

## Finding Aid to the North Dakota Division of Independent Study Records

### North Dakota. Division of Independent Study

North Dakota Division of Independent Study Records, 1940-1979

1 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 344

---

[History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

### OVERVIEW

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

**Provenance:** Donated by the Division of Independent Study, Neil Howe, Sept. 1999 (Acc. 2550).

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

**Copyrights:** Copyrights to this collection remains with the State of North Dakota or the creators.

**Citation:** [Identification of item]. North Dakota Division of Independent Study Records, MS 344, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

### HISTORY

The North Dakota Division of Correspondence Study was started in 1935 as a high school correspondence program when the North Dakota Legislative Assembly established the Division. The original staff consisted of T.W. Thordarson, and eight part-time teachers. There were also three office workers that were employed at the time of its inception. The first location of the center was NDSU Old Main's basement. This only served as their quarters for a couple of years. They soon moved to the top floor of Minard Hall. This was their home until 1962 when they moved into their present location at Thordarson Hall located at 1510 12th Ave N Fargo, N.D. By legislative action its name was changed July 1, 1971 to the North Dakota Division of Independent Study.

The name of this building is named after the center's long time director, T.W. Thordarson. Thordarson was founder of the Division and was the state director for thirty three years until his retirement in 1968. He worked to get different courses offered in regular high schools all across the state. Thordarson earned many degrees. In 1956, Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, conferred upon him an honorary degree of doctor in laws. Thordarson helped the Division become one of the foremost centers for correspondence courses in the nation. The name was changed to the North Dakota Center for Distance Education in April 2007. Today, the center offers different courses that help students complete their high school education.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **North Dakota Division of Independent Study Records** is an eclectic assortment of documents from the early years of the division, spanning from the early 1940s into the late 1970s. The major component of the collection related to the writing and publishing of the textbook *Basic Mathematics for High School; the Study of Measurement*, written by T.W. Thordarson and R. Perry Anderson in 1959 by Allyn and Bacon. Other records include correspondence of T.W. Thordarson to the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education, textbooks that were produced and used by the Division, and various subject files and clippings. This collection has five series: Correspondence, *Basic Mathematics for High School; the Study of Measurement*, Correspondence Course, Textbook, and Topical.

The **Correspondence Series** deals with incoming and outgoing letters of T.W. Thordarson. The first file deals with the book: *Basic Mathematics for High School; the Study of Measurement*, the book that Thordarson co-authored with R. Perry Anderson. It includes letters between the two and also with the publisher. The second file of correspondence is between Thordarson and the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education. They mostly deal with budget issues and getting approval of NDSBHE for various issues. The final file of correspondence deals with the search for a new building to house the Division. Minard Hall was the old home and they needed to expand to fit their needs.

The **Basic Mathematics for High School; the Study of Measurement Series** is the manuscript of the book that Thordarson co-authored and a carbon copy. The manuscript includes revision work that the publisher and Thordarson did for the final copy.

The **Correspondence Course Series** contained different course materials for courses that were offered by the Division. These are the homework assignments that students would send these back for grading. While these haven't been written in, they show what the students had to do to further their education. Course materials include courses on economics, early physics, U.S. history, and agriculture. There is a course from Canada issued by the Department of Education in Winnipeg Manitoba. It is a Manitoba High School course that includes spelling and some history.

The **Textbook Series** contains different textbooks that were used by the center. There are nine textbooks in this collection, most of which were written by Thordarson. There are three textbooks that deal with algebra for high school students. The next two textbooks deal with general math for grades nine and ten. The next textbook is a functional math program. The textbook "Mathematical Bingo" was sent and signed

to Thordarson by its author, R. Perry Anderson. The last two textbooks in this series are English textbooks for junior high and early high school.

The **Topical Series** is the most diverse of all of the series. It contains answer keys and teacher manuals from Thordarson's book, *Basic Mathematics*. There are also revision work from *Basic Mathematics* and the author's suggestions on *Basic Mathematics*. There are some brochures about *Basic Mathematics* and about the Division of Independent Study. There is a file that describes the courses offered by the Division of Independent Study. The correspondence from the Advisory committee from NDSU shows how the Division was operating. There is also letters from students to Thordarson about vocational education. There are several folders dealing with math including a comparison of three math textbooks and math unit 2. There is a study that is about Clay County Youth Control and how they needed to be watched so they don't get into trouble. There is some homework that was submitted to the Division of Independent Study.

Thordarson requested two reports about different subjects from *Encyclopedia Britannica* from the early 1940s that are included in this series. The two reports are on "The Cooperative Idea" and "Political and Economic Aspects of Capitalism in the U.S." He most likely used these articles to further research on a new course for the division. The newspaper articles in this series deal either with the center or Thordarson. A couple of studies deal with getting education to the people, and a study of the Division by NDSU. The last four documents in the series are a bulletin about pupil guidance, rules for students for the homework that they get, an unknown study regarding how students learn through correspondence courses but only pages 16-18, and Vacation guidance service.

## BOX AND FOLDER LIST

### Box/Folder      Contents

1/1                  Finding aid

#### **Correspondence Series**

1/2                  *Basic Mathematics for High School; the Study of Measurement*, 1956-1963

1/3                  North Dakota State Board of Higher Education, 1944-1964

1/4                  New Building Search, 1959-1979

#### ***Basic Mathematics for High School; the Study of Measurement Series***

1/5                  Manuscript for Basic Mathematics, part one

1/6                  Manuscript for Basic Mathematics, part two

1/7                  Manuscript for Basic Mathematics, part three

1/8                  Manuscript for Basic Mathematics, Carbon Copy

#### **Correspondence Courses Series**

1/9                  *Principles of Economics*

1/10                *Early Physics course*, 1940s

1/11                *Economic and Industrial History*

1/12 *Course in Agriculture*  
1/13 Manitoba High School Course

### **Textbook Series**

1/14 *General Mathematics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester*  
1/15 *Elementary Algebra*  
1/16 *A Course in Algebra*  
1/17 *General Math 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester*  
1/18 *General Math Grades 9 and 10*  
1/19 *Functional Math program*  
1/20 *Mathematical Bingo*  
1/21 *English Key to success*  
1/22 *Junior High School English*

### **Topical Series**

1/23 Answer key for Basic Mathematics, 1961  
1/24 Author's Suggestions on Basic Mathematics  
1/25 Basic Mathematics Units 10-16 revision  
1/26 Before the Advisory Committee, NDAC 1955  
1/27 Brochures and Bulletins for Division of Independent Study  
1/28 Brochure for Basic Mathematics  
1/29 *Clay County Youth Control*  
1/30 Comparison of three general math textbooks  
1/31 Correspondence to superintendents from legislative research committee  
1/32 Description of the courses offered by Division of Independent Study by NDSBHE  
1/33 *Encyclopedia Britannica* report "The Cooperative Idea" Oct. 4, 1943  
1/34 *Encyclopedia Britannica* report "Political and Economic Aspects of Capitalism in the U.S.," May 31, 1946  
1/35 Homework submitted to Division of Independent Study  
1/36 Letters to Thordarson about Vocational education, Jan. 1941  
1/37 *North Dakota plan of fitting education to the needs of the people*  
1/38 Newspaper articles  
1/39 Pupil guidance bulletin #2  
1/40 Rules for Students  
1/41 Supervised study of NDSU Department of Independent Study  
1/42 Teachers Manual for Basic Mathematics, 1959  
1/43 Teachers Manual for Basic Mathematics, 1965  
1/44 Unit 2 Mathematics  
1/45 Unknown study pages 16-18  
1/46 Vocation guidance service