

Finding Aid to the Fargo (N.D.) Public Schools Photograph Collection

Fargo (N.D.) Public Schools Photograph Collection, 1960s -1970s

110 photographic prints

21 35mm negatives

1 projection negative

Collection number: Photo 2002

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding aid to the [Fargo, N.D. Public Schools Records](#)
View collection in [Digital Horizons](#).

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

Provenance: Donated by the Fargo Public School, 2002 (Acc. 2669).

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

Copyrights: Copyrights to this collection remain with creator.

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

HISTORY

Fargo, North Dakota has its beginnings with the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway at the Red River of the North—the boundary between Minnesota and the Territory of Dakota. In 1872 the railroad crossed the river at the present site of Fargo, then called Centralia. With the organization of Fargo Township in 1874, a school mill was passed for the establishment of a school. In May of that year a Miss Gillings was hired at \$45.00 per month to teach the public school. In 1875 the first school house was purchased. As the town's population expanded, the need for additional schools was addressed by the Board of Education. In 1883 a combination grade and high school was built. On March 4, 1885 the Dakota Territory Legislature enacted a bill creating Fargo as an independent school district. The first high school graduating class in 1886 had eight students.

In 1875 the census showed there were 105 children of school age and by 1907 there were 3172. By 1957 there were 10,164 students of school age. From the 1920s to the 1950s a number of rural school districts adjacent to Fargo were absorbed by Fargo. The administration of the school district is the responsibility of the Board of Education, elected by popular vote; and superintendent of schools. To date there have been fifteen superintendents.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This is an eclectic collection of photographs from the 1960s to early 1970s. The photographs were donated by the Fargo Public Schools, at the time it donated its historical records. Those records have been processed as Manuscript 263. All prints are gelatin silver prints. There are 35mm negatives for part of the classroom series. The collection contains pictures of school buildings, classrooms activities, the blizzard of 1966, meetings, personnel, and a few public buildings in Fargo. Many of the photographs do not appear to be the work of professional photographers, but there is a professional series of pictures of the Ben Franklin gymnasium done by Dan Olson of Fargo and others by Dan Olson and Scherling’s photography studios. The collection is organized into three series: School Buildings, Topical and Group Photographs.

The [School Buildings Series](#) has many photographs of construction. This was a time of growth for the city of Fargo, therefore several elementary schools and North High are shown under construction. In these files are pictures taken after the “Blizzard of 1966,” which occurred in March. Of note, there is a picture looking through the hole in the North High dome. The Ben Franklin file contains a series of interior photographs of the gymnasium.

The [Topical Series](#) includes classrooms, portraits, and public buildings. In the classrooms file, there is one series of photographs of students and teachers taken in December of 1969. Several different activities and projects are recorded. There is an 8x10 image of middle school age children in a classroom and one of students working with Craig Readers.

The portraits file includes everything from single snapshots of personnel to studio portraits. A few of the people were identified, mainly principals and school board members. These are noted at the item level in the contents listing.

The last file is several 8x10 photographs of public buildings in Fargo. The file includes pictures of the Public Library, the YMCA, and the Engineering Center of NDSU.

The [Group Photographs Series](#) ranges from professional groupings to snapshots. Photographs of more than one person were placed in this category. There were a number of Polaroid pictures that are separated into their own file. If it appeared that the group was gathered to conduct a meeting, they are in the meetings file. A studio photograph in color includes Vernon Bennett and administrators of individual schools in the district.

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 - 11.2 Donald Bredell (assistant principal North)
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Group Photographs Series

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 - 12.4 Glenn Melvey, seated (principal, Jefferson)
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 - 12.9 Clarence Wright (Bd. of Ed.), Vernon Zimmerman (Bd. of Ed.)
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 - 13.2 O.S. Anderson (Bd. Of Ed.), Geo. Booth (prin. Horace Mann), Earl Torgerson (prin. Madison)
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 - 13.7 FEA officer(s)
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