

Finding Aid to the W. J. Lane Company Photograph Collection

W. J. Lane Company

W. J. Lane Company Photograph Collection, 1890-1966

102 photographic prints

Collection number: Photo 2069

[History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [W.J. Lane Company Records](#)
View collection in [Digital Horizons](#).

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

Provenance: Donated by Jeanne Anderson, 1998 (Acc. 2528).

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

Copyrights: Copyrights to this collection is held by the Institute for Regional Studies.

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

HISTORY

William J. Lane was born on March 23, 1867 in Newark, New Jersey. He started his career in Newark as an errand boy for a crockery store. He married Elizabeth Benson in Newark on July 13, 1882. They had four children. He later worked in New York before coming to Fargo, N.D. in April 1886. He acquired a job at the Hance loan office, then worked in the Yerxa's Wigwam general store. In 1887, Lane began working for the First National Bank. He was employed there until 1897 when he worked for the Fargo Loan Agency. For a short time in around 1891 he owned a photography studio. In 1902 he began the W.J. Lane Company. His firm handled real estate loans and insurance. It was incorporated in 1916. Mr. Lane was also involved in many

community activities including the YMCA, in which he served as director for 30 years. He was a member of the Fargo school board, a trustee of the Jamestown College, and active in the Presbyterian Church. He was also very active in many Fargo fraternal organizations and the Republican Party. Mr. Lane died suddenly on October 15, 1931, while speaking at a session of the North Dakota synod of the Presbyterian Church in Devils Lake. After William J. Lane's death the firm was continued by Harry R. Arneson. Mr. Arneson served as the company's president until 1971, when the firm went out of business. Harry Arneson died in May 1973.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The W. J. Lane Company photograph collection gives an insight into the broad involvement of William J. Lane in the community of Fargo, N.D. and the State of North Dakota. Being that he was an early resident of Fargo, his roots became deeply set in this community. He was not only involved in real estate, but he was involved in politics, and many groups and organizations in the city. This involvement is reflected in this collection through his portraits of politicians, the Presbyterian men and those images found in the Clubs and Organizations folder. Mr. Lane also operated a photographic studio from 1891 to 1892. Some views from this time period are embossed with his studio's imprint. Some examples are found in the North Dakota National Guard Co. B at Devils Lake, N.D. encampment folder. His interest in photography and real estate come together in the many views of the city, buildings and homes. Unfortunately, many of the images are in poor condition. They have sustained damage from moisture and mildew. Some images were adhered to others, and were impossible to separate, many were beyond salvage. The collection has been organized into four series: W.J. Lane Company, Fargo, N.D., People, and Subject Files.

The [W. J. Lane Company Series](#) holds photographs of the company staff, several of the building and its window displays. Of particular interest is a 50th anniversary photograph with the staff in front of the building at 609 N.P. Avenue.

The [Fargo, N.D. Series](#) contains nine folders listed in alphabetical order by topic. The Businesses folder holds a photograph of the deLendrecie building with the old cupola visible on its northwest corner. A second business is the Interior Lumber & Fuel Co. taken in 1903. Another folder holds a photograph of the old Cass County Courthouse that burned down in 1903. Photos of the Central High School, accentuating the architectural styles of its arched doorway and interesting brickwork, can be found in another folder. In the churches folder, a very early photograph of St. Mary's Cathedral can be found. Two other churches in this file are the First Presbyterian Church and the First United Methodist Church. Both of these prints have suffered severe moisture damage. The Fargo City Views folder has some very interesting shots of the city in its early years. One view of particular interest was taken from the Fargo College hill looking north over Island Park. Another set of images were taken from the roof of the old Fargo Post Office building. There are also several street scenes taken in front of the Post Office, down N.P. Avenue, and in front of the Headquarters Hotel. Two folders feature some natural disasters that have affected Fargo. The fire folder has two unidentified photographs of a burned out building,

and one photograph of the remains of the Glendenning Motorways building fire on August 24, 1948. The Flood of 1897 folder holds eight different views from that disaster. The Houses folder contains photographs of some homes that the W. J. Lane Company had for sale. Four photographs have been identified, but fourteen remain unidentified. Images of the Physical Education Building, Churchill Hall, Engineering Building and Old Main are found in the North Dakota State University folder.

The [People Series](#) contains a folder with group photographs for several Fargo clubs and organizations. One image of particular interest in this folder is one of the Fargo Commercial Club train. Another is of a gathering of the Grand Army of the Republic probably in Moorhead in the 1890s. The First National Bank staff folder contains a photograph of the staff around 1915, with two photocopies identifying those in the picture. There is an autographed photo of Lem Haskins, KFGO radio announcer. The North Dakota National Guard Company B at Devils Lake Encampment folder holds four images of the company taken by W.J. Lane. These images have his monogram stamped on the cardboard backings. The Politicians folder has portraits of the following politicians, J.E. Garvey, Joseph A. Kitchen, A.C. Pagenkopf, and C.W. McDonnell. The Presbyterian men folder was taken probably in the 1890s in front of the old First Presbyterian Church. The Rescue Hook and Ladder Company, No.2, Fargo, N.D. 1901 folder has a collage of portraits of these firefighters. This photo has suffered heavy moisture damage. The Twin Cities Pembina Division Airmail Pilots folder has the portraits of three pilots and one image of their insignia pin.

The [Subject File Series](#) contains the remaining images arranged in alphabetical order by subject, with the exception of the Grand Forks file which was added at a later date. The Bridge folder has one photograph of an unidentified bridge taken by David Anderson, a Fargo photographer. Another folder has a photograph of a dorm located at Concordia College. One image of an encampment of the 1894 labor protest of Coxey's Army is the subject of the next folder. The Moorhead folder has two images of the main gates of Moorhead State University and Weld Hall. There is also a series of photographs of the Waterman Building and Pierce Trailer Court in Moorhead. The photograph of the North Dakota State Capital fire has suffered some moisture damage. There is a photograph of the Potato Products Corporation building in Grand Forks. The rural views folder has nine rural images of land around Mapleton, N.D., and one of a farm near Fosston, Minnesota. The Wahpeton, N.D. file contains photographs of the Cox Bake Shop.

FOLDER CONTENT (number of items)

- 1 Finding aid, and historical information
- 2 **W. J. Lane Company Series** (7)
 - Fargo, N.D. Series**
- 3 Buildings, Fargo (20)

- 4 Cass County Courthouse (1)
- 5 Central High School (2)
- 6 Churches, Fargo (3)
- 7 City views, Fargo (9)
- 8 Fires (3)
- 9 Flood of 1897 (8)
- 10 Houses (47)
- 11 North Dakota State University (5)

People Series

- 12 Clubs and organizations, Fargo, N.D. (3)
- 13 First National Bank Staff, Fargo, N.D. - 1915 (1)
- 14 Lem Hawkins (1)
- 15 North Dakota National Guard, Co. B, at Devils Lake Encampment, ca. 1890 (4)
- 16 Politicians (4)
- 17 Presbyterian men, ca. 1890 (1)
- 18 Rescue Hook and Ladder Co., No. 2, Fargo, N.D. 1901 (1)
- 19 Twin Cities Pembina Division Airmail Pilots (4)
- 28 World War II – employees in service (8)

Subject File Series

- 20 Bridge (1)
- 20a Bismarck, N.D. houses, 1959 (21)
- 21 Concordia College (1)
- 22 Coxey's Army (1)
- 22a Froelich Garage, Dilworth, Minn., 1953 (7)
- 23 Moorhead, Minn. (22)
- 24 North Dakota State Capital Fire, December 28, 1930 (1)
- 24a Oleans Canning Company, Jamestown, ND, 1953 (12)
- 25 Grand Forks, N.D. (22)
- 26 Rural views (10)
- 27 Wahpeton, N.D. (5)