

Finding Aid to the George A. Sinner Photograph Collection

Sinner, George A.

George A. Sinner Photograph Collection, 1970s-1992

96 color photographic prints

4 photograph albums (186 photographic prints)

Collection number: Photo 2109

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OVERVIEW

Links: View images on [Digital Horizons](#)
Finding aid to [George A. Sinner Papers](#)

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

Provenance: Donated by George Sinner, 1997 (Acc. 2614).

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

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Credit Line: Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU, Fargo (item number)

BIOGRAPHY

George A. Sinner was born May 19, 1928, the youngest of four children of Albert and Katherine (Wild) Sinner. The family lived on a farm near Casselton, N.D. He attended St. John's Preparatory School and went on to obtain college degree from Saint John's University at Collegeville, Minnesota. Sinner credits his years at Saint John's for his life-long commitment to public service. In 1950 he enlisted in the Air National Guard at Fargo and was called to active duty in 1951. He married Elizabeth "Jane" Sinner in 1951. After military service he returned to the family farming operation at Casselton. The Mr. and Mrs. Sinner raised ten children.

George Sinner's entry into politics was in 1962 when he won a seat in the North Dakota Senate. In 1964 he ran for the seat in the U.S. House of Representatives but lost to incumbent Mark Andrews. Sinner also chaired circa 1966/1967 the board of directors that established the Southeast Region Mental Health and Retardation Clinic in Fargo. In 1967 Governor Guy appointed him to the State Board of Higher Education. Sinner continued to be very active in politics and local issues, serving as a member of the 1972 North Dakota Constitutional Convention. He chaired a group that successfully worked for a new greenhouse complex at North Dakota State University as well as an ad hoc group that organized the Northern Crops Institute in 1981, located on the North Dakota State University campus.

George Sinner became the 29th governor of the state of North Dakota, serving two terms from 1985 to 1992. During his governorship North Dakota celebrated its centennial. After his term as governor, Sinner became the vice president of Public and Government Relations for American Crystal Sugar Company in Moorhead Minnesota.

The April 2010 issue (Vol. 75, nos. 3 & 4) of *North Dakota History* is devoted entirely to the life and career of Governor George Sinner and Jane Sinner.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **George A. Sinner Photograph Collection** spans from the late 1970s and continues into the early 1990s; mostly of trips that Sinner took to the Republic of China and Japan when he was North Dakota Governor. This collection consists of ninety-three color photographic prints. They came as part of the accession of scrapbooks and artifacts from Sinner's governorship. The photographs have been organized into three series: Foreign Trips, Topical, and Photograph Albums.

The **Foreign Trip Series** consists of 69 photographs that span from 1986 to 1992. This series consists of image from three separate trade missions Governor Sinner made to Taiwan. These photos cover the different things that the Governor and his wife did while they were in Taiwan. They met with a lot of different officials, and there are a lot of photos of them receiving gifts. There are also photographs of the Sinners enjoying their time while in Taiwan.

The **Topical Series** is the most diverse of all of the series. These are the photographs that show a lot of different things from when Sinner was governor. A couple of the folders in this series are images that were given to Sinner by the armed forces. He spoke to the 164th engineering group in 1987 praising them for their work. There is also a photo from the Minot Air Force Base flight crew thanking him for his support during Desert Storm. There are some that deal with airplanes. Sinner had three photos from the Happy Hooligans, the 199th Fighter Group stationed headquarters at Fargo, N.D., and two photos of aerial views of Bismarck, N.D., showing likely the governor's plane flying over the North Dakota Capitol. George Sinner was president of the Red River Valley Sugar Beet Growers Association and there are eleven photographs from when he was president showing various boards and people. The rest are miscellaneous photos that were removed from the original frames. They range from Sinner planting a tree to him conducting a meeting with N.D. governor Allen Olson.

The **Photograph Albums Series** consists of five albums that were made for the governor documenting his visits to Kanazawa, Japan in 1985 and three trips to Taiwan in 1986, 1989 and 1992. All the albums are in good shape and have been kept intact.

The 1985 album (52 color images) documents a trip by American governors in November 1985 to Kanazawa, Japan with images of meeting with government officials, touring, shopping, and attending meetings. It includes a meeting with the Ishikawa Prefecture governor. The first page is titled ‘With the best wishes, Yoichi Nakanishi, Governor of Ishikawa Prefecture’. Other governors identified on the initial images include George R. Ariyoshi of Hawaii, George Nigh of Oklahoma, Anthony S. Earl of Wisconsin and Edward D. Diprete of Rhode Island.

The three albums for 1986, 1989 and 1992 are quite elaborate albums prepared by Republic of China officials documenting trade mission visits. They contain some of the same types of photographs as in the Foreign Trip Series, but there are some differences. Both of the series show the governor as a statesman and a gentleman. This series documents a variety of activities that George Sinner and his wife did when they were in the Republic of China. The albums are almost identical in design and format. The covers are imprinted in both Chinese and English with “The visit of Governor & Mrs. George A. Sinner and his party to The Republic of China, [dates], with the compliments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China.” In each album are color images of Governor and sometimes Mrs. Sinner visiting with various government officials. Each page has a notation with the names of the persons represented.

Of special interest in the 1986 album is the Sinners visiting the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall and meeting with Premier Yu Kuo-Hwa. The 1989 album including meeting with dignitaries and a visit to the Tunnel of Nine Curves. The snapshots from the 1989 visit in file eighteen were removed due to the album being a ‘magnetic page album’ that would damage the snapshots over time. A note attached to the cover reads ‘Governor Sinner, Compliments of Capt. Y.L. Lee, China Airlines. The images in this album are more casual snapshots of a group touring sites include the Tunnel of Nine Curves and a temple. The 1992 album is almost exclusively of shaking hands with various officials, attending meetings and formal visits with dignitaries. It does include several of Governor Sinner speaking before a group in a social setting.

FOLDER LIST

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1	Finding aid, and Biographical material
	Foreign Trip series
2	Republic of China, 1986 (34)
3	Republic of China, 1992 (30)
4	Republic of China, 1989 (5)
	Topical Series
5	164 th Engineering Group, 1987 (1)
6	Aerial of Bismarck, (2)
21	North Dakota Board of Higher Education, (1)
7	North Dakota Air National Guard, Fighter Wing 119th (Happy Hooligans) (3)
8	Governors Meeting, 1984 (1)
9	North Dakota Legislative Assembly House of Representatives, 1983 (1)
9a	North Dakota National Guard banquet, Camp Grafton (1)

- 10 National Governors Conference, 1992 (1)
- 11 Minot Air Force Base flight crew (1)
- 12 Portrait, (1)
- 13 Red River Valley Sugar Beet Growers Association, 1970s and 1980s (11)
- 22 Resolution and Platform Committee at DNC, 1964, (1)
- 14 Tree Planting, 1990 (1)
- 15 Turning on Water, 1991 (1)

Photograph Albums Series

- 16 Trip to Kanazawa, Japan, November 1985 (52)
- 17 Trip to Republic of China, March 20-April 3, 1986 (40)
- 18 Trip to Republic of China, May 27-31, 1989 (40)
- 19 Trip to Republic of China, May 1989 (14 snapshots)
- 20 Trip to Republic of China, May 16-20 1992 (40)