

**The Northwestern Lutheran Academy Papers
An Inventory**



Archive of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Mequon, Wisconsin

Inventory Prepared by Jeremiah J. Gumm

Description Prepared by Jeremiah J. Gumm
April 2005

The Northwestern Lutheran Academy Papers

Table of Contents

Collection Level Description

Title	3
Dates	3
Extent	3
Historical Sketch.....	3
Custodial History	3-4
Scope and Content	4
Source of Supplied Title	5
Arrangement	5
Restrictions	5
Accruals	5

Series Level Description

Series 1: Documents regarding the NLA Board of Control.....	5
Series 2: Documents regarding the NLA Campus.....	5
Series 3: NLA Catalogs	5
Series 4: Documents regarding the NLA Faculty.....	6
Series 5: The Reinhold A. Fenske Papers.....	6
Series 6: Documents regarding NLA Finances.....	6
Series 7: Documents regarding NLA History.....	6
Series 8: Documents regarding NLA Music.....	7
Series 9: NLA News Clippings.....	7
Series 10: NLA Photographs	7
Series 11: Documents regarding NLA Recruitment	7
Series 12: Documents regarding NLA Student Life.....	7
Series 13: Documents regarding NLA Worship	7-8
Series 14: <i>The Wildcat</i>	8

Appendix A: The Northwestern Lutheran Academy Papers File Arrangement List.....	9-10
---	------

Collection Level Description

Title: The Northwestern Lutheran Academy Papers

Dates: 1912-1993

Extent: 1.15 meters of textual records

Historical sketch:

Since the closing of Northwestern Lutheran Academy in the summer of 1979, a number of authors have written on the brief half century of NLA. Five Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary seniors have written on some aspect of NLA's history: In 1984, Mark Wilde, a former NLA professor's son, wrote *The Closing of Northwestern Lutheran Academy*. A copy of this paper can be found in this collection. In 1986, John Schroeder wrote *A History of Northwestern Lutheran Academy*. In 1993, Mark Schewe, another former NLA professor's son, wrote *The Beginnings of Northwestern Lutheran Academy: Founding a School on the Lone Prairie*. In 2000, Chad Wright wrote *Pastor and Professor Wayne TenBroek: A Faithful Servant*, regarding the life of the professor who graduated from NLA in 1935 and served at NLA from 1954-1979. In 2004, Peter Korthals wrote a thesis regarding the life of former NLA president and professor, Pastor Daniel Malchow, who served NLA from 1968-1979. These essays can be found at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library, Mequon, Wisconsin.

The most comprehensive history of Northwestern Lutheran Academy was published in 1992. Hans and Charlotte Johannsen, 1954 graduates of NLA, compiled and wrote the history entitled *Like a Tree Planted by the River of Waters: Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Mobridge, South Dakota 1928-1979*, for the 1992 All-School Reunion. Professor Emeritus Wayne TenBroek served as editor. This history includes a variety of pictures, memories and historical information that is both fascinating and informative. As mentioned above, this is the most complete and comprehensive history of NLA ever produced. Copies of this history can be found in this collection.

The only other history of this kind was authorized to be published in English and German by the Wisconsin Synod in 1939 as a means to inform the synod at-large about the little synodical school on the prairies of South Dakota. NLA President R.A. Fenske and Pastors W.T. Meier, Edgar Gamm and G.J. Schlegel, who served at one time on the Board of Control, wrote this history for the synod. Drafts and notes from the creation of this history can be found in this collection.

For access to most of the above-mentioned historical works on Northwestern Lutheran Academy, please see Series 7, Folders 45-48 of the Northwestern Lutheran Academy Papers, WELS Archives, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Custodial history:

An exact custodial history of this collection cannot be ascertained, because a number of individuals have donated whole portions of their files to the WELS Archives in Mequon, Wisconsin over the years. Pastor Henry Meyer and Pastor and Mrs. Reinhold Fenske donated a great deal of materials from the first forty years of the school and some from the final decade as well. In July 1972, Pastor Fenske contributed many of the school's papers from his tenure at NLA. Mrs. Fenske contributed the Reinhold A. Fenske papers to this collection in August 1985, after her husband's death. Pastor Daniel Malchow provided the nearly complete sets of faculty minutes and Board of Control minutes that are found in this collection. Many other documents came from him as well, especially those regarding the last decade and

the closure of Northwestern Lutheran Academy. After the 1992 All-School Reunion held in Mobridge, South Dakota, NLA historians, Hans and Charlotte Johannsen provided a number of documents they used to compile a history of NLA. Charlotte writes about the individual graduation photographs included in the collection, "The following photos were given to Rev. D. Malchow after the closing of NLA. They had been found by a janitor. Following their display at the reunion, June 1992, they were cut apart and put into this album." For preservation purposes, these photographs were removed from the album and from the matting they were glued to and placed in acid-free sleeves. Over the years, others have contributed items to this collection, but at this time the dates of contribution and names of these contributors remain unknown.

Scope and Content:

The collection is made up of materials produced by or about Northwestern Lutheran Academy since 1927. This collection also includes the Reinhold A. Fenske papers from 1912-1985.

The collection reflects the life of a small, Lutheran academy established on the prairies of South Dakota to offer a Christian education to the young adults of the outlying districts of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). This collection reflects the synod's challenges of maintaining a school of this kind in such a remote area of the United States, but it also reflects the joys and blessings that resulted from the ministerial education carried out at this school. This collection finally reflects the grace of God showered on the Dakota-Montana District of the WELS and on the synod at-large as young men and women were trained either to be faithful laypeople in the Lutheran church or to go on to study for the pastoral or teaching ministry at the worker-training colleges of the Wisconsin Synod.

The collection consists of the following series:

Series 1: Documents regarding the NLA Board of Control

Subseries 1: Correspondence, minutes and reports of the NLA Board of Control – 1927-1979

Subseries 2: Documents regarding NLA enrollments – 1928-1979

Subseries 3: Documents regarding the Executive Committee/Local Board of the NLA Board of Control – 1928-1939

Subseries 4: Documents regarding the NLA Ladies' Auxiliary – 1976

Series 2: Documents regarding the NLA campus

Series 3: NLA catalogs

Series 4: Documents regarding the NLA faculty

Subseries 1: Documents regarding NLA curriculum – 1940-1953

Subseries 2: Documents regarding the Ruth Dahlke Case – 1964

Subseries 3: Documents regarding fellowship discussions – 1959-1965

Subseries 4: Minutes, reports and correspondence from faculty meetings – 1937-1979

Series 5: The Reinhold A. Fenske papers

Series 6: Documents regarding NLA finances

Series 7: Documents regarding NLA history

Series 8: Documents regarding NLA music

Series 9: NLA news clippings

Series 10: NLA photographs

Series 11: Documents regarding NLA recruitment

Series 12: Documents regarding NLA student life

Series 13: Documents regarding NLA worship

Series 14: *The Wildcat*

Source of supplied title: Title based on the provenance of the records.

Arrangement: See appendix A for arrangement of the folders in the boxes.

Restrictions: None.

Accruals: The collection remains open for future accruals.

Series level description

The Northwestern Lutheran Academy Papers

Series 1: Documents regarding the NLA Board of Control

Dates: 1927-1979

Extent: 16 folders, 23.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of minutes, reports, correspondence and other documents regarding the administrative work of the NLA Board of Control during the entire period of its existence. The original minutes from the first meeting of the Board of Control in 1927 are included in this series. Included in the other Subseries are documents regarding: NLA enrollments, the first decade of the Executive Committee/Local Board of the NLA Board of Control, and the NLA Ladies' Auxiliary. This series strongly reflects the wide variety of challenges that the Board of Control faced in running Northwestern Lutheran Academy during its existence.

Subseries 1: Correspondence, minutes and reports of the NLA Board of Control – 1927-1979

Subseries 2: Documents regarding NLA enrollments – 1928-1979

Subseries 3: Documents regarding the Executive Committee/Local Board of the NLA Board of Control – 1928-1939

Subseries 4: Documents regarding the NLA Ladies' Auxiliary – 1976

Series 2: Documents regarding the NLA campus

Dates: 1928-1967

Extent: 1 folder, 1.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence and reports regarding the physical campus and maintenance of the Northwestern Lutheran Academy campus. This series includes documents regarding the selection of the property in Mobridge, South Dakota, correspondence regarding the creation of NLA on the purchased property and campus maintenance, 1959 correspondence regarding the building of a professorage, a 1961-1962 review of the buildings and grounds, correspondence requesting gifts of food for the cafeteria, correspondence regarding the creation of a "canteen", and 1967 master plans to renovate and expand the facilities of Northwestern Lutheran Academy.

Series 3: NLA Catalogs

Dates: 1928-1979

Extent: 6 folders, 14.8 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of catalogs produced and issued by Northwestern Lutheran Academy for the purpose of informing the congregations of the synod and interested students, who were considering enrolling at NLA. This series of catalogs is complete with the exception of the years 1933-1934, which were not found when the collection was archived. This series reflects the ebb and flow of change over the years at NLA from its beginnings in the Great Depression to its close in the late 1970s.

Series 4: Documents regarding the NLA Faculty

Dates: 1937-1979

Extent: 10 folders, 15.9 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of minutes, correspondence and reports regarding the activity of the NLA faculty during over forty years of the school's existence. The largest portion of the series includes the minutes, reports and correspondence from meetings of the faculty from 1937 to 1979. Other subseries include: documents regarding curriculum, the Ruth Dahlke Case (1964), and the faculty's involvement in the 1959 Dakota-Montana District fellowship discussions that ended in several pastors and congregations leaving the WELS for the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC).

Subseries 1: Documents regarding NLA curriculum – 1940-1953

Subseries 2: Documents regarding the Ruth Dahlke Case – 1964

Subseries 3: Documents regarding fellowship discussions – 1959-1965

Subseries 4: Minutes, reports and correspondence from faculty meetings – 1937-1979

Series 5: The Reinhold A. Fenske Papers

Dates: 1912-1985

Extent: 1 folder, 2 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of the personal papers of NLA President, Reinhold A. Fenske, who served as president of Northwestern Lutheran Academy from 1939-1966. This series includes a variety of correspondence and other documents from his years as a student at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin and at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin; from his years as a missionary-at-large and pastor in Ellensburg, Washington; from his years as a teacher at Milwaukee Lutheran High School and during his nearly thirty years of service at NLA. Documents from his retirement in 1966, correspondence from after his retirement and correspondence written to and from his widow after his death in 1985, regarding his documents in this collection, can also be found in this series. This series also includes a number of Fenske's sermons written between 1922 and 1972. This series reflects the major influence this man had on Northwestern Lutheran Academy as the school developed under his leadership from its formidable years in the 1930s to its prime in the late 1960s.

Series 6: Documents regarding NLA Finances

Dates: 1976-1980

Extent: 10 folders, 15.4 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of ledgers, correspondence and receipts from the finances of the last five years of NLA's existence. This series also includes documents dealing the financial aspect of closing NLA permanently between 1979 and 1980.

Series 7: Documents regarding NLA History

Dates: 1928-1993

Extent: 4 folders, 5.1 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of documents used to compile various histories of Northwestern Lutheran Academy. This series includes: documents from the 1940 and 1949 German and English histories of NLA; historical documents from the closing of the school – including advertisements for the auction of the campus; Mark Wilde's 1984 Senior Church History paper on the closing of NLA; and a 1992 complete history of NLA compiled and edited by Hans and Charlotte Johannsen and Prof. Wayne TenBroek.

Series 8: Documents regarding NLA Music

Dates: 1949-1972

Extent: 3 folders, 2.8 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of documents pertaining to the music department at NLA. This series includes: bulletins and programs from NLA A Capella Choir concerts and Commencement concerts; a 1971 recording tape of two organ recitals, a cantata performed by the A Capella Choir on 24 March 1971 and a Christmas concert; and documents regarding the 1949 purchase of the NLA organ.

Series 9: NLA News Clippings

Dates: 1927-1985

Extent: 3 folders, 6.1 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of news clippings from the synodical *Book of Reports and Memorials*, *The Mobridge Tribune*, and *The Northwestern Lutheran*. These clippings note in detail the major and minor historical events of Northwestern Lutheran Academy, most notably, its opening in 1928, the calling of various professors and presidents over the years, the expansion of the facilities on-campus over the years, the 40th anniversary in 1968 & 50th anniversary in 1978, the 1979 closure of the school, and the 1985 auctioning off of the campus

Series 10: NLA Photographs

Dates: 1940?-1990

Extent: 2 folders, 5.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of photograph taken over the years at Northwestern Lutheran Academy. This series includes photographs of: the various buildings on campus over the years; the building process of the refectory and the administration building; graduates and graduating classes from c. 1940 until about 1960; basketball teams and athletic events; student life; and former instructors and graduates from NLA.

Series 11: Documents regarding NLA Recruitment

Dates: 1929-1978

Extent: 4 folders, 3.1 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of pamphlets, synodical articles, photographs and *Academy Bulletins* that were published for the purpose of informing the Wisconsin Synod of the activities and educational opportunities at Northwestern Lutheran Academy. These documents were also meant to attract potential students to enroll at NLA.

Series 12: Documents regarding NLA Student Life

Dates: 1940?-1992

Extent: 4 folders, 3.4 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of documents pertaining to a variety of areas of student life. This series includes: student handbooks and dorm rules from the 1940s through the 1950s; issues of the *Academy Advocate* from 1952 and 1966; invitations and favors from junior-senior banquets and invitations to commencements; and documents assembled for NLA alumni & their reunions.

Series 13: Documents regarding NLA Worship

Dates: 1928-1976

Extent: 4 folders, 2.3 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of documents pertaining to worship on the Northwestern Lutheran Academy campus. This series includes: Opening Service addresses produced by R.A. Fenske

from 1946-1965; Commencement/Graduation addresses produced by R.A. Fenske from 1951-1964; Chapel series, announcements and other documents from 1958-1959; and service folders from the 1928 installation of Professor Karl G. Sievert, the 1930 NLA and the 1953 dedication services, other cornerstone-laying and dedication/installation services, 1956 & 1958 commencements, the 1959 opening service, the 1962 & 1976 Reformation services and the 1966 dedication of the refectory-student union.

Series 14: The Wildcat

Dates: 1961-1978

Extent: 13.3 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of issues of *The Wildcat*, the student-published yearbook of Northwestern Lutheran Academy. This series reflects the developments of NLA during its final two decades.

Appendix A

The Northwestern Lutheran Academy Papers

Arrangement

Box 1: Folders 1-23

Box 2: Folders 24-50

Box 3: Folders 51-68; Yearbooks

Series 1: Documents regarding the NLA Board of Control

Subseries 1: Correspondence, minutes and reports of the NLA Board of Control – 1927-1979
Folders 1-13

Subseries 2: Documents regarding NLA enrollments – 1928-1979
Folder 14

Subseries 3: Documents regarding the Executive Committee/Local Board of the NLA Board of Control – 1928-1939
Folder 15

Subseries 4: Documents regarding the NLA Ladies' Auxiliary – 1976
Folder 16

Series 2: Documents regarding the NLA campus
Folder 17

Series 3: NLA catalogs
Folders 18-23

Series 4: Documents regarding the NLA faculty

Subseries 1: Documents regarding NLA curriculum – 1940-1953
Folder 24

Subseries 2: Documents regarding the Ruth Dahlke Case – 1964
Folder 25

Subseries 3: Documents regarding fellowship discussions – 1959-1965
Folder 26

Subseries 4: Minutes, reports and correspondence from faculty meetings – 1937-1979
Folders 27-33

Series 5: The Reinhold A. Fenske papers
Folder 34

Series 6: Documents regarding NLA finances
Folders 35-44

Series 7: Documents regarding NLA history
Folders 45-48

Series 8: Documents regarding NLA music
Folders 49-51

Series 9: NLA news clippings
Folder 52-54

Series 10: NLA photographs
Folders 55-56

Series 11: Documents regarding NLA recruitment
Folders 57-60

Series 12: Documents regarding NLA student life
Folders 61-64

Series 13: Documents regarding NLA worship
Folders 65-68

Series 14: *The Wildcat*