

Automobiles in North Dakota

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, North Dakota residents began purchasing, producing, and selling automobiles. This pathfinder will lead researchers to several resources available at the North Dakota State Archives highlighting the history of automobiles in North Dakota.

Archival Collections

10113 Charles and Viola Liessman Family Papers

Box 2, Folder 1; Box 4, Folder 16

Correspondence, organizational records, subject files, notes, reports, photographs, ephemera, millinery store and other business records, moving image and audio recordings, and printed materials.

10440 Williston (N.D.) Chamber of Commerce Records

Boxes 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19

Minutes, correspondence, subject files, committee files, budgets, financial statements, annual reports, audit reports, by-laws, photographs, memoranda, programs, printed material, and memorabilia. Records relate primarily to administration of the Chamber, promotional activities, community celebrations, tourism, area businesses, public relations, reclamation, oil and gas industry, economic and industrial development, and Garrison Dam. Inventory list available.

10939 Anton P. Ness Papers

Boxes 2, 3, 6

Consists of business records, correspondence, testimonials, photographs, ephemera, publications, financial material, and legal documents relating to lands that Ness owned, his practice of spiritual healing, and personal life.

11005 Dana F. Johnson Papers

Working Papers on the Motor Power in the Western Plains and Central Rockies.

Consists of material on the history of motors or motoring.

Useful Search Guidance

Subjects

- Automobiles
- Cars
- North Dakota Automobile Club
- North Dakota State Good Roads Association
- Licensing
- Registration

People

- Samuel Holland
- August Frykman
- Frank Jaskowiak
- Lenard Mennes Milo, 1927-1995

Locations

- Ford assembly plant in Fargo
- Souris Blacksmith and Machine Shop

Journal Articles

Photo Essay: Automobile Manufacture in North Dakota

Jim Benjaminson – *North Dakota History* Vol. 39 Issue 3

Prosperity Rides on Rubber Tires: The Impact of the Automobile on Minot During the 1920's

Charles Ellis Dickson – *North Dakota History* Vol. 53 Issue 3

A History of the Automobile in North Dakota to 1911

Carl F. W. Larson – *North Dakota History* Vol. 54 Issue 4

21397 Gene Scherer Papers

Disc with the manuscript "As I Lived It" documenting the life of Eugene Scherer and his parents, Clarence and Herta Wilhelmine Justine (Ziegler) Scherer. Scherer provides a detailed account of his life, focusing on his employment in the replacement auto parts business from June 1944 to March 1992. The manuscript begins with the first seven years of his childhood at Grandpa Herman and Grandma Martha Ziegler's homestead farm in Oliver County (N.D.), the next seven years in Center (N.D.) and memories of Scherer Motor Co garage.

30354 Motor Vehicle Department. Registrar's Records.

Series consists of correspondence, memoranda, notes, and printed material relating to administration of the Motor Vehicle Department

30630 Motor Vehicle Department. Apportionment Record

Series documents motor vehicle license collections in North Dakota counties. Ledgers

30631 Motor Vehicle Department. Auto Theft Fund Ledger**30632 Motor Vehicle Department. Motor Vehicle Registration Fund Ledger****30633 Motor Vehicle Department. Distribution Record**

Series consists of a record of motor vehicle fees and collections arranged by county.

30634 Motor Vehicle Department. Distribution of Operating Expenses**31551 Motor Vehicle Department. News Releases.**

Consists of news releases from the Motor Vehicle Department.

31763 Transportation. Driver and Vehicle Service Division. Vehicle Registration Records

Vehicle Registration Records, 1911-1914, 1924-1925. 14 v. [microform] roll #14690 documents 1911-1914 only. The information found in the 1925 bound volumes distinguishes registration for Ford vehicles and non-Ford vehicles. Trucks and motorcycles are registered in a separate log. Information from the ledgers include: register number, date, owner and post office, county, manufacturer, serial or model number, number of cylinders, the registration fee, any changes in registration, and new owner. The registration volumes include manufacturers' makes and models.

31787 Historical Society. Museum Division, Automobile File

Historical Society. Museum Division, Automobile File, 1904-1961, .25 ft.

31856 Transportation, Department of. Motor Vehicle Division. Personalized License Plate Photograph

Consists of photos and correspondence about Ben Kalina who got a personalized license plate for driving his automobile for 500,000 miles.

32254 Motor Vehicle Registration Record

Contains title number, motor number (or VIN), name and address of owner, Make, Model and year, date of application, county, and whether it is a transfer or duplicate.

32255 Transportation, Department of. Motor Vehicle Division, Title and Registration Records

Microfilm of title and registration records including duplicates, license applications, renewals, junk, inactive and foreign, MSO, 1966-2000. 117ft. of microfilm, both silver masters and vesicular duplicates (cartridge loaded). SURETY BONDS Description: This series contains bonds filed by dealers to insure the proper documents are filed with the state (it is a continuous bond). LICENSE APPLICATIONS Description: This series contains all license applications. Data: registered owner's name, address, make and year of vehicle, title number, serial number, weight, last year licensed and fees due for the current year. MOBILITY IMPAIRED PARKING APPLICATIONS Description: This series contains application for mobility impaired parking certificates. APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATIONS, TITLES AND TITLE TRANSFERS Description: This series contains the registered owner's name, address, make and year of vehicle, title number, vehicle identification number, weight, fees due, manufacturer's statement of origins, out-of-state titles, supporting documents, duplicate titles, and North Dakota titles. 801456 VEHICLES REGISTERED OUT OF STATE Description: This series contains lists of vehicles (surrendered titles from other states).

Books

Manual and Specifications for the Manufacture, Display, and Erection of U. S. standard Road Markers and Signs

1927 - American Association of State Highway Officials

Call Number: 388.1 Am35

North Dakota Automobile Trails

1922 – North Dakota State Good Roads Association

Call Number: 388.1 N864na 1922

Rand McNally Junior Auto Trails Map North Dakota

1925 – Rand McNally and Company

Compliments of North Dakota Automobile Association, Fargo, North Dakota

Call Number: 388.1 R186r

Official Guide to the Red Trail Traversing the National Parks Highway

1877 – Washington Matthews

Call Number: 388.122 O324 1915

The Automobile in Common Use

1899 – Ray Stannard Baker

Call Number: 629.2 B176

Dyke's Automobile Encyclopedia

1914 – A. L. Dyke

Call Number: 629.2 D991

Ford Model "A" Instruction Book

1928—Ford Motor Company

Call Number: 629.2222 F699a 1928

Online Resources

[Frank Jaskowiak's Auto](#)

Photo on the State Historical Society of North Dakota website

[SHSND Photobook](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's Online Search Portal for all digitized photographs

[Digital Horizons](#)

Online consortium of historic photographs from the collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota

[WorldCat](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's publication search portal

External Resources

[Gravesite of Lenard Mennes](#)

Atlas Obscura website featuring photos of Lenard Mennes' tombstone that tells his story about vehicle tabs

[Automobile Adventures](#)

Carole Butcher – Prairie Public Broadcasting Dakota Datebook

State Archives

For more information related to the collections and resources available at the North Dakota State Archives, please email archives@nd.gov or call (701) 328-2668.



North Dakota State Archives Subject Guides made possible through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).