

**Finding Aid to the
Tower City History Photograph Collection**

***Tower City History* Photograph Collection, 1880s-1970s**

103 photographic prints

6 35mm color negatives

Collection number: Photo 2080

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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 Allen J. Peterson, 1985 (Acc. 2127).

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

Copyrights: Copyright to images in this collection remains with the creators.

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

HISTORY

In 1979 Tower City, N.D. celebrated its centennial anniversary. As part of the centennial a Centennial Book Committee was established with Allen J. Petersen as chairman. Part of the book included a "Community History" section authored by Mr. Petersen. A larger portion of the book was devoted to individual family histories provided by families in the community. The book *Tower City History* was published in 1979.

Tower City, N.D. was established along the Northern Pacific Railroad as it crossed North Dakota in the 1870s. The town is located at the extreme western edge of Cass County. Charlemagne Tower, a large stockholder in the Northern Pacific Railroad, received large areas of land in Minnesota, North Dakota and Washington as part of the settlement of the railroad's financial difficulties. It was George Ellsbury that became Tower's land agent to sell the land to farmers. It

was in 1879 that Ellsbury established the town of Tower City in the midst of Tower's land. He named it in honor of Charlemagne Tower.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Tower City Photograph Collection consists almost exclusively of photographic copies of drawings, photographs and printed documents related to Tower City, N.D. These materials were collected by Allen J. Petersen in the course of his research on the history of the town, with many were used in the community history publication. Most have identifying information written on the back of the print, although the source or location of the originals is not recorded. The individual family photographs used in the family histories section are not part of this collection. They likely were returned to the owner after the book's publication. The collection has been organized into two series: George Ellsbury and Tower City, N.D.

The **George Ellsbury Series** includes images of Mr. Ellsbury, his wife Julia Curtis Ellsbury, and other informal shots of the family. The images of his home in Tower City span from the 1880s to a color snapshot taken in 1969. George Ellsbury was an accomplished artist and during the 1860s a number of his drawings appeared in *Harpers* and *Leslie's* magazines. There is a file of photographic reproductions of a variety of his works. Of particular note are three drawings of farming on the Dalrymple farm near Casselton, N.D. and a sketch of Fort Abercrombie. There are also a number of views of Centralia, Washington taken from printed sources. One image of a group of men includes Mr. Ellsbury.

The **Tower City, N.D. Series** contains images of the town, its businesses and related people. Most of them date from the early years of the town and into the early 20th century. There is a file of advertisements that have been copied out of old newspapers and other publications that relate to the town and its businesses. There are images of early businesses and street scenes. There are also a number of color snapshots of buildings taken in 1969. In the files there is also an aerial view of the main building of the North Dakota Winter Show in Valley City, with many vehicles parked around it. This image was used on an advertising page of the book. The Miscellaneous file includes men standing by old vehicles, and the 1915 and 1960 basketball teams.

The Postcard File contains four original postcards. Two date from the 1910s of the bank, garage, school and residence of W. E. Clark. The other two are in color and are of the motel, café and truck stop. The Portrait File includes various images of Rev. G. Sumner Baskerville, as well Eben Young, Charlemagne Tower, and original prints of Elizabeth Preston Anderson and Wrede Clark. There is also a tintype, possibly of George Ellsbury. The Reference Images Files contains articles and photographs related to Tower City. Finally, the Sketches File includes seven drawings, all of Tower City or immediate area.

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Tower City, N.D. Series

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