

Finding Aid to the John P. Yerxa Family Photograph Collection

Yerxa, John P., 1868-1964

John P. Yerxa Family Photograph Collection, 1880s-1946

28 photographic prints

Collection number: Photo 2076

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OVERVIEW

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

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

Provenance: Donated by D.J. Guerrero, 1995 (Acc. 2425).

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

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

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

BIOGRAPHY

The Yerxa family name was once linked to the most popular and successful dry goods store in Fargo, North Dakota. The business was named the Wigwam, established in 1876, located on the corner of N.P. Ave. and Broadway, and owned by P. Goodman and Woolford A. Yerxa. Goodman later retired, W.A. Yerxa sold the business to his brother Thomas E. Yerxa in 1884, and moved to the Twin Cities and started the Yerxa Bros., a grocery business with another brother Fred R. Yerxa. The T.E. Yerxa Co. survived the Fargo fire of 1893 and roughly about the same time John P. Yerxa began employment at the store. John's relationship with the previous Yexas is unknown. While with the T.E. Yerxa Co., John held the positions of bookkeeper and manager. Around 1909 or 1910 the business exchanged hands and John became owner of the

John P. Yerxa Grocery Co. It is unknown when the Wigwam building was torn down, however in 1924, Yerxa Grocery was built at 510 10th Ave. N. It was later sold in 1943.

John P. Yerxa was born to Gabriel and Martha Yerxa at Stanely, New Brunswick on June 28, 1868. He married Albertina Selberg on July 30, 1893. Their wedding was postponed due to the Fargo fire (June 7, 1893). Albertina was born at Lulea, Sweden on August 30, 1869. Albertina Yerxa was an active member at the Gethsemane Cathedral and the Pythian Sisters.

On July 9, 1894 Charles Edgar Yerxa was born at Fargo, the only child of John and Albertina. Charles was a veteran of World War I (Battery F, 338th Field Artillery), a clerk at his father's business for several years, and a member of the American Legion. He never married. In August 1953, John and Albertina observed their 60th wedding anniversary. Albertina died March 25, 1958, Charles June 12, 1962, and John March 18, 1964.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The John P. Yerxa Family Photograph Collection contains twenty-eight photographs. The collection was found in the 1970s in the garbage by a Fargo employee. They were kept and turned over to D.J. Guerrero who in turn donated them to the Institute in 1995. The collection is organized into eight folders: Biographical information and finding aid, Albertina Yerxa (Mrs. John P.), Charles Edgar Yerxa, Canadian cabinet cards, Fargo cabinet cards, Cabinet cards, Miscellaneous women, and Miscellaneous (men, children, and couples). The majority of the photographs are cabinet photographs taken by professional photographers.

The **Albertina Yerxa (Mrs. John P.) Folder** contains two photographs with Albertina present, group of the Pythian Sisters (1942), and a post card sent to Albertina from John.

The **Charles Edgar Yerxa Folder** has two photographs of a young Charles Edgar and one of him in his army uniform returning from World War I holding the hand of Mary May Hall. The photograph of the uniformed Charles Edgar appears to have been cut out of an old photograph album sheet. Two photographs are on the back, friends of Albertina. There is also an image of a large group of children on steps of a school, likely the old Fargo school, and a part of the high school, taken circa 1900.

The **Canadian Cabinet Cards Folder** contains only two cabinet photographs. Although the individuals are unknown, they are separated because they were taken at the studio of John Harvey of Fredericton, New Brunswick (capitol) that is relatively close to where John P. Yerxa and the other Yexas originated. One is a portrait of an older woman and the other a woman and boy.

The **Fargo Cabinet Cards Folder** includes three cabinet photographs taken by photographers in Fargo. The photographers include Arthur A. Bentley, Gilbert E. Flaten, and S.H. Logan. The full-length portrait may be of Mrs. James W. Sutherland. The other two are of a couple and baby, and the other is of the children of Frank M. McKim of Fargo.

In the **Cabinet Cards Folder** the photographs were taken in Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, and Tennessee. The two most important photographs are of John P. Yerxa's brothers Charles E. Yerxa, taken in Stillwater, Minn., and of Miles Yerxa taken in Lowell, Massachusetts. Another may be of an Ollar Redd, taken in Marion, Ohio. There are also two portraits of unidentified women.

The **Miscellaneous Women Folder** contains five photographs of women only. A studio portrait is labeled Margaret Spencer and a snapshot as "Lulu Rohans's daughter and children." There is also one tin-type portrait.

The **Miscellaneous Folder** includes three photographs, one of Episcopalian Bishop Samuel C. Edsall, a carte de visite of a couple taken in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and a group of children on the steps of a house, many with plates in their laps.

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