

Finding Aid to the Northern School Supply (Fargo, N.D.) Records

Northern School Supply (Fargo, N.D.)

Northern School Supply (Fargo, N.D.) Records, 1918-1998

1.8 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 197

[History](#)

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [Northern School Supply Photograph Collection](#)

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

Provenance: Donated by Gary S. Groberg, School Specialty Inc., Fargo, N.D., 1998 (Acc 2516).

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

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Northern School Supply (Fargo, N.D.) Records, MS 197, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

Northern School Supply was founded in 1911 at Fargo, North Dakota when Fred V. Hutchinson and Walter L. Stockwell agreed to organize a school supply company. The co-founders saw their business grow and formed new branch offices in Great Falls, Montana and Portland, Oregon. Northern School Supply also made acquisitions of other companies. When the Greenwood Stationary Company of Fargo, North Dakota went out of business, Northern School Supply bought the controlling shares and reorganized it as Dacotah Paper. Northern School Supply sold Dacotah Paper in 1959 to F.W. Mohr and

Vernon R. Ranger. In 1975 Northern School Supply had retail and warehouse operations in Fargo and Great Falls Montana, a new retail outlet in Minot, and fifteen of their 100 employees serving as salespeople covering five states. Also in 1975 Northern School Supply offered its employees an opportunity to purchase company stock over a ten year period, an offer many accepted. On October 31, 1997 Northern School Supply closed after eighty-six years in business. It was bought out by School Specialty Inc. of Appleton, Wisconsin.

Fred V. Hutchinson was one of the co-founders of Northern School Supply. He was born August 20, 1880 in Manitowoc, Wisconsin and moved to Grand Rapids, North Dakota in 1886. After meeting with Walter L. Stockwell, he decided to help organize a school supply company rather than start his own abstracting business. While working for Northern School Supply Hutchinson was active in the National School Supply Association, serving on the Board of Directors (1921, 1923, 1924-25), the Executive Committee (1924-25), and the Committee on Credit and Business Practice (1921). He also served as the president and general manager of Northern School Supply in Fargo and from 1929 until his retirement in 1957 he was the president and chairman of the board for the Oregon subsidiary of the Fargo company. After retiring he continued on the board of directors. Previous to founding Northern School Supply, Hutchinson had been an educator and worked in an abstracting business. He served as the school principal at Enderlin, North Dakota and as the Ransom County, N.D. superintendent for schools. Later he worked in an abstracting business in La Moure, North Dakota before moving to Fargo. Hutchinson remained in Oregon where he died in 1958 at the age of 78. He was survived by his wife, two brothers, and five sisters. Hutchinson had no children.

Walter L. Stockwell was the other co-founder of Northern School Supply. He was born in Anoka, Minnesota on January 12, 1868 and married Helen Huntington Tombs on June 27, 1894. Stockwell and his wife had two children, Walter Lincoln Stockwell, Jr. and Helen Francis Stockwell. Their daughter died in early childhood, and their son died in an accident in 1934 while in California. Mr. Stockwell was active in the community and local clubs. He served as the grand secretary and recorder for the Masonic Grand Lodge and Templar bodies, a position he held for over forty years. His services and membership in the Masons earned him a place on Hitler's enemies list, something Stockwell called an honor. He also organized various community activities sponsored by the Masons. He too had been an educator. In 1889 he became the principal of the school at St. Thomas, North Dakota and later the superintendent at Grafton, North Dakota. Stockwell helped organize and taught in the first summer session in 1895 at the University of North Dakota. In 1899 he became president of the North Dakota Educational Association and from 1903 to 1911 was the state superintendent of public instruction. Stockwell died at the age of 82 on December 4, 1950 in Fargo. His wife preceded him in death.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Northern School Supply Records** are divided into two series: History and Catalogs. Early corporate records were sent to the home office of Office Specialty Inc. in Appleton, Wisconsin.

The [History Series](#) contains various clippings of the two founders, Hutchinson and Stockwell. Also included are clippings of various employees and other presidents and general managers. Some employees

have short biographies. The last part of this series contains the stock purchasing agreement and escrow agreement of 1975 with signatures of the employees who chose to buy stock.

The [Catalog Series](#) contains the Northern School Supply catalogs issued by the company. It starts with issue number 8 (1918) and then continues with issue 10 to issue number 39 (1950/51). After this point there are large gaps in the series. The catalogs go from issue 41 to 45, 47, 50 to 55 (1952/53-1966/68) which ends the use of numbers on the catalogs. The run continues with 1968 to 1974. There is another gap until the catalog celebrating Northern School Supply's 75th anniversary with the 1986/1988 issue. The final catalog is the 1998 Fargo issue. The majority of the catalogs are for the Fargo store, with a few for the Great Falls, Montana store. Beginning with issue 18 and ending with issue 33 the catalogs cover the stores in Fargo, Great Falls, and Portland. One catalog of special interest is the "Athletic Supplies and Equipment" issue, it is the one of its kind in the collection.

SEPARATION RECORDS

The collection of photographs (68 items) documenting Northern School Supply have been placed in the Institute photograph collection.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid
	History Series
1/2	Company history and co-founders biographical material
1/3	Newspaper clippings and employee biographical material
1/4	Stock selling/buying agreement, 1975
	Catalogs Series
1/5	#8, Fargo, 1918
1/6	#10, Fargo, n.d.
1/7	#11, Fargo, 1922/1923
1/8	#12, Fargo, 1923/1924
1/9	#13, Fargo, 1924/1925
1/10	#14, Fargo, 1925/1926
1/11	#15, Fargo, 1926/1927
1/12	#16, Fargo, 1927/1928
1/13	#17, Fargo, 1928/1929
1/14	Athletic Supplies and Equipment: Portland, Butte, Fargo,

Spokane, Seattle, 1929/1930

1/15 #18, Fargo, Butte, Spokane, Portland, Seattle, 1929/1930
1/16 #19, Fargo, Spokane, Seattle, Portland, 1930/1931
1/17 #20, Fargo, Spokane, Seattle, Great Falls, Portland, 1931/1932
1/18 #21, Fargo, Spokane, Seattle, Great Falls, Portland, 1932/1933
1/19 #22, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1933/1934
1/20 #23, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1934/1935
1/21 #24, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1935/1936
1/22 #25, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1936/1937
2/1 #26, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1937/1938
2/2 #27, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1938/1939
2/3 #28, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1939/1940
2/4 #29, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1940/1941
2/5 #30, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1941/1942
2/6 #31, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1942/1943
2/7 #32, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1943/1944
2/8 #33, Fargo, Great Falls, Portland, 1944/1945
2/9 #34, Fargo, 1945/1946
2/10 #34, Great Falls, 1945/1946
2/11 #35, Fargo, 1946/1947
2/12 #35, Great Falls, 1946/1947
2/13 #36, Fargo, 1947/1948
2/14 #37, Great Falls, 1948/1949
2/15 #39, Fargo, 1950/1951
2/16 #41, Fargo, 1952/1953
2/17 #41, Great Falls, 1952/1953
2/18 #42, Fargo, 1953/1954
3/1 #42, Great Falls, 1953/1954
3/2 #43, Fargo, 1954/1955
3/3 Seattle, Spokane, Portland, 1954/1955
3/4 #44, Fargo, 1955/1956
3/5 #45, Fargo, 1956/1957
3/6 #4?, Great Falls, 1955/1956
3/7 #47, Fargo, 1958/1959
3/8 #50, Fargo, 1960/1961
3/9 #51, Fargo, 1961/1962
3/10 #51, Great Falls, 1962/1963
3/11 #52, Fargo, 1962/1963
4/1 #52, Great Falls, 1963/1964
4/2 #53, Fargo, 1963/1964
4/3 #54, Fargo, 1964/1965
4/4 #55, Fargo, 1966/1968
4/5 Fargo, 1968/1970
4/6 Teacher's Catalogue, Fargo, 1970/1972

4/7	Fargo, 1971/1972
4/8	Fargo, Great Falls, 1973/1974
5/1	75 th Year, 1986/1988
5/2	Fargo, 1998