

Finding Aid to the YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties Photograph Collection

YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties

YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties Photograph Collection, 1900s-2000s

2,264 photographic prints

35 35mm Color Negatives (c35mm-175 to c35mm-180)

Collection number: Photo 2092

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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 the YMCA, 2006 (Acc. 2799) 2007(Acc. 2807), 2009 (Acc. 2905), 2010 (Acc. 2935)

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

HISTORY

On November 13, 1882 the first Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Fargo was organized, but the organization ran into financial problems and was force to disband after only a few years. On March 1, 1886, a group of fifteen men gathered at the home of Mrs. S. G. Roberts on the corner of Roberts Street and 2nd Avenue N., and organized the second YMCA of Fargo. On October 29, 1886, Fargo-Moorhead's first YMCA was formally incorporated. The Northern Pacific Railroad offered a plot of land just west of the railroad park, and in the fall of 1886, the former Cass County Courthouse was purchased and moved to the site for use as the YMCA facility. This initial building contained a gymnasium, bowling alley, bathrooms and library. It was dedicated on March 29, 1887. In 1898 the N.P. Railroad asked that this building be moved to

make way for a new depot. The YMCA building was then moved to the north side of the N.P. Railroad tracks on 8th Street N.

In 1902, General Secretary Charles J. Allen expressed the need for a new building, and a committee was set up to prepare plans. In 1903 the N.P. Railroad asked the YMCA to remove their building from its location north of the tracks, and the building was sold. Plans were then begun to secure a new location; at this time there were 411 members. Fund raising was begun, and by 1905 community leaders had raised \$50,000 to build the new facility at 632 1st Avenue N. This building was built by the Bowers Brothers contractors for a fee of \$40,890 using plans prepared by the architect W. C. Albrant, and later supervised by M. E. Beebe, due to Mr. Albrant's death. The corner stone for the building was laid on November 5, 1905. This building served the community for 56 years with amenities including sleeping rooms, indoor running track, pool, fitness center, and youth leadership programs.

Also noteworthy is that in 1908 the YMCA purchased 37 acres of land on the northwest shore of Big Cormorant Lake for Camp Cormorant, one of the earliest residence camps in the United States. On September 22, 1936 the YMCA of Fargo celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a banquet at the Gardner Hotel. The Golden Jubilee address was delivered by U. S. Senator Gerald P. Nye.

By the 1950s the YMCA was beginning to outgrowing its facility at 632 1st Avenue N. The Fargo-Moorhead Y's Men's Club was chartered in 1956, and in 1958 the membership stood at 2,006. The building was also being used by numerous non-YMCA groups and organizations. In 1959 \$1,000,000 was pledged to build a new facility to be used as a Community Youth Center for both the YMCA and the YWCA. In 1961, YMCA members raised \$1,235,387 and ground breaking on the new F-M Family YMCA was held on August 1, 1961. In 1962 the new building at 400 1st Avenue S. was opened with an additional 801 new members. In November 1961, the name was formally changed to the Fargo-Moorhead Young Men's Christian Association. KinderKamp, the YMCA's first preschool program was launched in 1963. In 1970, the Y kicked off a capital campaign to build an addition to the building at 400 1st Avenue N. including four racquetball/handball courts, a running track and a free weight area. In 1973 the YMCA Heritage Club was started, and Camp Cormorant was open to co-ed camping. In 1974 the YWCA organization left the shared facility for its own building. The building at 400 1st Avenue S. continued to expand with new courts, a youth room, renovation of the women's locker room, a child care area and swimming pool in 1979; and in 1984 major interior renovations of the program areas and improved energy efficiency. The YMCA Child Care Services were launched in 1989, when School Age Programs began at Madison and Jefferson elementary schools in Fargo.

In 1989 an adult fitness center called the Y on Broadway, was opened at 16 Broadway. The facility was donated by Dr. Cal Ferco in 1989, and served the Y community until it was closed in 1999. In 1997, a capital campaign raised \$3,300,000 to construct a new branch facility in the West Acres area, and to renovate Camp Cormorant and the downtown YMCA facility. The West Acres facility located at 4243 19th Avenue S. was named the Schlossman Family YMCA West, and included a climbing wall, childcare center, fitness space, and youth center. In 1999 larger

locker rooms and a free weight area were added to the Schlossman facility. In 1999 Y-South, a full-time child care center for infants through preschool opened on South University Drive in Fargo. In 2000, a capitol campaign raised \$1,700,000 to add a childcare facility, renovate and add fitness space to the downtown YMCA facility at 400 1st Avenue S. This addition included group fitness studios and an expansion of the fitness center. In 2004 a state-of-the art fitness facility, along with expanded School Age Program area was added to the Schlossman facility.

In 2005 the YMCA opened a new full-time child care center in West Fargo at the Lodoen Community Center. The center was expanded and moved to 13th Avenue in West Fargo. In 2006 in collaboration with Calvary United Methodist Church, the YMCA opened a full-time child care center in the Osgood neighborhood at 4575 S. 45th Street.

The official name was changed to YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties in 2008 to reflect the expanded reach of programming. In 2010 the YMCA and Sanford Health partnered to build a new facility called the Family Wellness Center located at 2960 Seter Parkway in southwest Fargo. In 2011 the YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties celebrated its 125th Anniversary. In that year they served over 41,000 individuals with more than 18,000 of them being youth. The Y had over 14,000 members in 2011.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties Photograph Collection provides a visual history of one of Fargo's oldest existing community organization. The photographs reflect the organizations mission to nurture the potential of children, promote healthy living, and foster a sense of social responsibility. The majority of the images in the collection are from 1940 onward, there are few images from before that date. The collection has been arranged into **Facilities Series; Programs and Classes Series; Sports and Recreation Series; Groups and Organizations Series; Events Series; YMCA Board, Staff, and People Series; Camp Cormorant Series; and Photograph Album Series.**

The [Facilities Series](#) (1910-2003) contains images of buildings that belonged to the YMCA. This includes the organizations 2nd headquarters located on the corner of 1st Avenue N. and Roberts Street in downtown Fargo, the 3rd building located on the corner of 1st Avenue and 4th Street S. on the edge of Island Park, the Y on Broadway facility located at 16 Broadway, and the Schlossman Family YMCA West near West Acres. Notably missing from this series are images of the first facility that served the organization from 1886 to 1903. Both the interiors and exteriors of these buildings are documented in this series, but the Y on Broadway is perhaps the best documented with a large number of color snapshots showing both the exterior and interior of the building. Also in this series are images of transportation belonging to the Y, including busses and a train, and also a photograph showing the exterior of the old YWCA building located at 15 7th Street S.

The [Programs and Classes Series](#) (1940-2009) reflect the organization's tradition of nurturing the spirit, mind and body of its members and youth, through programs and educational

opportunities. Included in this are a large number of color snapshots taken of Camp Koda, a sports and activities day camp for children. The images feature the groups of children playing games, doing crafts, and taking field trips to zoos, roller skating rinks, bowling alleys, restaurants and Camp Cormorant. Other child educational programs in this series feature the Discovery Club, Kindercamp, a nursery school for children, ages 3-5, and Indian Guides and Princesses program. The Indian Guides and Princesses file feature a Y program that was designed to cultivate relationships between fathers and their sons and daughters. The photographs feature the fathers and their children dressed in Native American costumes and doing crafts. As for other educational programs, there are some interesting images of a J. Herbert Schriver teaching a wood chip art class, and a magic class being taught by Bruce Lindvig in 1977. Another folder contains images from the Postnatal Class offered to new mothers. There is a folder showing scenes from the Y's Akers program for the developmentally disabled. The final folder labeled Tours contains snapshots taken in the 1940s and 1950s showing several youth tours of the Holsum Bread factory, Hector Airport, and the Coca Cola bottling company.

Numerous sporting activities and events offered by the YMCA can be found in the [Sports and Recreation Series](#) (1947-1990). They are organized alphabetically by the name of the activity. Some of the highlights from this series are scenes from an indoor archery range, a large number of basketball action scenes as well as team photographs from a tournament. There is a set of images of bodybuilders doing poses from the 1950s. In the Calisthenics folder there are groups of men doing stretching and sit ups. The Card Tournament folder contains images of men playing cards in a large room, likely taken in the 1970s, and the Checker Tournament photos appear to be from the 1940s, showing the activity taking place on the basketball courts of the YMCA building at 632 1st Ave. N. The Golf file has two images of Bill Weaver interviewing Ed Werre who appears to be explaining proper grip of a putter. The Gymnastics files contain images of both male and female classes. Some of the images are of the tiny tots gymnastics featuring children ages 3 to 5. The Handball file holds images of a popular sport at the Fargo YMCA, and they include early tournament players and scenes. Two of the images in the Massage file show masseur Bill Henry giving a massage. The Minibiking file features images dealing with the "NYPUM" National Youth Project Using Minibikes, a delinquency prevention outreach program set up by the National Board of the YMCA in the 1970s, using minibikes donated by the American Honda Company. Another sport largely represented in the series is the Swimming series and contains images taken at the swimming pools inside YMCA buildings. The Volleyball files contain images of both men's and women's teams in action, and in team photographs, some dating back to the 1950s. There are two Weight Lifting folders in this series. The first file shows members working out in the weight room and using free weights. The second Weightlifting file shows people using the Nautilus machines in the 1980s. The Yoga file has one image of instructor Colleen Odden demonstrating a yoga pose in 1977.

The [Groups and Organizations Series](#) (1914-2002) feature the Boy Scouts, Heritage Club, Hi-Y and Junior Hi-Y, the Knothole Gang and the Rifle Club. The Foreign Exchange Students file features snapshots taken in 2002 of a group of foreign exchange students at Bonanzaville and at Camp Cormorant. The largest set of images in this series belong to the Y's Men's Club and show images from various banquets, meetings and events relating to this group.

The [Events Series](#) (1936-2003) contains photographs relating to special revolving around the YMCA including building fund and membership campaigns, special banquets and meetings, and

social gatherings such as dances and costume parties. Of special note in this series are images relating to the 1961 Building Fund Campaign, an image taken at the Golden Jubilee celebration in 1936, and images of an Iron Lung that was purchased with \$1,400 derived from the 1952 Candy Sale. There are also a number of color snapshots taken on a child care ski trip in 2003, and of a Service Club Olympics event in the 1990s.

The [YMCA Board, Staff, and People Series](#) (1940s-1990s) have group portrait photographs of the YMCA board and staff members. There are a few color snapshots from staff Christmas parties, and there is also a set of portraits of people affiliated with the YMCA organized arranged alphabetically.

The [Camp Cormorant Series](#) (1910s-2000s) starts out with general images of the camp including aerial photographs taken in January 1976, general exterior and interiors of buildings, and general views of the grounds. These images are followed by portraiture and general scenes of the camp staff and the campers taken between the 1940s and the 2000s. Some of the images taken in the 2000s appear to have been taken by professional photographers featuring groups of campers and councilors. These images are followed by general camp activities showing campers playing games, eating, riding horses, swimming and boating. One of the largest set of images belongs to the first Ice Fishing Tournament taken in 1994.

The [Photograph Album Series](#) (1940s-1950s) holds a group of images mounted on what appears to have been a photograph album from the 1940s and 1950s. All the pages in this series are loose with images on both the front and the back sides. These album pages have been cut apart, and unfortunately, in some cases where pages were cut, it damaged the photographs on the reverse side. Also it appears that attempts were made to remove some of the affixed photographs from these pages, and in the process the photographs were damaged.

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