

## Finding Aid to the H. Elaine Lindgren Papers

### Lindgren, H. Elaine

H. Elaine Lindgren Papers on the Fargo 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North bridge controversy, 1961-1987  
1.6 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 199

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### OVERVIEW

**Links:** Finding Aid to the [H. Elaine Lindgren Photograph Collection](#)  
Finding Aid to the [H. Elaine Lindgren Research Papers](#)  
Finding Aid to the [Jon G. and H. Elaine Lindgren Papers](#)

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### BIOGRAPHY

H. Elaine Lindgren was Professor of Sociology at North Dakota State University and had been teaching at the college for over thirty years until her retirement in 2005. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Missouri in 1970 and her research interests are social change, gender, and citizen participation. The letters, newspaper clippings, and manuals were collected by Lindgren over the course of the dispute

involving the proposed bridge that would link 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North of Fargo, North Dakota with 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue North in Moorhead, Minnesota. She studied the group for a period of eight years and the dispute gave Lindgren sufficient material to write an article titled “The Informal-Intermittent Organization: A Vehicle for Successful Citizen Protest,” published in *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* in 1987. The article is one of the few written on citizen groups, especially over such a long period of time. Also, Lindgren was part of the group who established a women’s study program at North Dakota State in the 1980s. Lindgren’s most famous book to date is *Land in Their Own Name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota*, which is a study of women who filed homestead claims in their own name in North Dakota.

## BACKGROUND

The protest against the proposed bridge began with the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Association, when it was formed in 1961. Its members were against the bridge because it threatened to turn their residential neighborhood into an area that would experience heavy commercial traffic. To the association the bridge meant a safety hazard for children crossing the street for school or sporting events at Jack Williams Stadium; trees and other greenery being removed for wider streets and construction of the bridge; and increased noise and air pollution from the large traffic volume that would be using the street. Other groups began to protest the construction of alternative bridges for the proposed 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge while the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Avenue area called for the bridge to be constructed in their neighborhood. The result of the multitude of protest groups resulted in the formation of Citizens Organized for Residential Protection (CORP) in 1970. CORP did extensive research into the environmental consequences, what would happen to property and tax values of the area if the bridge was built, and other factors related to the bridge. The organization hired a lawyer and sued the city to prevent the construction of the bridge. For twenty-seven years CORP and its predecessors fought the city. In 1987 the Fargo City Commission went ahead with plans to construct a toll bridge on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue even though it went against the people’s wishes. In a lecture Lindgren gave on October 27, 1998, she stated that two members, who supported the bridge, were removed from office four months after the plans for the toll bridge were final. CORP and the other protest organizations came very close to having their ultimate goal met. Even though a bridge was finally constructed, the two-lane, low level, floodable bridge actually built was far different from the high-profile four-lane structure proposed during the controversy.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The material in this collection consists of newspaper clippings, meeting minutes, journals, engineering plans, and planning manuals. An article by Elaine Lindgren about the bridge controversy is also included. The collection is divided into five series: **Background**, **Citizens Organized for Residential Protection (CORP)**, **Newspaper Clippings**, **Manuals/Planning Guides**, and **Public Hearings**.

The [Background Series](#) contains H. Elaine Lindgren’s article “The Informal-Intermittent Organization: A Vehicle for Successful Citizen Protest,” in *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* (vol. 23, no. 3, 1987). In her article, Lindgren traces the development of the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Association as well as the

development of CORP through their various stages. Different names for people, places and organizations are used in the article but it does pertain specifically to the Fargo-Moorhead bridge. The article gives a good overview of what is contained in the collection. The *Sociological Inventory* issue, a sample issue, contains an article on citizen protest movements titled “Evolution of Community Power Research,” written by John Walton.

The [Citizens Organized for Residential Protection \(CORP\) Series](#) includes a wide range of material. The 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Association is included in this series. There are documents relating to the Association’s alternative plan for a 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North bridge and why an alternative elsewhere would be more feasible. There is correspondence from citizens who supported and opposed the Association’s goals. The Association did extensive research into what the property values and tax revenues would be if the bridge was built. A press release from Eddie Gall, Jr., Co-Chairman of the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Association, contains a paragraph stating its purpose. The majority of the material in this series involves CORP. The organization continued the work started by the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Association and expanded it in some cases. There are flyers and notices CORP sent out informing the voters about what the bridge meant to them and its possible effects on the environment. CORP’s lawsuit against the city is included. The newspaper clippings detail CORP’s struggles against the city and shows the gains the organization made in making people more aware of the situation that the bridge controversy created.

The [Newspaper Clippings Series](#) documents the protest movement, critics of the bridge, and supporters of the bridge. The clippings cover 1961, 1963, 1965-69 and 1970-1972, 1974-1976, 1978-1979 and 1987. The issue was not dormant during the gaps and other clippings have been incorporated into the **CORP Series**. Many of the articles inform the people of the benefits of the proposed bridges and in some cases ignore the adverse affects. Others are editorials that blast the protest organizations telling them to be quiet and let the bridge be built because it will do more good than harm. The articles also show the change in attitude the city officials had about CORP over the years. Overall the articles provide a good understanding of both sides of the issue.

The [Manuals/ Planning Guide Series](#) contains all the manuals and planning guides gathered by CORP and the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Association. Some detail population and traffic projections for the future of the Fargo-Moorhead area. Others are environmental studies and problems the Department of Natural Resources or the Army Corps of Engineers found with the engineering plans. The majority of the manuals cover highway planning and the engineering studies of the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North bridge. The last manual is from 1986 and details a new plan for the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North Bridge. This series also includes a map with aerial image of ‘Fargo/Moorhead Proposed 12<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Ave. Improvements,’ dated June 27, 1979.

The [Public Hearings Series](#) contains transcripts from two of the public hearings held by the North Dakota State Highway Department and the Bid Proposal of one of the companies interested in constructing the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge. The public hearings were held after much protest by CORP that the project was being forced through and the public interest was being ignored. The hearings detail citizens’ concern over the proposed bridge. The Bid Proposal was obtained by Fargo mayor Jon Lindgren from Walter Hjelle, the North Dakota Highway Commissioner, to see what the projected cost of the bridge would be. The Bid Proposal details the cost for every aspect of building the bridge, labor, material cost, electricity, etc.

**BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
1/1	Finding aid
	<b>Background Series</b>
1/2	Lindgren article, "The Informal-Intermittent Organization" ( <i>The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science</i> , 1987); and a sample issue of <i>Sociological Inventory</i> containing "Evolution of Community Power Research," by John Walton.
	<b>Citizens Organized for Residential Protection (CORP)</b>
1/3	12 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Association correspondence
1/4	12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Association meeting minutes
1/5	12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Association research
1/6	12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Association list of workers
1/7	12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Association truck traffic correspondence
1/8	Property, land, building, and tax values
1/9	Citizens Advisory Committee
1/10	CORP newspaper clippings
1/11	CORP correspondence
1/12	CORP informative information-pamphlets and flyers
1/13	CORP meeting minutes and dates
1/14	Petition calling for 12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to remain residential
1/15	Barton-Aschman report
2/1	CORP's alternative plan for the 12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge
2/2	CORP's legal research
2/3	CORP's court pleadings in lawsuit against City of Fargo
2/4	CORP's correspondence relating to lawsuit
2/5	CORP's highway research
2/6	CORP's engineering plans
2/7	Fargo City Commission and Park Board Meeting Minutes
	<b>Newspaper Clippings Series</b>
2/8	Newspaper clippings, 1961, 1963, 1965-69
2/9	Newspaper clippings, 1970-1972, 1974-1976
2/10	Newspaper clippings, 1978-1979
2/11	Newspaper clippings, 1987
2/12	Pollution clippings and Articles
	<b>Manuals/Planning Guides Series</b>

- 3/1 Draft and final environmental statement on “Improvement of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North from Interstate 29 easterly to the University Drive-10<sup>th</sup> Street North Corridor in the City of Fargo, County of Cass, State of North Dakota,” 1973 and 1974,
- 3/2 *National Transportation Planning Manual (1970-1990): A: General Instructions; B: Urban Public Transportation; D: Airports and Intercity Terminals*
- 3/3 *Highway Research Records (Numbers 244, 245, 252, 253) and Highway Rights of Way (Number 53)*
- 3/4 *Fargo Central Area Development Plan (1969)*
- 3/5 *Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Highway Plan Update, Draft, 1986*
- 4/10 *Fargo/Moorhead Proposed 12<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Ave. Improvements, 1979*
- 3/6 *Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Studies, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area, 1966; and supplement prepared by South Side Betterment Association, Sept. 1966*
- 3/7 *Population analysis and populations projections for the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area, 1983; Comprehensive Land-use and Transportation Plan, Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, 1966; and Community Planning in Fargo Moorhead SMSA*
- 4/1 *Metropolitan Highway Plan-Preliminary Draft, 1976*
- 4/2 *Preliminary Design Study, 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. N., Fargo, N.Dak, 1973; and Fargo Master Plan, 1952*
- 4/3 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources preliminary plans outline, 1977
- 4/4 *Planning in the 1970's* by the League of Women Voters, 1970
- 4/5 Army Corps of Engineers survey, 1979
- 4/6 *Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety*, by North Dakota State Highway Department, 1969
- 4/7 Maps
- Public Hearings Series**
- 4/8 Lunda Construction Company contract, 1976
- 4/9 Public Hearing Transcripts regarding improvements to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Fargo,-September 24, 1970, and September 18, 1974