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Finding Aid to the Alba Bales House Records

Alba Bales House (Home Management House, Practice House)

Alba Bales House, Records, 1918-2009

3.5 linear ft.

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [Dean Alba Bales Records 1926-1937, 1940-1942](#)

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HISTORY

The Alba Bales House, which was originally named the Practice House, was built between 1922-1923 and on Saturday, October 21, 1922 the cornerstone was laid. The Practice House was ready for its first residents in the fall of 1923. It was renamed the Home Management House in 1936 to better reflect its purpose, and finally renamed the Alba Bales House in 1954, in honor of Dean Alba Bales.

Alba Bales was the first female academic Dean at North Dakota Agricultural College. She was born in Lewis, Iowa in 1879, attended Oberlin College, and received her bachelor's and master's from Columbia University. Prior to coming to NDAC in 1920, she taught in normal schools in Idaho and Kansas and at

Montana State College. From 1920 to 1926, she served as Head of the School of Home Economics and in 1926 she became Dean. In 1937 she was fired in the infamous “Purge” but was reinstated in 1940. She retired from NDAC in 1942 and moved to Florida. She died in 1967 at the age of 88.

The foundation for the establishment of the Alba Bales House commences with the beginnings of the North Dakota Agricultural College. Under the *Laws of North Dakota*, 1890, home economy is listed as one of the courses at the College. The description of the first Domestic Economy Winter Course, in the 1892 NDAC catalog provides the foundation for the eventual building of the practice house: “The instruction is imparted by means of demonstration lecture, after which pupils are expected to perform work described for themselves in the practice kitchen.”

In 1917 two developments impacted the department, first the department became the School of Home Economics and the Vocational Education Act of 1917, popularly referred to as the Smith-Hughes Act, was implemented, which made federal funds available for home economics education. Practical experience was an integral part of the requirements for the training of home economic teachers. “Teachers of home economics under the Smith-Hughes act must, be graduates of a four-year college course in home economics of standard grade and present satisfactory evidence of at least two years practical experience, including a considerable period of home management.”

To be able to provide the necessary experience, a facility dedicated specifically for demonstration work was needed. In the *Fourteenth Biennial Report (1918)*, President Edwin F. Ladd, recommended the construction of a demonstration cottage. Apparently no funds were appropriated, since President Ladd reported in the next biennial report (1920), under the Smith-Hughes act that “there will need to be provided a demonstration cottage for the use of students in the Department of Home Economics ... without this provision, the federal funds will not be furnished.”

As the process of securing funds continued, Alba Bales, who had taken over the department in 1920 moved ahead to comply with Smith-Hughes and secured a temporary practice houses. In the *Sixteenth Biennial Report* (October, 1922), the Practice House was listed and originally budgeted \$8,000 for building and \$4,000 for equipping. In the 16th Biennial (1922) , Alba Bales reported that they felt the new Home Economics practice house would be completed by January 1923.

The first residents entered the practice house in the fall term of 1923 and the facility continued to serve as a practical residential training laboratory until the fall semester of 1981. The headlines of the 1982 College of Home Economics *Alumni Newsletter* read: “60 years of one bathroom, one telephone and smoking only in the basement. Era of living-in at Home Management House comes to an end.” Today (1998) the house still provides a practical setting for students in the Child Development and Family Science department.

In 1982, “Laboratory in Home Management,” replaced the 4-5 week live-in experience in the Alba Bales House. At that time, the house was used by the Home Management and Family Economics Department for class lectures and practical demonstrations. In 1986, the Child Development and Family Science Department received two grants to expand the Family Studies Institute. The next year, 1987, the Alba Bales House was chosen as the site for the Family Studies Institute, and renovations began. By 1991,

“the Family Studies Institute in child development and family science and the counselor education program in the School of Education occupy the house.” (*History of the Home Management House*. Monograph - December, 1997 - NDSU, College of Human Development and Education, p. 41.)

In September 2009, the Alba Bales House became the “Equity and Diversity Center.” As per their website “The NDSU Equity & Diversity Center is committed to facilitating an inclusive environment where individuals of diverse cultures, backgrounds and orientations are respected. We value all identities while challenging the varied forms of oppression and discrimination. We celebrate our shared human experiences while affirming and enriching the dignity of diversity. The Equity & Diversity Center serves as a safe and inviting gathering space as well as an empowering resource, cultivating a nurturing, accepting campus climate by coordinating educational and social activities, programming, and development opportunities. It is our mission to advocate for social justice among traditionally under-represented groups while establishing a sense of community on campus and in the Fargo-Moorhead area.” (<http://www.ndsu.edu/edcenter/>, February 2010).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Alba Bales House Records is an artificially constructed series consisting of materials found in the basement of the Alba Bales House in 1992, materials sent to the NDSU Archives in 1996/1997 by the College of Human Development and Education, materials generated in preparation for and during the 75th Anniversary of the Alba Bales House in October, 1997, as well as various news articles about the Alba Bales House..

The [General House Records Series](#) consist of assorted materials, including floor plans, a recount of the laying of the cornerstone (quite amusing), biennial reports, lists of residents, re-dedication as the Alba Bales House in 1954 (correspondence, clippings, programs, tape and video), wallpaper swatches, histories of the house, and the high tea celebrating the 75th anniversary of the house.

The [Guest Book Series](#) consists of eight guest books from 1939 - 1971. Some include the activity and comments.

The [Journals, Account Books, and Menu Book Series](#) contains of two bound daily journals kept from September 1948 through May 1951. The journals should be viewed with some skepticism, since during the course of preparing for the 75th Anniversary, some former residents who were interviewed said they wrote what they were supposed to, since the books were reviewed and what they wrote could have impacted on their grade. The Expenditure books provide a detailed accounting of daily expenses and the Menu book recounts the daily fare.

The [Articles Series](#) consists of articles about the Alba Bales House, including the purpose of the house, residents, and functions and activities. Primarily the articles are from *The Spectrum* (NDSU student newspaper) and *The Forum* (Fargo-Moorhead local newspaper).

The [Scrapbook/Album Series](#) contains scrapbooks/albums from the 1940s through 1981. Due to extreme deterioration on a number of the scrapbooks, conservation and preservation techniques and supplies were

utilized to create five scrapbooks for the Fall, 1946 - Winter, 1954. Wherever possible the integrity of the original scrapbooks was maintained.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

BOX 1

1/1 Finding Aid/History & Clippings

House Records (1918-1997)

- 1/2 Biennial Report excerpts as they relate to Alba Bales House - 1918-1924
- 1/3 Stanley A. Smith letter - recounting the laying of the cornerstone in 1922 - 1965
- 1/4 Floor Plans - enlarged copies - c.1922 (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- 1/5 Residents - 1939 - 1954 [gaps]
- 1/6 List of Residents - 1940s-1950s - handwritten
- 1/7 Class Will - Six Residents from Fall, 1953
- 1/8 Class Prophecy - Group from Fall, 1953, recounted in 1963
- 1/9 Dedication of Alba Bales House - press release, program suggestions, correspondence, clippings - 1954
- 1/10 Video & Audio Tape of Dedication Ceremony of Alba Bales House - May, 1954 (copied Spring, 1997 - originals no longer available)
- 1/11 Thank You letters to Girls at HMH - 1950s-1980s
- 1/12 BBQ invitation to HMH & "Ode to a Saturday Mourn" - c.1950s
- 1/13 Policies and Regulations - c.1965-66
- 1/14 Wallpaper swatches from stairs to resident's apartment in Alba Bales house & wallpaper analyses
- 1/15 High Tea Script - History of Alba Bales House - Abbreviated - Oct., 1997; Alba Bales Background - Script - by Trisha Velure, Grad. Ass't. NDIRS - 1997
- 1/16 Menu/RSVP form - College of Human Development and Education High Tea - Raddison Hotel Ballroom, Fargo, October 10, 1997
- 1/17 Flyer - Proposed \$1 million dollar Alba Bales Renovation - 10/97
- 1/18 *School Cottages For Training in Home-Making* - Better Homes in America - October, 1925 - NDAC Practice House, p. 4
- 1/19 *Leaves of Gold* - 1962
- 1/20 *History of the Home Management House*. Monograph - December, 1997 - NDSU, College of Human Development and Education.

Guest Books (1939-1971)

1/21 Guest Book - cork front/back - 1939-1940

BOX 2

- Guest Book (Album) - 1942-1944 (Oversized - Removed to Box 4)
- 2/1 Guests - 1946-1948

- 2/2 Guests - 1950-1951
- 2/3 Guest Book - 1953-1956
- 2/4 Guest Book - 1960-1962
- 2/5 Guest Book - 1962-1975
- 2/6 Guest Book - 1967-1971

Journals, Account Books, and Menu Book (1943-1951)

- 2/7 Daily Journal - September, 1948 - June, 1949; March, 1951 - May, 1951
- 2/8 Daily Journal - September, 1949 - January, 1951

BOX 3

- 3/1 Expenditure Book - Fall, 1943-November, 1944
- 3/2 Daily Menu Book - September, 1948 - June, 1951
- 3/3 Cash Book - Itemized - September - June, no year

Articles (1918-1982)

- 3/4 "To Train Vocational Teachers." *College and State*, A Publication of the North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo. Volume II., March-April, 1918, pp. 1-2
- 3/5 "Senior Girls in Home Economics Put Theories into Practice."- copy - *The Forum*, Saturday, March 12, 1921, pp. 9-10. (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- 3/6 "Senior Home Economics To Be Practical Housekeepers." *The Weekly Spectrum*, January 20, 1922, pp. 1, 4.
- 3/7 "Laying of the Cornerstone." *College & State*, December, 1922, p. 12
- 3/8 "Practice House Ready." *The Fargo Forum*, June 2, 1923, p 11.
- 3/8a "Practice House at A.C. model both in beauty, utility," *Fargo Daily Tribune*, June 3, 1923, p. 1
- 3/8b "Practice house viewed by many on opening day," *Fargo Daily Tribune*, June 5, 1923, pp. 1,4
- 3/9 "Modern, up-to-date Practice house Needed To give Girls Best Training, Prof. Alba Bales at A.C. Declares" *Fargo Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1923 [Incorrect Date, probably early June, 1923 – NOTE: CANNOT VERIFY DATE]
- 3/10 "Plans Made at A.C." *Fargo Daily Tribune*, c. June, 1923
- 3/11 "Coeds At A.C. Take Pride In Looks Of New Practice House." *The Forum*, October 27, 1923, p. 9.
- 3/12 "Practice House Is A Laboratory, Says Economic Head." *The Weekly Spectrum*, October 31, 1923, p. 1
- 3/13 "Fargoans Inspect A.C. Practice House." *The Forum*, November 2, 1923, p. 9
- 3/14 "No Union Hours For Housekeepers: A.C. Practice Girls Find." Probably *The Forum*, c. 1923.
- 3/15 "Here Is Good News For Single Men: Girls At A.C. Learn How To Live On 45 Cents Per Day." Probably *The Forum*, c. 1923.
- 3/16 "Colonial Touches Appear In Practice House Interior." *The Forum*, March 22, 1924 - 4 shot photo spread
- 3/17 "Six Home Ec Girls Enter Practice House." *The Spectrum*, March 26, 1929, p. 1

- 3/17a "An Attic Made Charming." *The Farmer's Wife*, November, 1930, pp. 17, 53
- 3/18 "Popcorn Popular As Election Returns Come In—." Photo with caption. Probably *The Forum*, c.1940.
- 3/19 "Home Management House Entertaining Gets Praise." *The Spectrum*, January 8, 1943, p. 1.
- 3/20 "It's A Dog's Life." (photo & caption) & "Pup News at Management." *The Spectrum*, December 5, 1947.
- 3/21 "Practice Group Has New Senior Group." *The Spectrum*, November 18, 1949
- 3/22 "Home Ec Girls At NDAC Study 'Management.'" *The Forum*, December 4, 1949, p. 21.
- 3/23 "Mimi Mouse Eats Popcorn, Macaroni In Home Management House Kitchen." *The Spectrum*, October 5, 1951, p. 4.
- 3/24 "Home Management House Festive In Yuletide Dress." *The Forum*, December, 16, 1951.
- 3/25 "Management House Appoints Residents." *The Spectrum*, April 11, 1952 [24]
- 3/26 "Comings & Goings." Photo with Caption - *Fargo Forum* - April 9, 1953
- 3/27 "Honors Day Convo Thursday to Feature Dedication of Home Management House." *The Spectrum*, May 14, 1954, p. 1. (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- 3/28 "North Dakota School Honors Local Resident In Naming New Building." - copy - *St. Petersburg Times*, May 17, 1954, p. 22. Original (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- 3/29 News clipping - 2 photos with captions - Alba Bales Management House - *The Fargo Forum*, 1955. Sent in by Doris (Tallackson) Lauf, Class of 1953,
- 3/30 "Ironing Is A Needed Chore - - Cooking Is A Must Work, You Future Housewives - - Dust, Dust, Dust." - copy - 2 page photo spread - *The Spectrum*, December 7, 1956. (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- 3/31 "Eleanor Vergin Gives Tips On Entertaining." *The Forum*, August 13, 1961.
- 3/32 "Home Management House Is Laboratory For Home Economic Coeds." 2 page spread - *The Spectrum*, December 22, 1961
- 3/33 "Home Management House Often Billed A Mystery." *The Spectrum*, December 10, 1971, p. 8 (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- "Alba Bales, 'Dedicated to the education of you ladies' since 1922." *The Spectrum*, March 21, 1975, p. 3
- "Alba Bales' Home for Home Economists." *The Spectrum*, November 10, 1978 (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- "60 years of one bathroom, one telephone and smoking only in the basement. Era of living -in at Home Management comes to an end." *Alumni News*, 1982 (Removed to: NDSU COLLEGES, Oversized Print Materials, College of Human Development & Education folder)
- 3/34 "What is Alba Bales?" *The Spectrum*, November 4, 2003, p. 5.

3/35 "Equity and Diversity Center is now open." *The Spectrum*, September 25, 2009, p.1.

BOX 4 (Scrapbooks/Albums)

- Black Binder - Guest comments & photos – November 1942 – July 1944
- Small (4 page) photo Album, with written reminisce page by Leola (Myra) Olson – NDAC Class of 1945 - Spring, 1945
- Scrapbook/Album – October 1946 – March 1949
- Scrapbook/Album – April 1949 – February 1950
- Scrapbook/Album – February 1950-May 1951
- Scrapbook/Album – Fall 1951 – Spring 1952
- Single page (oversized) sheet – Winter 1954 – 8 small cutout red hearts with surrounding another heart with the names of the girls who were in the HMH during that time period – glued on a large doily
- 3 loose pages – c.1940s

BOX 5 (Scrapbooks/Albums)

- Scrapbook/Album – Fall 1952 – Winter 1954
- Scrapbook -Spring, 1971 (gold/black cover)
- Scrapbook -Winter '81 - 1/17 - 2/28 (red cover)
- Scrapbook -Spring '81 - 4/14 - 5/18 (green cover)