

Finding Aid to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for North Dakota

Sanborn Map Company

North Dakota Fire Insurance Maps, 1884-1951

4 microfilm reels & 2 oversize vols.

Collection number: Institute Microfilm G1441.G475 1983 .S26

Mss 1563	Fargo, N.D. Sanborn Insurance maps, 1958
Mss 1564	Fargo, N.D. Sanborn Insurance maps, 1929-1956
Mss 1565	Fargo, N.D. Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1922

[History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [Fire Underwriters Inspection Bureau, North Dakota Fire Insurance Maps](#)

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

Provenance: The microfilm was purchased from Chadwyck-Healey. 1958 atlas donated by Brian Hayer, 2019 (2019-005irs)

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HISTORY

Insurance maps and plans originated in London toward the end of the 18th Century in response to the need felt by large fire insurance companies and underwriters for accurate, current, and detailed information about the buildings they were insuring. A London company, Phoenix Assurance Company, extended its coverage to include the United States by the 1790s. George T. Hope is generally credited from having fostered the idea of specialized and detailed fire insurance maps in the United States. Around 1849 or 1850 Hope, who was at the time secretary of the Jefferson Insurance Company in New York City, began to compile a large-scale map of a portion of New York City for use in calculating fire risks on business and residential structures. Other American companies followed Hope's lead with additional maps made for other American cities.

D.A. Sanborn, a young surveyor from Somerville, Massachusetts, was engaged in 1866 by Aetna Insurance Company to prepare insurance maps for several cities in Tennessee. Before working for Aetna, Sanborn conducted surveys and compiled an atlas of the city of Boston. The success of the Boston atlas and the commission from Aetna must have impressed Sanborn, for after the work in Tennessee he established the D.A. Sanborn National Insurance Diagram Bureau in New York City in 1867. From this modest beginning grew the specialized company that has compiled and published maps of more than 12,000 American towns and cities for insurance companies for more than a hundred years.

D.A. Sanborn died in 1883. The company he founded, however, continued to grow. In 1899 it acquired the Perris and Browne firm and can by virtue of this expansion date its origins to 1852. The firm name established by Sanborn in 1867 was changed in 1876 when the firm was incorporated under the name Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, which then became the Sanborn Perris Map Company, Ltd., until, in 1902, the name was shortened to the Sanborn Map Company, the form which the company uses today.

By 1920 Sanborn virtually monopolized the insurance map industry. The company had only two or three small competitors, including Walter I. Fisher who, operated in Minneapolis as the General Inspection Bureau, published insurance maps of more than 640 towns in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota between 1907 and the 1960s.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Sanborn fire insurance maps for North Dakota were filmed on four reels of microfilm from the originals in the Library of Congress. They were organized in alphabetical order by town and then chronologically therein. The earliest maps for North Dakota towns were published in 1884 for Bismarck, Carrington, Fargo, Grafton, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Larimore, Mandan, Pembina, Valley City, and Wahpeton. Other towns were added with a total of fifty-one North Dakota towns represented. In the 1920s a loose-leaf atlas format was introduced and additions or changes were sent to subscribers which they in turn could add to their atlas or add the paste-on correction slips. The original maps were, of course, color coded which is lost in the black and white microfilm. The three Fargo atlases are original and thus the color coding is present.

The maps were designed to assist fire insurance agents in determining the degree of hazard associated with a particular property and therefore the maps show the size, shape, and construction of dwellings, commercial buildings, and factories as well as fire walls, location of windows and doors, sprinkler systems, and types of roofs. The maps also indicate the widths and names of streets, property boundaries, building use, and house and block numbers. They even show the location of water mains, giving the dimensions, and of fire alarm boxes and hydrants. Such maps are thus an unrivaled source of information about the structure and use of buildings in North Dakota cities.

The three original Sanborn atlases for Fargo in the Institute collections were published in 1922, 1929, and 1957. The 1922 atlas (Mss 1565) contains thirty-seven pages covering the entire city. The volume was originally owned by W. J. Lane Company, a Fargo real estate and insurance company. The title page includes a street and selected business index as well as a map of Fargo keyed to the individual maps. Accompanying the atlas is a booklet, *Description and Utilization of The Sanborn Map*, published in 1940 by the Sanborn Map Company. It is a very informative booklet on how to read and utilize the maps. It includes a key to the colors and symbols used. There are also narrative description examples for portions of two accompanying maps.

The 1929 Sanborn atlas (Mss 1564) is a bound edition, titled *Insurance Maps of Fargo, North Dakota* including West Fargo & S.W. Fargo. Inscribed inside the front cover is "Assessor's Office, Fargo." Pasted in the front cover are two indexes, "Additional index, May 1951" and "Addenda, Aug., 1956, to Additional Index of May, 1951." This atlas includes many paste-on correction slips, thus preventing the user to view the original sheets or earlier paste-overs. The index map indicates sixty-five separate sheets, but there are two additional sheets in the atlas which were added later. There is also a "Correction Record" on this sheet indicating fifteen paste-on slips were received and added to the original atlas. They date from the early 1930s to 1956.

The 1958 Sanborn atlas (Mss 1563) is a bound edition, titled *Insurance Maps of Fargo, North Dakota* including South West Fargo & West Fargo. Handwritten on inside the front cover is "Property of Warner and Company. The first page has a Legend, and there is a booklet entitled "Description and Utilization of the Sanborn Map" (1953). The book contains 73 pages, each sleeved in plastic sleeves.

INVENTORY

Microfilm reel 1

Bismarck, Burleigh County, N.D.

1884 [4 sheets]
1888 [8 sheets]
1899 [9 sheets]
1904 [9 sheets]
1908 [11 sheets]
1912 [14 sheets]
1919 [15 sheets]

1927 [23 sheets]
1927-1949 [23 sheets]

Bottineau, Bottineau County, N.D.

1908 [3 sheets]
1913 [3 sheets]
1926 [4 sheets]
1926 [4 sheets]

Cando, Towner County, N.D.

1908 [3 sheets]
1913 [3 sheets]
1926 [3 sheets]
1926 [3 sheets]

Carrington, Foster County, N.D.

1884 [1 sheet]
1893 [1 sheet]
1898 [1 sheet]
1904 [2 sheets]
1907 [2 sheets]
1909 [4 sheets]
1914 [5 sheets]
1926 [5 sheets]
1926-1945 [5 sheets]

Casselton, Cass County, N.D.

1893 [4 sheets]
1898 [4 sheets]
1904 [4 sheets]
1910 [4 sheets]
1917 [4 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]
1927-1941 [4 sheets]

Cavalier, Pembina County, N.D.

1907 [2 sheets]
1914 [3 sheets]
1927 [3 sheets]
1927 [3 sheets]

Cooperstown, Griggs County, N.D.

1893 [2 sheets]
1898 [2 sheets]

1904 [2 sheets]
1908 [2 sheets]
1914 [3 sheets]
1927 [5 sheets]
1927 [5 sheets]

Dazey, Barnes County, N.D.

1908 [1 sheet]
1918 [1 sheet]
1929 [2 sheets]
1929 [2 sheets]

Devils Lake, Ramsey County, N.D.

1886 [2 sheets]
1891 [3 sheets]
1898 [4 sheets]
1904 [5 sheets]
1908 [7 sheets]
1914 [11 sheets]
1924 [14 sheets]
1932 [9 sheets]
1932-1948 [9 sheets]

Dickinson, Stark County, N.D.

1898 [3 sheets]
1904 [4 sheets]
1908 [7 sheets]
1913 [14 sheets]
1927 [16 sheets]
1927-1945 [16 sheets]

Ellendale, Dickey County, N.D.

1893 [2 sheets]
1898 [2 sheets]
1905 [3 sheets]
1910 [3 sheets]
1919 [5 sheets]
1927 [6 sheets]
1927-1937 [6 sheets]

Enderlin, Ransom County, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]
1914 [6 sheets]
1927 [7 sheets]

1927-1937 [7 sheets]

Microfilm reel 2

Fargo, Cass County, N.D.

1884 [10 sheets]

1888 [14 sheets]

1892 [17 sheets]

1896 [20 sheets]

1901 [22 sheets]

1905 [23 sheets]

1906 [1 sheet]

1910 [32 sheets]

1916 [28 sheets]

1922 [37 sheets] (Also available in original format in Institute, Mss 1565)

1929 [68 sheets]

1929-1951 [69 sheets] (Also available in original format in Institute, Mss 1563)

Fessenden, Wells County, N.D.

1904 [2 sheets]

1907 [2 sheets]

1918 [3 sheets]

1929 [5 sheets]

1929 [5 sheets]

Grafton, Walsh County, N.D.

1884 [3 sheets]

1891 [3 sheets]

1897 [4 sheets]

1904 [5 sheets]

1907 [6 sheets]

1914 [8 sheets]

1918 [10 sheets]

1929 [12 sheets]

1929-1939 [12 sheets]

Grand Forks, Grand Forks County, N.D.

1884 [9 sheets]

1888 [12 sheets]

1892 [16 sheets]

1897 [17 sheets]

1901 [17 sheets]

1906 [21 sheets]

1912 [28 sheets]

1916 [22 sheets]
1927 [33 sheets]
1927-1947 [34 sheets]

Microfilm reel 3

Hankinson, Richland County, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]
1914 [2 sheets]
1927 [5 sheets]
1927-1935 [5 sheets]

Harvey, Wells County, N.D.

1904 [2 sheets]
1907 [3 sheets]
1913 [3 sheets]
1926 [5 sheets]
1939 [5 sheets]
1939 [5 sheets]

Hillsboro, Traill County, N.D.

1897 [3 sheets]
1905 [3 sheets]
1910 [3 sheets]
1929 [6 sheets]
1929-1941 [6 sheets]

Jamestown, Stutsman County, N.D.

1884 [4 sheets]
1886 [5 sheets]
1891 [6 sheets]
1898 [7 sheets]
1904 [8 sheets]
1907 [11 sheets]
1913 [17 sheets]
1919 [21 sheets]
1929 [25 sheets]
1929-1949 [25 sheets]

La Moure, La Moure County, N.D.

1893 [1 sheet]
1898 [2 sheets]
1905 [2 sheets]
1908 [2 sheets]

1914 [3 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]

Lakota, Nelson County, N.D.

1898 [1 sheet]
1904 [2 sheets]
1908 [2 sheets]
1914 [3 sheets]
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1928 [5 sheets]

Langdon, Cavalier County, N.D.

1907 [3 sheets]
1914 [5 sheets]
1918 [5 sheets]
1927 [5 sheets]
1927 [5 sheets]

Larimore, Grand Forks County, N.D.

1884 [3 sheets]
1892 [3 sheets]
1898 [3 sheets]
1904 [3 sheets]
1910 [4 sheets]
1916 [4 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]
1927-1943 [4 sheets]

Leeds, Benson County, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]
1918 [3 sheets]
1918 [3 sheets]

Lidgerwood, Richland County, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]
1914 [2 sheets]
1927 [5 sheets]
1927 [5 sheets]

Lisbon, Ransom County, N.D.

1893 [5 sheets]
1898 [5 sheets]
1905 [5 sheets]

1908 [5 sheets]
1914 [7 sheets]
1919 [9 sheets]
1919-1945 [9 sheets]

McHenry, Foster County, N.D.

1908 [1 sheet]
1916 [1 sheet]
1927 [2 sheets]
1927 [2 sheets]

Mandan, Morton County, N.D.

1884 [2 sheets]
1888 [3 sheets]
1892 [4 sheets]
1898 [5 sheets]
1904 [6 sheets]
1907 [8 sheets]
1913 [13 sheets]
1919 [14 sheets]
1927 [15 sheets]
1927-1945 [15 sheets]

Mayville, Trail County, N.D.

1893 [3 sheets]
1898 [3 sheets]
1904 [3 sheets]
1914 [3 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]
1927-1941 [4 sheets]

Minnewaukan, Benson County, N.D.

1904 [1 sheet]
1913 [1 sheet]
1926 [2 sheets]
1926 [2 sheets]

Microfilm reel 4

Minot, Ward County, N.D.

1904 [4 sheets]
1907 [6 sheets]
1913 [15 sheets]
1918 [20 sheets]

1926 [28 sheets]
1932 [16 sheets]
1932-1945 [16 sheets]

Minto, Walsh County, N.D.

1904 [2 sheets]
1914 [3 sheets]
1928 [4 sheets]
1928 [4 sheets]

Neché, Pembina County, N.D.

1907 [2 sheets]
1918 [2 sheets]
1918 [2 sheets]

New Rockford, Eddy County, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]
1912 [3 sheets]
1916 [4 sheets]
1927 [6 sheets]
1917-1945 [6 sheets]

New Salem, Morton County, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]
1913 [4 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]

Oakes, Dickey County, N.D.

1908 [3 sheets]
1914 [4 sheets]
1927 [6 sheets]
1927-1945 [6 sheets]

Park River, Walsh County, N.D.

1893 [1 sheet]
1898 [2 sheets]
1904 [3 sheets]
1910 [3 sheets]
1916 [3 sheets]
1927 [3 sheets]
1927 [3 sheets]

Pembina, Pembina County, N.D.

1884 [1 sheet]
1892 [2 sheets]
1897 [2 sheets]
1904 [2 sheets]
1907 [2 sheets]
1910 [2 sheets]
1928 [2 sheets]
1928 [2 sheets]

Portland, Traill County, N.D.

1886 [1 sheet]
1892 [1 sheet]
1898 [2 sheets]
1904 [2 sheets]
1914 [2 sheets]
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1927 [2 sheets]

Rugby, Pierce County, N.D.

1907 [2 sheets]
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1926 [3 sheets]
1926-1934 [3 sheets]

Saint Thomas, Pembina County, N.D.

1907 [2 sheets]
1914 [2 sheets]
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1928 [3 sheets]

Sanborn, Barnes County, N.D.

1893 [1 sheet]
1898 [1 sheet]
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1927 [3 sheets]

Sheldon, Ransom County, N.D.

1886 [1 sheet]
1904 [1 sheet]
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1908 [1 sheet]

Valley City, Barnes County, N.D.

1884 [2 sheets]
1891 [3 sheets]
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1908 [7 sheets]
1913 [7 sheets]
1919 [13 sheets]
1928 [15 sheets]
1928-1950 [15 sheets]

Wahpeton, Richland County, N.D.

1884 [3 sheets]
1886 [4 sheets]
1891 [4 sheets]
1898 [5 sheets]
1904 [6 sheets]
1910 [8 sheets]
1916 [8 sheets]
1927 [11 sheets]
1927-1948 [11 sheets]

Walhalla, Pembina County, N.D.

1907 [2 sheets]
1918 [3 sheets]
1928 [4 sheets]
1928 [4 sheets]

Washburn, McLean County, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]
1913 [2 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]
1927 [4 sheets]

Williston, Williams County, N.D.

1907 [3 sheets]
1913 [7 sheets]
1916 [9 sheets]
1926 [12 sheets]
1932 [8 sheets]
1932-1949 [8 sheets]

Wilton, McLean and Burleigh Counties, N.D.

1908 [2 sheets]

1919 [2 sheets]

1919 [2 sheets]

Wyndmere, Richland County, N.D.

1908 [1 sheet]

1914 [1 sheet]

1927 [3 sheets]

1927 [3 sheets]

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