

Finding Aid to the Rudy Rudd Photograph Albums

Rudd, Rudy (Rudolph Alexander), 1900-1940

Rudy Rudd Photograph Albums, ca. 1911-1939

1 scrapbook (233 photographic prints)

4 photograph albums (1095 photographic prints)

Collection number: Photo 2005

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OVERVIEW

Links: View collection on [Digital Horizons](#)

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

Provenance: Donated by M. Eugene Rudd, 2000-2007 (Acc. 2609, 2741, 2793, 2819).

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

BIOGRAPHY

Rudolph Rudd was born June 11, 1900 in Fargo, N.D., the son of Peter Axel and Ellen (Olson) Rudd. Both parents were natives of Norway. He attended the Dakota Conservatory of Music in Fargo where he studied piano, graduating in 1917. He played piano with numerous local and national bands in the 1920 and 1930s, and played piano at the State and Fargo theaters for silent films. From 1928 to 1931 he was with Ken Murray on the RKO circuit, playing with such stars as Edgar Bergen, Bob Hope and Mary Brian. In 1925 he played in a band aboard the *S.S. President McKinley* during a trip to the Orient. After returning to Fargo, Rudy played with various orchestras including the Red Jackets. He was staff pianist at WDAY radio in Fargo from 1938 to 1940, where he had a program of his own. He was known as 'Snazzy' with the Oscar Johnson orchestra in the Hayloft Jamboree troupe. He died of meningitis on October 9, 1940 and buried at Riverside Cemetery in Fargo.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Rudy Rudd collection reflects three separate donations. The first was the scrapbook that he compiled regarding his life, particularly his musical career and spans from 1911 to 1930. The second donation was his photograph album that again documents primarily his musical career and spans from 1917 to 1928. The third donation was a second photograph album that begins in 1928 and goes to 1939. Together the three albums provide good insight into the life of a young man pursuing a music career in the band era of the 1910s to the 1930s.

The **Rudy Rudd Scrapbook** was compiled by Rudy Rudd documenting his career in music, both locally in Fargo, N.D. and nationally. Although it spans from 1911 to 1930, most of the photographs and items are from the period 1925-1930. It primarily consists of photographs, but there are many clippings, advertising, letters, mementoes, and union cards. It includes many portraits of Mr. Rudd. Documented quite well is the Collegians band composed of five Fargo men who played on the *S.S. President McKinley* on a 1925 trip to Japan, China and the Philippines. The five men were Rudd, Roy L. Hellander, James G. Stamp, Hugh L. McMath and Earl B. Olsen. Three of them were students at the North Dakota Agricultural College and the band was identified as from the NDAC.

There is also substantial material on the Harry Smith and his Red Jackets band of Fargo-Moorhead and for which Rudd played piano for some time. Other bands represented, primarily in photographs, include South Bound Shaffter, Leland Parker Hotel Band (Minot, N.D.), Butterfly Orchestra, Red Jackets, Fletcher Band, Loomis Orchestra, Earl Olsen and his Collegians, Hotel Statler Orchestra (Lopez Band, Buffalo, N.Y.), Norman Ostbye's Note Hawks, Leonard Dahl and his Orchestra, Norman Ostbye's Fargoans, Charles Dornberg, Ned E. Fryberg, and Cec Hurst and his Club Royal Band. Portraits include, although many are unidentified, of Kay Austin, Frank Daran, Elmo L. Einung, Paul Christensen, Norman Wright, Johnny Stove, Edward J. Wirtz, Mathew Phalen, Alyce L. Bennett, Ronnie Sinclair, George A. Osborn, Stanley Weiser, Florence Saxon, Pete Harmon, Hugo Menard, Helen Charleston, Francis Berry, George A. Osborn and Adela Verne. There are also views of bands at the Winter Garden ballroom in Fargo and other Fargo theaters, and of Russie Le Roy in boxing match at the Winter Garden.

The **Rudy Rudd Photograph Albums** span the time period of circa 1917 to 1939, consisting of four albums. The first covers from 1918 to 1928 (474 prints), the second from 1928 to 1939 (489 prints), the third from 1930 to 1936 (59 prints), and the fourth from 1931 to 1939 (73 prints). The 1095 snapshots and formal studio prints are either glued or taped into the albums. The vast majority of the snapshots are not dated nor identified. There is some identification with the images taken on the trip to the Orient when Rudd was part of the *Collegians* band that played on the *S.S. President McKinley* located in the scrapbook/album.

In the first album (1917-1928), Rudd appears in many of the images in the album while there are many of presumed friends and some of family in Fargo. The first twenty pages or so of images likely were taken in the Fargo, N.D. area. For the pages following, the images detail the *S.S. President McKinley* trip. Locations identified include Seattle, Yokohama, Kobe, & Tokyo, Japan; Shanghai, China; Manila, Philippines; and Hong Kong.

Thereafter there is less certainty as to location, although some images are from Yellowstone National Park and California, with images likely taken in Fargo appearing regularly. The vast majority of the snapshots are casual images of people, both men and women; bands; band members; and fellow musicians with their instruments. Of particular note is a snapshot of the Fargo Theatre, where according to the marquee the Norman Ostbye Note Hawks were playing, and a band outside the Leland Parker Hotel

in Minot, N.D. Rudy Rudd appears on many of the images, both alone and with other young men and women.

In the second album (1928-1939), the type and arrangement of photographs is very similar to the first album. Again, most of the people and locations are not given. The album appears to begin with snapshots taken in Fargo of family and friends, and which continue to appear throughout the album. Rudd is, of course, in many of the snapshots. Some of the images were no doubt taken in California, likely the Los Angeles area. Snapshots of known people and locations include of Ernest C. Wilson, M. Eugene Rudd, Ramona's Marriage Place, Earl Carroll Theatre, NBC studio, and the RKO theater. In addition there are a number of views of people on the beach or by a swimming pool, again likely in California.

The third album (1930-1936) is a mix of photographs, clippings, programs, flyers and letters. It also includes several articles written by Rudy Rudd and printed in the periodical *Metaphysical News* (1931). Although some of the portraits only have a first name and message written, those with incomplete names include by Guy Lombardo, Ken Murray (quite a number of him), Hildegard Kraus of Fargo, Jesse Crawford, Bob Hope, Hildur Shaw, Polly Walters and John Steel. There are several images of Edgar Bergen, including one with Rudy Rudd having lunch with him. In addition there are some letters from Bergen to Rudd.

The fourth album (1931-1939) is more a scrapbook with seventy-three photographs interspersed throughout the album. All the clippings and photographs are either glued or taped onto the pages. It includes many clippings, programs, flyers, letters and music. Many of the photographs, primarily portraits, are not identified except for first name, although most have personal messages written on the front to Rudy Rudd. Those with identification include of Cherry Sisters, Anthony Galla-Rimi, Rudy Vallee, David Rubinoff, Charlie Farrell, Ken Murray, 'Aces High' group with WDAY microphone, Ken Kennedy, Edgar Bergen, Dave Elman and Arthur Schutt. It appears a fair amount of the clippings and even photographs are related to WDAY Radio of Fargo. There are also quite a number of images of Rudy Rudd.

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