

Finding Aid to the Northern States Power Company, Fargo District Records

Northern States Power Company (Minnesota). Fargo District

Northern States Power Company Fargo District Records, 1882, 1928-1976

.4 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 205

[History](#)

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [Northern States Power Company, Fargo District Photograph Collection, 1913-1980s](#)

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

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Northern States Power Company-Fargo District Records, MS 205, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

The Fargo Electric Light and Power Company was granted its franchise on November 7, 1881. They built their first electric generating plant in 1882, located around the location of 8th Street and N.P. Avenue. One of the company's main purposes was street lighting. A 160-foot tall light tower was erected at the intersection of N.P. Avenue and Broadway. A second tower was erected at Broadway and 4th Avenue.

These towers were destroyed by a tornado in 1897 and never rebuilt. A gas plant was erected at the intersection of N.P. Avenue and 12th Street, and the first gas was delivered to the gas mains in 1885.

On May 1, 1888 a new company, the Fargo Incandescent Light Company, was granted a franchise. In 1889 the Fargo Electric Light and Power Company merged with this new entity to become the Fargo Gas and Electric Company. A new electric plant was built adjacent to the gas plant, and the old equipment was moved to this site.

In 1898 the Hughes Electric Company was given a franchise. They built their new plant along the Northern Pacific tracks, across from the depot. This new company was incorporated by Alexander Hughes and his son Edmond Hughes. The Hughes family was important in the manufacture of the first electric ranges, which later became Hotpoint, Inc.

The Hughes Electric Company changed its name to the Fargo Edison Company in 1900. The company installed steam heating mains in the downtown area, as well as providing a 24-hour electric service. Their business grew rapidly, and competition between the Fargo Edison Company and the Fargo Gas and Electric Company became bitter. Each tried to steal each other's customers and even each other's poles. In 1903 the two companies finally merged to become the Union Light Heat and Power Company. In 1904 the old Fargo Gas and Electric plant was dismantled and a new gas plant was built on the site.

The Union Light Heat and Power Company was acquired in 1910 by the Consumer Power Company, which became Northern States Power in 1916. The Union Light Heat and Power Company continued to operate under its own name until 1937 when it took the name of its owner Northern States Power.

In 1911 the Fargo and Moorhead Railway Company was acquired by the Union Light Heat and Power Company. Since its founding in 1902, the street cars current had been supplied by the power company. The tracks would eventually extend all the way to Dilworth, Minnesota. It was abandoned in 1937. The Union Company organized the Northern Transit Company in 1926, a bus company that was later sold in 1937.

A complete rebuilding of the downtown steam plant was completed in 1916. The gas plant required a rebuilding again in 1925, when the method of producing gas changed to water-carburetion. In 1960 natural gas came to Fargo and the gas plant was shut down. The downtown steam plant was dismantled in 1971 after it had become obsolete with power being supplied by sources outside of the city.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Northern States Power company, Fargo District Records are made up of a cookbook and some documents included with a donation of photographs from NSP. They are organized into two series: Home Service Department cookbook and a subject file series.

The [Northern States Power Home Service Department Recipe Book Series](#) includes all the material removed from a three-ring binder containing mimeographed recipes issued by the department. They are not dated but appear to span from 1932 to the 1950s. It is believed the recipes were issued from the

headquarters in Minneapolis and not Fargo. There is a printed index for the recipe collection. The index identified recipes in two different series: Business Women’s Class (B) and the Homemakers Class (H). In some instances a recipe can be found with both the B and the H series, but located on a single page. All recipe sheets are numbered. There are also recipes which were not in the two series listed above, including bread recipes and miscellaneous recipes. The final folder contains a set of recipes featured on a NSP sponsored television cooking show.

In the [Subject File Series](#), the first file contains some souvenirs from Fargo’s 75th and 100th anniversary celebrations. These involve three humorous certificates for the “Brothers of the Brush” beard growing contest, made out to Harold Sandvik. The next folder contains three newspaper articles involving Fargo and NSP. The first one is a 1962 *Fargo Forum* clipping about the ground breaking for the new Fargo NSP office building. Another article is from a 1971 *Minneapolis Tribune*. It details how businesses in downtown Fargo were looking at ways to hold shoppers downtown once the West Acres shopping mall was built.

The third article was from a 1976 *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, it is about the new NSP chief executive Don McCarthy. The next folder holds educational materials on the operation of the steam plant. This includes a real good explanation of the inner workings of the steam plant, and blue print diagrams of the boilers and stokers made up in 1930. There is an 1882 receipt to the Electric Light Company from the Rolph Bros. Dealers in Hardware, Glass, Tinware and Plumbing. The scrapbook has ‘Advertising’ and ‘November 1928’ on the cover and title page. It contains a wide variety of advertising for Northern State Power promoting electrical use and many home appliances including Kelvinator stoves, Eureka vacuum cleaner, Reliable stoves, and Hotpoint stoves. Most are newspaper advertisements, but the scrapbook does include flyers and booklets regarding various appliances. There is also a copy of the booklet *The Light to Happiness* by Edith Cook, published in 1928 by Northern States Power.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

1/1 Finding aid

Northern States Power, Home Service Department Recipe Book Series

- 1/2 Index
- 1/3 Lessons 1-100 (Business Women’s Class)
- 1/4 Lessons 101-200 (Business Women’s Class)
- 1/5 Lessons 1-100 (Homemakers Class)
- 1/6 Lessons 101-200 (Homemakers Class)
- 1/7 Lessons 201-275 (Homemakers Class)
- 1/8 Lessons 276-347 (Homemakers Class)
- 1/9 Recipe book on breads
- 1/10 Individual recipes
- 1/11 Miscellaneous recipes
- 1/12 Television series recipes

Subject Files Series

- 1/13 Brothers of the Bush, Fargo-Moorhead 75th and 100th anniversary, 1950, 1975
- 1/14 Newspaper clippings
- 1/15 “Path of Energy from the Coal Pile to the Switchboard,” Fargo Steam Plant
instructional lessons, ca. 1930s
- 1/16 Rolph Bros. Receipt to the Electric Company, Fargo, Oct. 31, 1882
- 1/17 Scrapbook “Northern States Power Company Advertising, November 1928”