Finding Aid to the
West Fargo Union Stockyards Photograph Collection

West Fargo Union Stockyards
West Fargo Union Stockyards photograph collection, 1940s-1970s.
413 photographic prints.
Collection number: Photo 2036

OVERVIEW

Links: View collection in Digital Horizons

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


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

Copyrights: Copyrights to this collection remain with original copyright holder, the Institute or in public domain.

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

HISTORY

The West Fargo Union Stockyards was established by its parent company, the South St. Paul Union Stockyards in cooperation with the Central Livestock Association. The facility was built to compete with the Armour packing plant, also located in West Fargo. After two years planning construction began on June 1, 1935 and the stockyards opened for business on October 1, 1935. The main Exchange Building was completed in 1936. The opening of the stockyards signified an expansion of diversified agriculture in the region and brought cattle buyers and sellers together at a public market for the first time in the region. The first manager was Llewellen W. Kube who was there from 1935 to 1947. Other managers included Roy L. Olson (1947-1954) Gerald Redmond (1954-1961), Kieffer Lehman (1961-1967) and Jewel Roningen from 1967 until he retired in 1987.

The stockyards continued to expand over the decades and enlarged its facilities. In July 1960 the Armour and Company packing plant closed which resulted in increased business for the stockyards. Armour’s
plant and property were purchased by the West Fargo Union Stockyards. The stockyards continued to be one of the major stockyards in the Midwest. The early 1980s were times of uncertainty for local livestock producers and receipts declined at the Union Stockyards. The stockyards were sold in 1988 to Central Livestock of St. Paul, Minn. and the scale of operation reduced.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The West Fargo Union Stockyards Photograph Collection gives a fairly comprehensive overview of the operation of the stockyards. The collection has been arranged alphabetically by topic. The topics varying from aerial views of the stockyard to stockyard workers. Consult the Contents section for a listing of the topics and subdivisions.

The aerial views of the stockyards complex span from 1952 to 1984. Several show the flooding that occurred near the stockyards. The 1962 aerials include all of West Fargo, looking west towards Interstate 94. The 1971 and 1984 images are in color and include portions of the city of West Fargo. The asphalt application file shows the laying of asphalt on the roads within the stockyards.

The ‘Australian Auction’ images are in color and are taken in the outdoor cattle pens. The auction arena images document both the facilities as well as actual auctions being conducted with an auctioneer. The Cattle series shows beef cattle in chutes, feeding, herded among the pens, and in pens. It also included elevated view of the pens complex including when no cattle present.

Other topics covered include a construction crew working on roof over pens; exhibit at a fair for Union Stockyards Company; and unidentified farm scenes including flax and potato fields, aerial of farmstead and line of five combines harvesting. The flood scenes include aerials of the 1954 flood that also include portions of West Fargo, while the 1964 flood images appear to be from an early spring flooding of the Sheyenne River. There is a series of images of hay bales being stacked at the stockyards and the loading and hauling of manure and straw on the grounds. There is a series of images of the Union Stockyards exhibit at the Red River Valley Fair, likely from the 1970s that include both color and black and white views.

The miscellaneous file includes railroad cars in the stockyards, a line of cattle trailers and a man filing out a form. The North Dakota Stockman’s Association files consist of snapshots taken at meetings held at Dickinson in 1968, and Jamestown in 1970, and are of men seated at a banquet or at tables eating. For an unknown reason there is an aerial view of an oil well, likely in western North Dakota. There are quite a number of images of hogs at the stockyards in pens, being herded among the pens and being loaded into a truck. There are several nice images of cattle being herded on the open range including two in the Badlands.

The only portrait in the collection is of a Mr. G. Redmond, taken in St. Paul, Minn. The road construction images are of the laying of a concrete road at the stockyards and include the equipment and laborers involved. There are three images of the stockyards scale with workers using it. The images of sheep include in the pens, being herded across the yards, in a truck and one of sheep on the open range. There is also a series of images documenting sheep being dipped. The Shippers Club was a two-story wood structure on the stockyard grounds. There is one image of the exterior of the Sioux City Dressed Beef building showing automobiles and trucks parked in front.
Apparently the stockyards presented two beef cattle to NDSU, for there is an image on the NDSU football field, likely taken during half-time, of President L.D. Loftsgard with Jewel Rooning, Ade Sponberg and two other men along with two head of cattle. This image is in color. The trucks file includes a variety of images of cattle trucks driving or parked in the stockyards grounds, dating from the 1930s into the 1950s. There are a number of good images of the main building at the stockyards, a two-story brick structure. The unbound photograph album likely was compiled shortly after the stockyards opened in 1935. At the front is an index to the images in the album and include directors, staff, cattle pens, a series of Marylyn Cool with a sheep, the Albin Olson family listening to a radio, and a series of men standing by fence in stockyards with sign ‘Government Supervised Service, 24 Hour Service.’ The index provided names of the people in most of the images.

There are a number of images related to waste treatment and the waste stabilization ponds of the stockyards. The water tower images are likely taken on the stockyard grounds and includes one of a tower covered with ice. There are several images of the stockyards taken in winter with snow in the pens and on grounds. The workers file includes a man cooking over a campfire, man at a machine that likely is part of the auction sales, portrait of A.Z. Baker, man speaking into microphones including a KFGO microphone, two men in white coats, man mowing lawn, and group of men outside in snow by stockyard pens, some holding canes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOLDER</th>
<th>CONTENTS (no. of prints)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Finding aid and historical information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aerial views — 1952 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1962 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1968 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lagoon, September 1971 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1984 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Asphalt application (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;Australian&quot; Auction, March 9, 1971 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Auction arena ring (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Auction arena ring scale (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Auction scenes, 1969 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Auction scenes (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cattle — Chute scenes (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Feeding (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Herding (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Herding (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folio 70</td>
<td>Pens (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Pens (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pens (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pens distant scenes (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Roundup (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Scale (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Championship bull (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22 Construction (2)
23 Fair exhibit (1)
24 Farm scenes (5)
25 Flood—
   1954 (4)
   1964-1965 (11)
26 Hay bales (6)
27 Manure loading (4)
28 Meat booth, Red River Valley Fair—
   July 1974 (5)
   (Color) (5)
29 Miscellaneous (4)
30 Missouri River at Sanish, N.D. (1)
31 North Dakota Stockmen’s Association—
   Dickinson meeting, June 1968 (11)
   Jamestown meeting, 1970 (12)
32 Oil well (1)
33 Pigs (28)
34 Pollution control sign (1)
35 Range cattle (4)
36 Redmond, G. (1)
37 Road construction (7)
38 Scale (3)
39 Sheep (16)
40 Sheep dipping (5)
41 Shippers Club (1)
42 Sioux City Dressed Beef, Inc. (1)
43 Steers at NDSU, 1973 (color) (2)
44 Tornado (1)
45 Trucks (11)
46 Trucks (1)
47 Union Stockyards—
   Headquarters building (6)
   Company at Fargo (Scrapbook) (39)
48 Waste treatment facility—
   July 1971 (2)
   (Color) (8)
49 Water towers (2)
50 Winter scenes (4)
51 Workers (7)
52 Workers (color) (2)