

Finding Aid to the Coleman Museum, Ellendale, N.D. Photograph Collection

Coleman Museum (Ellendale, N.D.)

Coleman Museum, Ellendale, N.D. Photograph Collection, 1880s-1990s

1025 photographs

Collection number: Photo 2129

History

Scope and Content

Folder List

OVERVIEW

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

Provenance: Donated by the Ellendale Historical Society, 2015 (Acc. 2015-058irs)

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HISTORY

The town of Ellendale, founded in 1882, and subsequently named the county seat of Dickey County in South-Central North Dakota, has a history as an unusually vibrant community. This vibrancy was due in part to the establishment, via the 1889 North Dakota Constitution, of a state school in the town. This institution operated between 1899 and 1972, when it was transferred to private ownership and became Trinity Bible Institute. From the beginning, Ellendale was home to significant number of well-educated, civic-minded residents, some of whom became active in state and national politics. The state school brought a continual flow of students from around the state and beyond, seeking to better themselves through education.

The name of the institution was revised several times: originally it was named the State Manual Training School; in 1907 its official designation was changed to the State Normal and Industrial School; from 1945 until 1959 it was known as the State Normal and Industrial College; from 1960-1964 it was known as the

Ellendale State Teacher's College; in 1964 it entered into a partnership with the University of North Dakota and took the name UND Ellendale Center. In 1965 this was changed again to its final name, "UND Ellendale Branch."

In 1970, a fire destroyed the campus's two main buildings, giving impetus to longstanding outside efforts to streamline the state's higher education system and concentrate resources on fewer campuses. A state referendum was held, with voters approving the transfer of the property and facilities to a religiously-based private school. Trinity Bible Institute moved from Jamestown to Ellendale in 1972. Ten years later its name was changed to Trinity Bible College, and it remains in operation to the current date.

Ellendale citizens have long placed high value on their local history. R.M. Black, a trained historian and president of the state school from 1914 to 1936, oversaw the publication of *The History of Dickey County*, the area's first formal history, in 1930. In 1982 the Ellendale Historical Society published *A Century of Memories: Ellendale, North Dakota, 1882-1982*. In 2007, the Society published a larger and more detailed history entitled *Ellendale, North Dakota: 125th Anniversary, 1882-2007*.

The state school played a prominent role in all of these histories. However, the fire of 1970 with its resulting destruction of records and historical resources—and the subsequent closing of the state school—created difficulties for the adequate reconstruction of the institution's history, particularly its early years.

The Coleman Museum, established in a former main street bank building in 1984, served as a repository for many materials relating to the town's history that had been preserved in the Milwaukee and Great Northern railroad depots. Among these were many papers and mementos and photographs relating to the history of the state college. In conjunction with the 125th anniversary celebrations in 2007, the Ellendale Historical Society gathered many photographs and other materials related to the town and the college. Some of these materials were used for the 125th anniversary history book and placed in drawers, boxes and folders at the museum. In 2015, the Ellendale Historical Society donated the bulk of its photograph collection to the NDSU/Institute for Regional Studies Archives for digitization and permanent preservation.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Coleman collection consists of 1025 photographs, including paper prints, glass-plate positives, glass-plate negatives, and film negatives. Panoramic originals too large for the regular boxes are stored in the Institute for Regional Studies Oversize Photographs Collection, Drawer #9. Reduced-size photocopies of these images are filed along with the standard-sized images.

Non-human subjects include scenes from in and around Ellendale; streets and buildings, businesses, churches, and aerial views of the town both from grain elevators and from airplanes. A large number of photographs are from the college, and these provide a useful record of how the campus and its various buildings appeared at different stages in its history.

Human subjects include individuals in candid and more formal settings; group portraits of children and adults, many of which are associated with the college or the public school, civic organizations, or local government. The collection includes a large number of formal group portraits or classes, clubs, and miscellaneous campus organizations that were taken at the college from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. One notable group of photos are Kodak pictures taken by Arthur Kirschner from the late 1920s and early 1930s, displaying young people involved in various sporting activities, including amateur aviation.

Another notable group of photos are of postcards from the early days of auto tourism in and around Medora, North Dakota.

A set of 46 glass slide negatives were taken in and around the town of Lowry, S.D. near the time of the town's founding in 1907. The Lowry slides feature fourth-of-July celebrations, family life, and the country around the town.

A particularly notable part of this collection consists of 126 glass-slide positive photographs taken in Germany by Prof. A.E. Dunphy of the State Normal & Industrial School from April-June 1914. Professor Dunphy was participating in a visitation program to acquaint American industrial arts teachers with the organization and methods of the industrial schools of Munich. The photographs include classroom scenes of German industrial schools, examples of crafts made in the schools, street scenes, and scenes from various landmarks and museums in and around Munich.

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