

Finding Aid to the Commons Club (Fargo, N.D.) Records

Commons Club (Fargo, N.D.)

Commons Club (Fargo, N.D.) Records, 1910-1989

.6 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 921

[History](#)

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OVERVIEW

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

Provenance: Donated by Alfred Parrott, George Soule, Rudolf Ottersen, I.H. Ulsaker, and William Hunter, Fargo, N.D., 1958 (Acc. 921); Carl Elofson, 2004 (Acc. 2723).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Commons Club Records, MS. 921, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

The Commons Club, Fargo's oldest service club, was founded December 6, 1910 by Walter L. Stockwell and professor Arland Weeks who felt there was a need for a club that would thoroughly discuss current events of public interest. The name chosen was to indicate the representative nature of the club. The club would meet at the Gardner, the Waldorf, or their favorite, Piries. In 1920 they began meeting regularly at the Commercial Club and later, in 1936, at the Graver Hotel. With a brief exception, the club has met regularly on the first and third Mondays each month of the school term, promptly at 6 o'clock for dinner and then a guest speaker and discussion on a topic of interest. The membership, which was exclusively

male, started at 30 members, finally increasing to 50. In 1914, associate memberships were adopted. Presidents served one year terms and alternated between Fargo residents and Agricultural College staff, with Judge A.G. Hanson the first president, Arland Weeks, the first vice-president, and John Frame the first Secretary-treasurer. Walter Lee Airheart, Ralph Miller, and Alfred Parrott also served long terms as secretaries of the club. Among well known speakers were Lincoln Steffins, E.A. Ross, Henry Morgenthau, Frederick C. Howe, and Maude Ballington Booth. The club ceased circa 2004.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The [Correspondence Series](#) is very small and mainly concerns club business. The **Records of Meetings Series** is complete from 1910 to 1961, except for 1929-1933 and 1958. The minutes include attendance records, and financial reports.

The [Subject Files Series](#) contains a history of the club, (1958). There are membership rolls for 1958 and 1961, and the 25th, 30th, and 50th anniversary programs, as well as a short 60th anniversary history. There is also miscellaneous material from various programs including a pamphlet, *A Just and Lasting Peace* (1943), a partial list of programs (1910-1953, 1958), Roosevelt's "Atlantic Charter", "A Christian Manifesto", "Historical Background of the New Deal", by W.C. Hunter, material on Dakota Territory, tax and financial statistics on Cass County and North Dakota, (1957), a memorial to H.L. Walster (1957), and information on the Great Northern Railroad.

SEPARATION RECORD

The following non-manuscript items were removed from the Commons Club papers and have been sent to the section indicated.

Maps (Institute map collection)

Primary and secondary trade area of Fargo, North Dakota, 1958.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid, and Historical material
1/1a	Constitution and Bylaws
1/2	Correspondence, 1934, 1958-1961
	Records of Meetings Series
1/2a	1910-1921 (bound ledger)

1/3	1922-1924
1/4	1925-1926
1/5	1927-1928
1/6	1934-1936
1/7	1937
1/8	1938
1/9	1939
1/10	1940
1/11	1941-1943
1/12	1944-1947
1/13	1948-1951
1/14	1952-1954
1/15	1955-1957
2/1	1959-1961
2/2	1986-1987

Subject Files Series

2/3	History, anniversary programs, membership rolls, 1958-1970
2/4	Certificate forms
2/5	Membership, 1958-1989
2/6	Newspaper clipping, 1935
2/7	Program booklets and flyers
2/8	Miscellaneous resources and handouts from programs