

Finding Aid to the Emerson Harris Family Photograph Collection

Harris, Emerson, 1834-1898

Emerson Harris Family photograph collection, 1880s-1930s

55 photographic prints

1 tintype

Collection number: Photo 2083

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding aid to [Emerson Harris Family Manuscript Collection](#)

View collection in [Digital Horizons](#).

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

Provenance: Donated by Ward Harris, 1955 (Acc. 319).

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

Copyrights: Copyrights to this collection remain with the creators or are in the public domain.

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

BIOGRAPHY

Emerson (1834- Feb. 15, 1898) and Theresa (June 6, 1842-Aug. 14, 1926) (nee Goodman) Harris moved to the Fargo, N.D. area in 1875 from Minnesota and settled on land along the Red River north of Fargo. They had five sons but one tragically died as a child. The sons' names were Nathan, Henry, Francis (1872-1872), Frank, and Asa. Nathan (a.k.a. Nate) Harris (1868-1946) went to school at the North Dakota Agricultural College (NDSU), was a member of the Yerxa Hose Company, and owned the Pure Food Store located at 23 South 8th Street in Fargo. Nathan Harris was married to Hilma (?). Frank Harris (1874-1954) married Nora Estby (d. 1934) in 1901 and they had five children together. The children were Alive Violet (1902-1918), Gladys (1903-), Blanche Beata (1906-), Frances Olive (1908-1909), and Emerson R. (1911-).

Asa Harris (1878-1952) married Blanche Estby (b. 1934) in 1917 and they had three children, Beata, Ward and Bruce. Both Nora and Blanche were the daughters of Ole Estby, a Norwegian immigrant who came to the Fargo area in the late 1870s and was the owner of the Norman Hotel (which burned down in the 1893 Fargo fire) as well as a farmer in the area. Henry Harris was a bachelor who lived in a house in town with his mother after his father died in 1898. The Harris family farmed in Cass County for decades and the sons' business, called Harris Brothers', was often sought out for their threshing business, which began at the turn of the century when they bought their first threshing rig. Emerson R. Harris (1911-) married Evelyn Ahlbom in 1936 and they had six children. Emerson R. Harris eventually took over his father's portion of the Harris Farm and farmed it until his retirement in 1973.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Emerson Harris Photograph Collection primarily consists of images taken from the mid-1880s until the 1930s. There are a variety of photographic formats including cabinet photographs, photographic postcards, and one tintype. The collection has been organized into three series: People, Farming and Homes, and the Pure Food Grocery Store. The photographs were originally accessioned as part of the manuscript collection donated by the family. The manuscripts have been processed as Mss 81. Most of the images in the People Series are identified as well as the homes that are in the Farming and Homes Series. The Pure Food Grocery Store Series contain images of the store that was owned by Nathan Harris and the images are all interior views of the store and its displays. Originally included in the collection were over 100 postcards. Most of them were correspondence between Theresa Harris and various friends and family. These postcards have been integrated into the Emerson Harris manuscript collection.

The [People Series](#) consists of forty-five images, mainly gelatin silver prints. There are a variety of formats including cabinet cards, photographic postcards, and one tintype. The tintype is an image of a young girl standing besides a toddler that is standing on a chair. Most of the portraits are identified and members of the Harris family. There are some that are identified but the relation to the Harris family is unknown. Such examples are the portraits of Nellie Pearson (?), Joe Lappen, Mrs. Lappen-Mother, Carl Jergins (?), Lawrence (?) Bakken, the Sweger Family (from a Christmas card), a man's portrait merely signed as E.O., a baby girl named Elain Meredith, and a baby named Anthony James.

There are a variety of portraits from various photographic studios in this series. They include Haynes of Fargo, Dakota Territory; Flaten of Fargo and O.E. Flaten of Moorhead; O.P. Frees of Tiffin, Ohio; Olson & Barnes of Fargo; Swem of Fargo; and Sewell of San Francisco. One particularly intriguing image is a portrait taken of a young woman by the Salveson Studio of Thief River Falls, Minnesota. In the Yerxa Hose Company folder, Nathan Harris is identified as one of the men, as well as of J.E. McKendry and a man named Davis. Both McKendry and Davis' portraits were taken by Agnew Photo of Fargo, Dakota.

In the Unidentified Portraits folder there are three images of the same family. The first one is of a man and a woman holding a baby, the next is of the man standing outside in the winter with three young children, and the last is of the woman standing outside with the same three young children. Both of the images that were taken outside were taken in front of the same white house while sitting on the steps leading to the porch.

The [Farming and Homes Series](#) consists of nine images. Identified are two prints of the Emerson home as well as one print of the Andrew Miller home, and one print of the Peter and Anna Stewart home. In the Stewart home image, it is written on the back that Anna Stewart is one of the women in the portrait. There are three prints that are not identified. There are three images of Huber engines in this series. One shows a Huber tractor pulling five grain wagons on a street, likely in Fargo.

The [Pure Food Grocery Store Series](#) consists of three gelatin silver prints that show the interior of various food displays in the grocery store. One image shows a man in the store, among the counters and displays, though he is unidentified.

FOLDER	CONTENT (no. of images)
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	People Series
2	Harris family portraits (5)
3	Goodman family portraits (3)
4	Hjalmer Rehn portraits (2)
5	Identified Portraits-Unknown (10)
6	Unidentified babies and children (7)
7	Unidentified Adults (9)
8	Wedding portraits-Unidentified (2)
9	Unidentified portraits (6)
10	Yerxa Hose Company (3)
	Farming and Homes Series
11	Huber engines (3)
12	Emerson home (2)
13	Identified houses (2)
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	Pure Food Grocery Store Series
15	Pure Food Grocery Store-Interior views (3)