4	5740
112/1 & 113	Index volumes (2)

Box/Folder Topical Series

103/5-6	Farm contracts
103/7-10	Florida Properties (4)
103/11-13	Insurance
103/14	Stock certificates
103/15-25	Unidentified misc. files (11)
103/26	<i>Catalog, North Dakota Lands, Fall 1907</i>

Correspondence Series

1907-1908—	
104/1	P.H Butler, abstractor, Lisbon, N.D.
104/2	W.J. Donlin
104/3-4	Enderlin State Bank (2)
104/5	Minnesota Loan and Trust Co.
104/6	Minot State Bank
104/7	Northern Land Co., Enderlin, N.D.
104/8-9	Northern Trust Co.
104/10-11	Pierce and Tenneson, Fargo, N.D.
104/12-13	F.A. Wheeler
104/14-27	General correspondence
105-1-4	General correspondence
1908-1909—	
105/5	V.E. Bemis
105/6-7	Enderlin State Bank
105/8	R.A. Froemke, Bordulac, N.D.
105/9	Minnesota Loan and Trust Co.
105/10	Northern Trust Co.
105/10a	Pierce and Tenneson
105/11	Ransom County Treasurer
105/12-13	F.A. Wheeler
105/14-29	General correspondence

106/1-11	General correspondence
	1909—
106/12	Minnesota Loan and Trust Co.
106/13	Northern Trust Co.
106/14	Pierce, Tenneson & Cupler
106/15	Ransom County Treasurer
106/15a	Register of Deeds (various N.D. counties)
106/16-31	General correspondence
107/1-10	General correspondence
	1910—
107/11	Enderlin State Bank
107/12-13	R.A. Froemke, Bordulac, N.D. (2)
107/14	Minnesota Loan and Trust Co.
107/15-19	Northern Immigration Association (4)
107/20	Northern Trust Co.
107/21	Pierce, Tenneson & Cupler
107/22-33	General correspondence
108/1-10	General correspondence
	1911—
108/11-18	Northern Improvement Association
108/19-26	Northern Improvement Association – General
108/27-36	General correspondence
109/1-18	General correspondence
	1912—
109/19	Enderlin State Bank
109/20-34	General correspondence
110/1-16	General correspondence
110/17-20	1913
110/21	1914
110/22	1915
110/23-36	1916
111/1-5	1916
111/6-8	1917
111/9	1918
111/10	1919
	1920—
111/11	Drake Ballard
111/12	E.H. Dutcher Company
111/13	P.W. Froemke
111/14	Nast & Co., Chicago
111/15	Pacific Gas & Electric
111/16	Sundry Liberty Loan
111/17	Sundry Corporations annual reports
111/18	1920s
111/19	1930s
111/20	1940s
111/21	Ed Pierce, 1902-1917
	Miscellaneous Correspondence Subseries—
111/22	1898-1901
111/23-24	1910-1911 (2)
111/25	1911

111/26-30 Various dates (5)

Financial Records Series

116/1 Collection register, 1912-1928
 116/2 Check register, 1910-1943
 117 Journal #11, 1922-1932
 115 Cash Journal, 1929-1933
 115 Cash Journal, 1932-1947
 118/1 Cash Journal, 1936-1942
 Related companies—
 118/2 Froemke Land Co.: Minutes, articles of incorporation & bylaws, 1918-1936
 119/1 Northern Immigration Association: Bills & Receivable, 1910-1920s
 119/2 Northern Land Company: Combined record book, 1907-1911
 118/3 Sheldon Investment Co. – Check register, 1922-1931

Miscellaneous Financial Records Series

Ledgers—

120/1 1907-1929
 120/2 1919-1928
 120/3 1919-1928
 120/4 1922-1933
 120/5 1924-1927
 120/6 1929-1939
 120/7 1910-1938
 120/8 Check Register, 1931-1946
 120/9 Cash Journal, 1929-1954
 120/10 Bills Receivable, 1921-1941
 120/11 Stock ledger, 1925-1956

Frank Shaw Financial Cash Journals Series

121/1 1929-1930
 121/2 1930-1934
 121/3 1932-1937
 121/4 1933-1939
 121/5 1936-1940
 121/6 1940-1943
 121/7 1943-1945
 121/8 1947-1949
 121/9 1949-1951
 121/10 1951-1952
 121/11 1953/1959
 121/12 1954-1956

Oversize Maps Series

17.1 Plat maps for Alice (Watson) (6 maps), Bordulac (1), Casselton Pollock's Addn. (1), Chaffee, N.D. 1907-1909 (4)
 17.2 Enderlin, N.D. plat maps (5)
 17.3 Kathryn, N.D., 1901-1903 plat maps (6)

- 17.4 Lucca, N.D. Ohms Addn. plat maps, 1903 (3)
17.5 Lynchburg, N.D. (6); Oakes, N.D. plat maps (2)