

[Home](#)

## Finding Aid to the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies Records

### North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies

North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies records, 1950-present  
14 linear ft.

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[History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

### OVERVIEW

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

**Provenance:** University records transfer.

**Property rights:** The University Archives owns the property rights to this collection.

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**Citation:** [Identification of item]. North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies Records, University Archives, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

### HISTORY

After arriving on campus in 1949, G. Ernst Giesecke, Dean of the School of Applied Arts and Sciences at North Dakota Agricultural College, began developing the idea for the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies. Giesecke envisioned that such an organization would enable the faculty to do original research focusing on the Upper Great Plains and, in the process, better themselves as teachers. Once the idea received the support a few faculty members, a rough outline of the plan was presented to the President of North Dakota Agricultural College, Fred Hultz, who told them to continue with their plans.

After further planning and being approved by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education in March 1950, the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies was formally founded later that year. The founders were: Giesecke, O. A. Stevens, H. Dean Stallings, William C. Hunter, E. A. Helgeson, Rudolf

Otterson and Kenneth Kuhn. The founders developed four basic principles to serve as guides for the direction of the Institute: First, to stimulate research into the region's resources and culture; second, to provide a center for research; third, to encourage artistic expression of life on the plains; and fourth to assist in disseminating results of significant work.

In order to assist in the dissemination of significant work, the Institute started its own publishing program. The first book was *The Handbook of North Dakota Plants* written by Professor O.A. Stevens and published in 1950. Dr. Leo Hertel, Professor of Modern Languages, served as the Institute's editor for many years and was succeeded by Dr. Bill Reid, Professor of History, in the 1970s. Originally the publishing program was under the direction of the Institute staff, but over the years the Dean Office's of the College of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences assumed more responsibility and now has assumed full control over the publishing program.

The Institute provided a center for research through the creation of its archives. The Institute received its first donation of historical documents in 1950 and shortly after Dr. Hunter received release time from teaching to manage the archives. Dr. Leonard Sackett, Professor of English and Chairman of the Committee for the Preservation of Historical Documents, became responsible for acquiring further records. The Institute began to collect bonanza farm records in 1953 and Dr. Sackett collected many business records as well as photographs relating to the bonanza farm era. The Institute's effort in collecting bonanza farm records led to a good librarianship award from the Mountain Plains Library Association.

The Institute has remained focused on collecting all aspects of the state's past, but has been especially successful in collecting records focused on agriculture, literary figures, the pioneer era, women, and social history resources. With the continued expansion of the archives and the retirement of Dr. Hunter, Dr. Reid was appointed University and Institute archivist in 1971 while maintaining his teaching duties. In 1975, John E. Bye was appointed the first full time archivist marking a significant change in the operation of the Institute archives. Also at this time the NDSU Library assumed complete responsibility for the Institute archive function.

The Institute founder's also attempted to stimulate interest in the region through a variety of activities. One of the first attempts was a train that traveled throughout the state bringing the history and the ideas behind the Institute to the people. After using the train, they held art shows to display the talents of North Dakota artists, one of the first being Elmer Halvorsen in 1952. Einar Olstad followed Halvorsen two years later. Olstad's paintings focused on the everyday life of a rancher. The Institute also held Local History Day, which was an attempt to teach people how to preserve documents and an attempt to aid people in the writing of local history. The Institute, with the aid of a monetary gift, created the Young Memorial Scholarship that was rewarded to students who researched and wrote exceptional papers on regional interests and topics.

In 1995 the Institute created a website, the first of any North Dakota archives, and revamped it in 1998. Also, the entire Institute's archival and many of its photograph collections are part of a national catalog database.

The aggressive collecting campaign began by the founders, to obtain personal and business records, books, and other materials relating to North Dakota, has been continued with great success. Presently the Institute has had over 3,000 donations of records and other material. The collection break down to the following broad subject categories: Agriculture, Bonanza Farms and Land Development; Architecture and Historic Preservation; Business; Cass County, N.D.; City of Fargo, N.D.; Education; Fargo, N.D.; Lawrence Welk; Legal; Literary, Music and Theater; Local and Ethnic History; Medicine and Health Care; Military; Natural History; Personal and Family Papers; Pioneer Life; Politics and Government; Religion; Social Issues; Sports and Recreation; Women and Women's Organizations. Along with the manuscript collection, the Institute houses an impressive collection of photographs dealing with North Dakota. The collection contains over 150,000 prints and negatives covering such topics as North Dakota towns and the bonanza era.

There are two administrative heads of the Institute. Dr. Kent L. Sandstrom (2011- present) , Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, is also the Co-Director of the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies Publications. Dr. Ross Collins, Professor of Communications, is the senior editor (1995-present). Michele M. Reid (2008-present), Dean of the Libraries, is the Co-Director of the Institute for Regional Studies Archives.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Institute's records consist of correspondence, memoranda, meeting minutes, and Institute publications, and an oversized flat boxes with some material not elsewhere noted. The majority of the collection consists of unpublished and published manuscripts. The collection is broken down into nine series: History, Organization/Committee, Executive Secretary/Director, Memoranda and Meeting Minutes, Projects, Archives Annual Reports, Archives, Unpublished Manuscripts, and Publications.

The History Series spans the years 1950 to 2000. Included are newspaper clippings from the Fargo Forum, Spectrum, and other newspapers documenting the Institute's progression. There are several items of interest. The first is a term paper written by an NDSU history graduate student documenting the Institute's first twenty years of operation. The second item is the draft memo and completed memo written by Dean Archer Jones, Director of the Institute and Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences, in the mid 1970s. Jones called for the liquidation of the Institute and for its various collection to be divided up between the University of North Dakota, Concordia College, and Moorehead State University. One final item is the grant the Institute received to partake in the Library of Congress American Memory web project. The project involved placing photographs on the Institute's website as well as the Library of Congress' website. The Institute received the grant along with schools such as Yale and other Ivy League institutions.

The Organization/Committee Series covers the early development of the Institute. The organization files cover how the planners structured the committees and determined their tax status. The committee files illustrate how the Institute planned to best meet the needs of the public and scholars and planned to best continue its expansion. The established committees ranged from scholarship to foundations to Institute Development to manuscript acquisitions.

The Executive Secretary/Director Series consists of correspondence and covers the years 1951 to 1975 with the bulk covering the early 1950s. Dean Giesecke served as the executive secretary when the

Institute was first founded and much of the correspondence in this series comes from him. The earlier correspondence illustrates the attempts of the founders to build the Institute along the lines of similar archives and research centers. There is correspondence with Harvard, Stanford, and other institutions asking for newsletters and pamphlets they had regarding their archives and centers. The early correspondence also contains several letters to other Great Plains universities notifying them of the Institute's creation and purposes. The founders also marketed the Institute to Harvard through a letter of inquiry by asking if their master and doctoral candidates were required to write theses and dissertations and, if so, the Institute had records relating to the marketing of agricultural products.

The Memoranda and Meeting Minutes Series primarily covers the first ten years of the Institute with a few scattered records dating from the 1960s and 1970s. The most inclusive minutes cover the years 1950 to 1959 when the Board of Directors met quite frequently. There is another good run of meeting minutes in the mid 1970s. The memoranda best cover the early years when the Institute was forming its various committees. The memoranda consist mainly of requests to professors to serve on different committees and meeting announcements.

The Project Series is the second largest series and covers the early years of the Institute when it was attempting to build its collection and attempting to expand peoples' understanding of North Dakota. The records in this series document the founders' attempts to start a press, to promote the Institute in scholarly journals and through projects that would attract public attention, to find additional funds through monetary gifts, and to stimulate research in North Dakota topics by awarding scholarships. The Institute sponsored several gallery exhibitions of North Dakota artists, one of the first being Elmer Halvorson. Another project involved school children gathering oral histories for pioneers and early settlers with prizes going to the top three in their respective grades. Projects also included authors the Institute worked with as the acquisition committee attempted to obtain the authors' research notes and other personal papers.

The Archives Annual Reports Series begins with the first report issued in 1972 and continues up to 1990. After 1990 there are gaps in the reports with donations of non-manuscript items receiving the best coverage. The reports contain information on the number of donations received by the Institute, number of collections processed, number of visitors each month, and the number of requests for photographs and other materials.

The Archives Series consists of documents that relate directly to the operation of the Institute archives. The series contains a manual with the proper procedures for processing a manuscript collection and the Institute's loan agreement with other archives concerning the lending of manuscripts and other collections. Also included in this series are the Institute's accession book that documents when the collection was donated, what the collection consists of, and who donated the collection.

The Unpublished Manuscript Series consists of correspondence and several book drafts. The majority of the correspondence is from the 1950s when the Institute first offered publishing services for researchers. Many letters are requests to have manuscripts reviewed for publication by the Institute editorial staff. The most complete collection of an unpublished manuscript is that of "A Life in Garnet" which was later

published by a different organization under the title Vikings of the Prairie: Three North Dakota Settlers Reminisce by N.C. Hagen.

The Publications Series contains the books, monographs and reports published by the Institute. The series begins with Institute's first publication the Handbook of North Dakota Plants by Professor O. A. Stevens published in 1950 and continues with each subsequent publication. The series contains correspondence between the author and the Institute, the Institute and the publisher, the various drafts of the manuscript, and the book as it was published. Unfortunately, not all the books and monographs are accompanied by correspondence and the different drafts, especially those published from the mid 1970s to the present. Finally, there are gaps in the series where a copy of the book is not available, but an empty folder is included in anticipation of finding a copy.

The oversized flat box, at the end of the records, contains copies of Unwanted Bread: The Challenge of Farming and Ranching, 2000, by Green, Sheldon & James Coomber and The Promise of Water, 2002 by Gudmundson, Wayne (photographs) & Robert Silberman (Essay), due to their size. In addition, also due to size are the following items: Hudson, Lois Philip. Conscious. Poem. Broadside Number Three – 1995; Lamar, Howard R. Persistent Frontier. Broadside Number 4 – 1995; a laserdisc titled: From the northern prairies : guide to the visual collections of the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1991. Drache. “The Naked Prairie” – book cover painting. n.d.; Trees and Shrubs of the Northern Plains, 1965. Hoag, Donald G. – mock-up; The Valley Comes of Age: A History of Agriculture in the Valley of the Red River of the North, 1812-1920. 1967. Murray, Stanely Norman. Map sheets for book.; and Scanning the Land: Poems in North Dakota, 1980. Lyons, Richard. Book Jacket preliminary mock-up.

## **BOX AND FOLDER LISTING**

### **Box/Folder Contents**

1/1 Finding aid

#### **History Series**

- 1/2 Institute mission statement
- 1/3 North Dakota Agricultural College catalog—Institute for Regional Studies
- 1/4 Institute history
- 1/5 Newspaper clippings, 1950-2000
- 1/6 Institute informational pamphlets
- 1/7 Twentieth anniversary
- 1/8 Twentieth anniversary invitation
- 1/9 Twentieth anniversary program brochures
- 1/10 Twentieth anniversary guest book
- 1/11 Twentieth anniversary tapes and speakers
- 1/12 Giesecke's address at Twentieth anniversary celebration
- 1/13 “An idea, experiment, and success: A History of the Institute for Regional Studies”

- 1/14 Testimonials regarding the Institute for Fiftieth anniversary
- 1/15 Fiftieth anniversary invitation
- 1/16 Institute Newsletter (Spring 2000)—Fiftieth anniversary
- 1/17 Founders Room dedication—October 14, 1975
- 1/18 Institute liquidation proposal—January 8, 1974
- 1/19 Reflections on Dean Jones' proposed liquidation of the Institute
- 1/20 "The North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies: A Critical Review"
- 1/21 "60 Years of Service: Newly Established Institute for Regional Studies"
- 1/22 Potential endowment, 1987
- 1/23 Reorganization, 1988
- 1/24 John Bye interview, n.d
- 1/25 Non-circulating Institute publications
- 1/26 List of Institute collection, 1972
- 1/27 Institute letterhead, circa 1991
- 1/28 Institute book order form, 1999
- 1/29 Institute book publications brochure, April 1997
- 1/30 List of Institute publications
- 1/31 Library of Congress/Ameritech Digital Competition—Hultstrand and Pazendek—1996-1998
- 1/32 Institute Web, March 1996
- 1/33 Institute Web—American Memory—Hultstrand and Pazandak, 1999
- 1/34 Finding aid list for web
- 1/35 Dr. Reid's appointment
- 1/36 Friends of the Institute

### **Organization/Committee Series**

- 1/37 Organization plan—March 9, 1951
- 1/38 Organization meeting—April 17, 1951
- 1/39 Organization—Board of Directors
- 1/40 Organization—Committee structure
- 1/41 Organization—Incorporation
- 1/42 Organization—Tax status
- 1/43 Committees—Standing
- 1/44 Committees—Scholarships
- 1/45 Committees—Research projects
- 1/46 Committees—Constitutional
- 1/47 Committees—Editorial
- 1/48 Committees—Exhibitions
- 1/49 Committees—Foundations and Funds
- 1/50 Committees—Interviews
- 1/51 Committees—Preservation of historical documents, biographical sketch and form letter D

- 1/52 Committees—Preservation of historical documents correspondence
- 1/53 Committees—Research
- 1/54 Committees—Miscellaneous
- 1/55 Committees—Manuscript acquisition
- 1/56 Committees—Advisory council
- 1/57 Committees—Institute Centennial
- 1/58 Committees—Institute development
- 1/59 Committees—Institute Board of Publications

### **Executive Secretary/Director Series**

- 1/60 Giesecke speeches
- 1/61 Executive secretary job description
- 1/62 Executive secretary—North Dakota State Historical Society correspondence
- 1/63 Executive secretary—National Geographical Society correspondence
- 1/64 Executive secretary—American Council of Learned Society correspondence
- 1/65 Executive secretary—American Council on Education correspondence
- 1/66 Executive secretary—Plains Wide Cooperation correspondence
- 1/67 Executive secretary—G.B. Gunlogson correspondence
- 1/68 Executive secretary—Public agencies correspondence
- 1/69 Executive secretary—Miscellaneous correspondence
- 1/70 Executive secretary—Committee on Southern Regional Studies and E.D.U.C. (similar projects)
- 1/71 Executive secretary—Friends of the Middle Border (similar projects)
- 1/72 Executive secretary—Great Plains Agricultural Council (similar projects)
- 1/73 Executive secretary—Great Plains Foundation (similar projects)
- 1/74 Executive secretary—International Great Plains Conference of Entomologists (similar projects)
- 1/75 Executive secretary—Kansas State College (similar projects)
- 1/76 Executive secretary—Libby Foundation (similar projects)
- 1/77 Executive secretary—Institute for Research in Social Science (similar projects)
- 1/78 Executive secretary—Mid-America Foundation of Parsons College (similar projects)
- 1/79 Executive secretary—miscellaneous similar projects
- 1/80 Executive secretary—Montana Institute of the Arts (similar project)
- 1/81 Executive secretary—School of Natural Resources, Michigan (similar projects)
- 1/82 Executive secretary—Regional Teaching, Mount Holyoke (similar projects)
- 1/83 Executive secretary—Research Foundation, Oklahoma A&M (similar projects)
- 1/84 Executive secretary—Theodore Roosevelt Nature and Historical Association (similar projects)
- 1/85 Executive secretary—Resources Research Committee (similar projects)
- 1/86 Executive secretary—Regional Association, Cleveland (similar projects)
- 1/87 Executive secretary—South Dakota Historical Society (similar projects)
- 1/88 Executive secretary—Southwest Research Institute (similar projects)

- 1/89 Executive secretary—Stanford Research Institute (similar projects)
- 1/90 Executive secretary—University of Oregon (similar projects)
- 1/91 Executive secretary—Urban Life Research Institute, Tulane (similar projects)
- 1/92 Executive secretary—North Dakota Research Foundation (similar projects)
- 1/93 Executive secretary—North Dakota Wildlife Federation (similar projects)
- 1/94 Executive secretary—Foundations—Hill Foundation
- 1/95 Executive secretary—Foundations—Rockefeller Foundation
- 1/96 Executive secretary—Foundations—Social Science Research Council
- 1/97 Executive secretary—Foundations—Miscellaneous
- 1/98 Executive secretary—Foundations—Carnegie Corporation
- 2/1 Executive secretary—Foundations—Carnegie for Advancement of Teaching
- 2/2 Executive secretary—Foundations—Ford Foundation
- 2/3 Executive secretary—speech engagement correspondence
- 2/4 Executive secretary—Regional Clubs—North Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs
- 2/5 Executive secretary—Regional clubs and organizations
- 2/6 Executive secretary—Colleges and Universities—University of Minnesota
- 2/7 Executive secretary—Colleges and Universities—Montana State
- 2/8 Executive secretary—Colleges and Universities—Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration
- 2/9 Executive secretary—Colleges and Universities—University of Manitoba
- 2/10 Director—correspondence
- 2/11 Director—general correspondence, 1971
- 2/12 Director—general correspondence, January to June 1972
- 2/13 Director—general correspondence, July to December 1972
- 2/14 Director—general correspondence, 1973
- 2/15 Director—general correspondence, September 1974 to January 1975
- 2/16 Director—Institute correspondence
- 2/17 Director—miscellaneous correspondence
- 2/18 Kenneth Kuhn—notes and correspondence
- 2/19 Dean Archer Jones—memos and correspondence

### **Memoranda and Meeting Minutes Series**

- 2/20 Memoranda, 1950, 1952-1956, 1964, 1965
- 2/21 Minutes—early minutes to April 1951
- 2/22 Minutes—Board of Directors, 1951-1959
- 2/23 Minutes—current business
- 2/24 Institute staff meeting minutes
- 2/25 Institute board minutes
- 2/26 Institute meetings with Dean
- 2/27 Memoranda, 1970s
- 2/28 Memoranda, miscellaneous



## Projects Series

- 2/29 Publisher—miscellaneous
- 2/30 Publisher—editorial policies
- 2/31 Publisher—Webb Publishing Company
- 2/32 Publisher—University of Denver Press
- 2/33 Publisher—Johnston Publishing Company
- 2/34 Publisher—University of Oklahoma Press
- 2/35 Publisher—University of Minnesota Press
- 2/36 Publisher—Lund Press, Inc.
- 2/37 North Dakota Writers and Poets
- 2/38 North Dakota Agricultural College authors list
- 2/39 Promotional—early logos
- 2/40 Promotional—Spectrum, 1950-1952
- 2/41 Promotional—press releases
- 2/42 Promotional—Fargo Forum (1951), O.A. Stevens stories
- 2/43 Promotional—winter exhibit train
- 2/44 Promotional—O.A. Stevens
- 2/45 Promotional—School and Society
- 2/46 Promotional—Phi Kappa Phi Journal
- 2/47 Promotional—North Dakota Library Association
- 2/48 Promotional—first brochure
- 2/49 Promotional—North Dakota Education Association
- 2/50 Promotional—miscellaneous newspapers
- 2/51 Promotional—Great Falls Public Library
- 2/52 Promotional—Higher Education
- 2/53 Promotional—Farmer's Union
- 2/54 Promotional—county agents
- 2/55 Promotional—Bi-monthly Bulletin
- 2/56 Promotional—Alumni Review
- 2/57 Promotional—The Divide County Journal
- 2/58 Promotional—Fargo Forum
- 2/59 Promotional—Fargo Forum, Roy Johnson
- 2/60 Promotional—Minot Daily News
- 2/61 Projects—North Dakota authors
- 2/62 Projects—Anthology of North Dakota Authors project statement
- 2/63 Projects—A bibliographic note on North Dakota authors
- 2/64 Projects—North Dakota authors, Edna LaMoore Waldo
- 2/65 Projects—North Dakota Authors, Zdena Trinka
- 2/66 Projects—North Dakota Authors, Prudence Gearey Sand
- 2/67 Projects—North Dakota Authors, Erling Rolfsrud
- 2/68 Projects—North Dakota Authors, Penwomen of Williston
- 2/69 Projects—North Dakota Authors, Rosanna Gutterud Johnsrud
- 2/70 Projects—North Dakota artists

- 2/71 Projects—North Dakota artists, potential exhibits and local artists
- 2/72 Projects—North Dakota artists, Irene Truli
- 2/73 Projects—North Dakota artists, art ideas
- 2/74 Projects—North Dakota artists, Art Talk in North Dakota
- 2/75 Projects—North Dakota artists, Bismarck exhibit
- 2/76 Projects—North Dakota artists, Paul Barr
- 2/77 Projects—North Dakota artists, Olstad Exhibition
- 2/78 Projects—North Dakota artists, Index of American Design
- 2/79 Projects—North Dakota artists, manuscript letters
- 2/80 Projects—North Dakota artists, Mrs. Roy M. Wells
- 2/81 Projects—North Dakota artists, Willis Nelson exhibition
- 2/82 Projects—North Dakota artists, Frank Sampson
- 2/83 Projects—Roosevelt statue
- 2/84 Projects—G.B. Gunlogson, birds
- 2/85 Projects—G.B. Gunlogson, pageant
- 2/86 Projects—“Handbook of Municipal Government”
- 2/87 Projects—history of North Dakota Agricultural College
- 2/88 Projects—music
- 2/89 Projects—insurance contracts
- 2/90 Projects—North Dakota artists, correspondence
- 2/91 Projects—North Dakota geology
- 2/92 Projects—North Dakota journalism
- 2/93 Projects—North Dakota Press Association history
- 2/94 Projects—North Dakota soil survey
- 2/95 Projects—oil of North Dakota
- 2/96 Projects—population study with Experiment Station
- 2/97 Projects—Miss Aagot Raaen
- 2/98 Projects—regional bibliographic center
- 2/99 Projects—reading survey
- 2/100 Projects—religion
- 2/101 Projects—projects in progress
- 3/1 Projects—bonanza farming
- 3/2 Projects—calendar
- 3/3 Projects—exhibits, seminars and symposiums, 1950s-1980s
- 3/4 Projects—North Dakota Biography Index
- 3/5 Projects—Roy W. Simpson
- 3/6 Projects—conferences sponsored
- 3/7 Projects—Fort Seward
- 3/8 Projects—journal series
- 3/9 Projects—research center
- 3/10 Projects—J. Clayton Russell
- 3/11 Projects—Dean Walster
- 3/12 Projects—Mrs. C.J. Whemper (Fort Abercrombie)
- 3/13 Projects—Paul Barr Exhibit

- 3/14 Projects—C.B. Cleland
- 3/15 Projects—Non-Partisan League
- 3/16 Projects—map printing
- 3/17 Projects—Hiram Drache
- 3/18 Projects—Mrs. Pearl Frazer
- 3/19 Projects—Biological and ecological
- 3/20 Projects—North Dakota Atlas
- 3/21 Projects—annual craftsman fair
- 3/22 Projects—Casselton film preservation
- 3/23 Projects—conservation brochures
- 3/24 Projects—local history preservation
- 3/25 Projects—North American Revolution Bicentennial Commission,  
Bicentennial Project Application, 1975
- 3/26 Halvorson Art Show
- 3/27 Olstad Art Show
- 3/28 Projects—North Dakota local history day
- 3/29 Projects—Graduate Teaching Assistants manuscript publications
- 3/30 Projects—Linguistic Atlas of Upper Midwest
- 3/31 Projects—resources
- 3/32 Projects—craftsmen
- 3/33 Projects—bonanza farming
- 3/34 Projects—history of the cattle industry
- 3/35 Projects—conservancy
- 3/36 Projects—Dakota imprints
- 3/37 Projects—farmers and oil
- 3/38 Projects—farmers' reading habits
- 3/39 Projects—printing/publishing
- 3/40 Projects—folklore contest
- 3/41 Projects—industrialization
- 3/42 Projects—Anthology of North Dakota Writers
- 3/43 Projects—Anthology—permissions
- 3/44 Projects—Anthology—permissions
- 3/45 Projects—art survey
- 3/46 Projects—Governor George A. and Jane Sinner donation and exhibit
- 3/46a Projects—Small grants program, 1999
- 3/46b Projects—“College Training for Participation in Politics,” November  
20 and 21, 1953
- 3/47 Projects—North Dakota Bar Association
- 3/48 Gifts—J.C. Ellickson
- 3/49 Gifts—botanical collection
- 3/50 Gifts—Blue Key
- 3/51 Scholarships—project proposals and requests for funds
- 3/52 Scholarships—Young Memorial Award
- 3/53 Scholarships—general

- 3/54 Scholarships—"The North Dakota Budgeting Process"—Young Memorial Award winner
- 3/55 Scholarships—scholar requests for funding from Institute
- 3/56 Scholarships—possible topics for regional history papers
- 3/57 Scholarships—student research in social science
- 3/58 Scholarships—grant proposal for processing and collecting Ladd's papers
- 3/59 Scholarships—Institute research project guidelines
- 3/60 Scholarships—Institute proposals, 1969-1971
- 3/61 Scholarships—Institute proposals, 1972
- 3/62 Scholarships—Institute proposals, 1973
- 3/63 Scholarships—Institute proposals, 1973-1974
- 3/64 Scholarships—Institute proposals, 1974-1975

### **Annual Reports Series**

- 3/65 "Your Archives Working for You: First Annual Report of the Archives Function of the Institute for Regional Studies," July 1971-July 1972
- 3/66 "Your Archives Working for You: Second Annual Report of the Archives Function of the Institute for Regional Studies," July 1972-June 1973
- 3/67 Annual Reports, 1975-1976 to 1984-1985
- 3/68 Annual Reports, 1985-1986 to 1986-1987
- 3/69 Annual Reports, 1987-1988 to 1989-1990
- 3/70 Annual Reports: Donations of Non-manuscript items, 1990-1991 to 1994-1995
- 3/71 Reports on Institute activities to K.L.Janecek and Dean Jones
- 3/72 Progress reports submitted to John Beecher
- 3/73 Institute financial reports, 1951, 1956-1960, 1971-1973

### **Institute Series**

- 3/74 Manual for Processing of Institute for Regional Studies Archival and Manuscript Materials
- 3/75 Loan agreement for documents and manuscripts
- 3/76 NUCMC
- 3/77 Accessions, manuscripts, 1-799
- 3/78 Accessions, manuscripts, 801-1883
- 3/79 Accessions, 1884-2470
- 3/80 Accessions, books and pamphlets, 1950-1956
- 3/81 Accessions, pictures and maps (including atlases)
- 4/1 Original, handwritten accession listing of Institute holdings
- 4/2 North Dakota Biography Index: finding aid for card index
- 4/2a Institute for Regional Studies Newsletter—Spring 2000
- 4/2b Institute for Regional Studies Newsletter—Fall 2001

### **Unpublished Manuscript Series**

- 4/3 Manuscripts received and reviewed correspondence, 1951-April 1954
- 4/4 Manuscripts received and reviewed correspondence, May 1954-1981
- 4/5 Lund Publishing correspondence regarding potential publishing projects
- 4/6 Book binding specifications
- 4/7 Institute Reprint Series
- 4/8 Institute Annual correspondence
- 4/9 Institute Annual fiction section
- 4/10 Institute Annual articles and documents sections
- 4/11 Institute Annual possible material
- 4/12 A Life in Garnet correspondence
- 4/13 A Life in Garnet-first draft-pages 1-243
- 4/14 A Life in Garnet-first draft-pages 244-403
- 4/15 A Life in Garnet-first draft-pages 404-557
- 4/16 A Life in Garnet-second draft-pages 1-191
- 4/17 A Life in Garnet-second draft-pages 192-430
- 4/18 A Life in Garnet-second draft-pages 431-634
- 4/19 A Life in Garnet-unrevised chapters 16-18
- 4/20 A Life in Garnet-third draft-pages 1-100
- 4/21 A Life in Garnet-third draft-pages 101-200
- 4/22 A Life in Garnet-third draft-pages 201-259
- 4/23 A Life in Garnet-final draft-pages 1-100
- 4/24 A Life in Garnet-final draft-pages 101-200
- 4/25 A Life in Garnet-final draft-pages 201-238
- 4/26 Hawks and Eagles-Lund Publishing correspondence
- 4/27 Hawks and Eagles-first draft
- 4/28 Hawks and Eagles-suggested corrections
- 4/29 North Dakota Anthology
- 4/30 Old Four Eyes
- 4/31 Trail West
- 4/32 The North Dakota Oil and Gas Severance Tax
- 4/33 North Dakota Rural Life Poll
- 4/34 Correspondence regarding promotion of Institute publications

### **Publications Series**

- 4/35 Institute's publishing contract
- 4/36 Institute book sales, January 1973, June 1975, March 1976

Handbook of North Dakota Plants, 1950. Stevens, Orin Alva

- 4/37 Handbook of North Dakota Plants chronology

- 4/38 Handbook of North Dakota Plants copyright
- 4/39 Handbook of North Dakota Plants printing cost correspondence
- 4/40 Handbook of North Dakota Plants front piece
- 4/41 Handbook of North Dakota Plants advertising
- 4/42 Handbook of North Dakota Plants distribution
- 4/43 Handbook of North Dakota Plants reviews
- 4/44 Handbook of North Dakota Plants copyright
- 4/45 Handbook of North Dakota Plants corrected manuscript
- 13/1 Drawings used in Handbook of North Dakota Plants
- 4/45a Handbook of North Dakota Plants—First Edition 1951 with dust jacket (publication copy)
- 4/46 Handbook of North Dakota Plants—Second Edition 1963 no dust jacket (publication copy)
  
- 4/47 “Call Back Yesterday: How to Preserve and Write the Record of Our Regional Heritage,” n.d., Sackett, Leonard

Stackers of Wheat, 1951. Lyons, Richard & Sand, Prudence Gearey

- 4/48 Stackers of Wheat correspondence
- 4/49 Stackers of Wheat (publication copy)

Measure of My Days, 1953. Raaen, Agot

- 4/50 Measure of My Days correspondence
- 4/51 Measure of My Days copyright and contract
- 4/52 Measure of My Days publishing costs
- 5/1 Measure of My Days advertising and promotion
- 5/2 Measure of My Days reviews
- 5/3 Measure of My Days drafts
- 5/4 Measure of My Days distribution
- 5/5 Measure of My Days (publication copy)

Modern Sagas: The Story of the Icelanders in North America, 1953.  
Walters, Thorstina (Jackson)

- 5/6 Modern Sagas correspondence 1952 to June 1953
- 5/7 Modern Sagas correspondence July to December 1953
- 5/8 Modern Sagas correspondence 1954-1956, 1957, 1958, 1971
- 5/9 Modern Sagas Lund Publishing correspondence
- 5/10 Modern Sagas contract
- 5/11 Modern Sagas promotion
- 5/12 Modern Sagas distribution of complimentary copies
- 5/13 Modern Sagas expenses
- 5/14 Modern Sagas finance
- 5/15 Modern Sagas request for review copies and reviews

- 5/16 Modern Sagas book jacket drafts
- 5/17 Modern Sagas drafts of table of contents and introduction
- 5/18 Modern Sagas-typewritten manuscript-pages 1-77
- 5/19 Modern Sagas-typewritten manuscript-pages 78-154
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- 6/17 Geography of North Dakota comments
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- 6/20 Geography of North Dakota-second draft-pages 201-320
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- 11/12 Land in Her Own Name-basic questionnaire sent out to women homesteaders not personally interviewed



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