

Finding Aid to the Jon G. & H. Elaine Lindgren Papers

Lindgren, Jon G. and H. Elaine

John G. and H. Elaine Lindgren Papers, 1991-1995

.6 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 272

[Biography](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

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

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

Provenance: Donated by Jon and H. Elaine Lindgren, 2000 (Acc. 2600).

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

Copyrights: The Institute owns the copyrights.

Citation: [Identification of item]. Jon G. & H. Elaine Lindgren Papers, MS 272, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Jon G. Lindgren received a B.S. in 1960 from Iowa State University, and an M.A. and Ph.D., both from the University of Missouri. He began teaching at North Dakota State University in 1968 in the economics department, rising to the rank of associate professor before retiring in 2001. He was elected mayor of

Fargo, North Dakota in 1978 and served until 1994. H. Elaine Lindgren received a B.S. in 1961 from Iowa State University, an M.S. and a Ph.D. both from the University of Missouri. She is a professor of sociology at North Dakota State University, where she has taught since 1970. Her most well-known work is the book *Land in Her Own Name*, which was published in 1991 (paperback edition in 1996 by University of Oklahoma Press) and details women in North Dakota who filed on homestead claims in their own names.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s antiabortion protest groups such as Operation Rescue and the Lambs of Christ attempted to get abortion clinics around the nation to close through various means which included sit-ins, picketing, and in some extreme cases bombings of clinics and the murder of doctors who worked in such clinics. In 1991, a police chief from Redwood Falls, Minnesota, Michael Gerrety, participated in protest activities at the Fargo Women's Health Organization in Fargo, N.D. As a result, Gerrety was arrested and imprisoned along with several other protestors. In reaction, antiabortion protestors from around the nation wrote letters to Jon Lindgren, who was mayor of Fargo, N.D. at the time.

Using the letters as a significant part of their research material, the Lindgrens wrote an article for the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, which analyzed the methods the local government utilized to maintain control over the situation and keep the conflict from escalating.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The research papers of Jon and Elaine Lindgren contain letters and other research material they collected for writing of their article, published in the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences*, titled "Social Change Within the 'Establishment': A City's Response to National Antiabortion Protesters". This collection consists of the article itself, as well as the letters and other research material used to prepare the article. Some of the letters were form letters requesting the release of Gerrety, and called for the closure of the Fargo Women's Health Organization. The research papers of Jon and Elaine Lindgren have been organized into six series: Journal article, Research materials, Letters, Newspaper articles, Video tape, and Subject files.

The [Journal Article Series](#) contains one article, which was the final result of the Lindgrens' research and experience with local politics. The article, "Social Change Within the 'Establishment': A City's Response to National Antiabortion Protesters," was published in the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences* in 1995. This article examined antiabortion activism in Fargo, N.D. during Jon Lindgren's term as mayor and how the activists were dealt with by local government officials in order to maintain law and order within the city.

The [Research Materials Series](#) consists of several articles and essays that the Lindgrens used in preparation for their article. The series includes a copy of the article that appeared in a 1991 *CDC-Action Alert* that called for letters to be sent to Mayor Jon Lindgren in support of the antiabortion movement and to request the release of a Minnesota police chief, Michael Gerrety. This article inspired people from all over the nation, and several foreign countries to send letters to Mayor Lindgren stating their views on the

controversy. While there are some letters supporting the pro-choice side of the issue, the majority of letters are from pro-life activists. There are two letters that are labeled “A” and “B” that serve as examples of the form letter format that some of the letters follow. Also included is a list of the names and addresses of most of the letter senders.

The [Letters Series](#) includes 425 letters sent to Mayor Jon Lindgren in regards to the antiabortion protesting in Fargo and the arrest of police chief Michael Gerrety. The Lindgrens analyzed 400 of these letters and the results were used in their article. The letters were each numbered and then phrases common to a number of letters were selected, counted, and analyzed. They also mapped where each letter came from to determine the states or regions that sent the most letters. The letters have been filed in the order in which the Lindgrens numbered them.

The [Newspaper Articles Series](#) includes news and opinion articles regarding the abortion controversy and the resulting protest movements from 1991 to 1994. While articles from the *Grand Forks Herald* and the *Bismarck Tribune* have been included in the series, the majority of the articles are from *The Forum* and are focused specifically on the Fargo protesters.

The [Video Tape Series](#) consists of one tape of the May 10, 1993 Fargo City Commission Meeting. While the tape covers the whole meeting of about 120 minutes, the first 60 minutes of the footage consists of a hearing on Jane Bovard’s request for an ordinance of restricted picketing around her personal place of residence. Antiabortion protestors such as Martin Wishnatsky, David Habiger, Tim Lindgren, and Kathy Kirkeby, and Andy Vanyo spoke for varying lengths on why they were against the ordinance, and Jane Bovard and her neighbors spoke for varying lengths on why they believed the ordinance was necessary. Following the hearing about 30 minutes of footage covered the debate and eventual vote by commissioners on the ordinance. The commissioners voted in support of the ordinance to restrict picketing around Bovard’s private residence.

The [Subject Files Series](#) includes a file of complaints from employees and volunteers at the Fargo Women’s Health Organization regarding alleged instances of harassment, stalking, and ordinance violations by antiabortion protesters between May 6, 1991 and October 28, 1993. There is a file of correspondence written to the Lindgrens from 1991 to 1993 that includes letters from supporters such as Senator Kent Conrad and well-known protesters such as Randal Terry and Martin Wishnatsky. There are two pro-choice newsletters; a number of antiabortion pamphlets; and promotional material for a radical newsletter, the *Farmers and Consumers Report, Son Times/Concerned Citizens*. Other items in the subject files include fliers promoting antiabortion activities and meetings, a pro-choice advertisement titled “Send the ‘Lambs’ to Greener Pastures” and an article written about antiabortion activist Randal Terry titled “Where Did Randal Terry Go Wrong?”

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid

Journal Article Series

- 1/2 “Social Change Within the ‘Establishment’: A City’s Response to National Antiabortion Protesters” (1995).

Research Materials Series

- 1/3 Article on case studies, listing of related articles, book review
1/4 Photocopied pages from the book *Between Two Absolutes: Public Opinion and the Politics of Abortion* by Elizabeth Adell Cook, Ted G. Jelen, and Clyde Wilcox (1992).
1/5 Ten articles and essays pertaining to the abortion issue
1/6 *CDC Action Alert*: “ND Mayor Slams Pro-Life MN Police Chief,” examples of form “A” and form “B” letters that were sent to mayor Jon Lindgren, list of names and addresses of those people sending letters to the mayor

Letters Series

- | | |
|------|---------|
| 1/7 | 1-25 |
| 1/8 | 26-50 |
| 1/9 | 51-75 |
| 1/10 | 76-100 |
| 1/11 | 101-125 |
| 1/12 | 126-150 |
| 1/13 | 151-175 |
| 1/14 | 176-200 |
| 1/15 | 201-225 |
| 1/16 | 226-250 |
| 1/17 | 251-275 |
| 1/18 | 276-300 |
| 1/19 | 301-325 |
| 1/20 | 326-350 |
| 1/21 | 351-375 |
| 1/22 | 376-400 |
| 1/23 | 401-425 |

Newspaper Articles Series

- | | |
|------|----------------|
| 1/24 | June 1991 |
| 1/25 | July 1991 |
| 2/1 | August 1991 |
| 2/2 | September 1991 |
| 2/3 | October 1991 |

2/4 November 1991
2/5 1992-1994
2/6 No Date

Video Tape Series

VHS/1 Tape of the May 10, 1993 Fargo City Commission meeting

Subject Files Series

2/7 Complaints of harassment, stalking, and ordinance violations: May 6, 1993-October 28, 1993
2/8 Correspondence 1991-1993
2/9 Newsletters: *Feminist Majority Report*, March 1993; *ND-NARAL UPDATE* (Sept. 1991)
2/10 Pamphlets
2/11 Promotional material for *Farmers and Consumers Report*, *Son Times/Concerned Citizens*
2/12 Protest flier 1991-1993
2/13 "Send the 'Lambs' To Greener Pastures"
2/14 "Where Did Randal Terry Go Wrong?" 1989