



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500  
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## Plat of the City of Fargo

**Stock#:** 92774  
**Map Maker:** Von Michalowski  
**Date:** 1880 circa  
**Place:** St. Paul, Minnesota  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 28.25 x 38.75 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *Fargo Before The Arrival of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway (Great Northern Railway)*

Rare early map of Fargo, Dakota Territory, surrounded by 31 advertisements for area businesses, showing the town at a pivotal moment in its first boom years and early growth following the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in June 1872.

The present map of Fargo is one of the oldest extent maps of North Dakota's largest city and the historic launching point for modern settlement of Dakota Territory, published about 5 years after Fargo was incorporated, and just prior to the arrival of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway. We date the map based upon its inclusion of a hand drawn red line across the map, locating the future line of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway, the planning of which likely post-dated the publication of the map.



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In 1880, the population of Fargo was about 2,693. The St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway (later Great Northern Railway after 1890) was the second Railroad to pass through Fargo and its arrival appears to have been the primary interest of the map's owner. A number of the city blocks contiguous to the railway line are marked in red, almost certainly representing the acquisition of land along the future route, including the location of the line's future depot and warehouses in Fargo.

The line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, depot, roundhouse and bridge are shown, as well as a warehouse and "Grain?" Elevator on the river. The Post Office Republican (newspaper) office, Sherman House, Lumber Yards and a number of businesses and churches are located, along with the Court House Square, Island Park and Harwood Park.

The map also includes a number of printed and pencil notes which tell a more complete story of the lands along the west side of the Red River. Pencil notes in an early hand meticulously note the river front streets and alleys which, while shown on the plat map, had not yet been constructed. Dashed lines to the west of the river provide rough contour features, including what looks like one or two older river beds or earlier channels of the Red River and lower points within in the city. Other pencil notes reference early additions, including:

- Roberts Addition
- Roberts Second Addition
- Keeney & Devitt's Addition
- N[orthern] P[acific] Second Additon.

A number of other notes and sets of numbers are shown, which may reflect lot or block prices or other real estate speculator notes. Older Street names are given, of which only Roberts Street and Broadway seem to survive among the streets running north and south. A curious note strikes out Cass Street and changing it to Park Street (which is also the street immediatetly to the west).

Two of the four vignettes include the imprint of the Pioneer Press in St. Paul, Minnesota. Advertisers included famed western photographer Frank Jay Haynes of Minnesota, who played a major role in documenting the settlement and early history of the great Northwest. He became both the official photographer of the Northern Pacific Railway and of Yellowstone National Park as well as operating early transportation concessions in Yellowstone. The remaining 30 advertisements provide a fine early snapshot of Fargo, at about the same time as the first city directory of Fargo was published in 1881.

The mapmaker, **T[heophilus] B[hyrd] von Michalowski**, was a Polish immigrant who was in St. Louis in 1860, when he enlisted in the Army, rising from the level of private in 1860 to Captain by 1864, before resigning from the Army in 1867. We found nothing about his life after 1867, other than a note that he was



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convicted of check fraud in 1874 in La Cross Wisconsin and later granted a pardon by the Governor Wisconsin in April 1875, on the condition that he "abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage for ten years."

The map publisher, **James S. Slack**, moved to Fargo, Dakota Territory in 1873, where he was in the land business, served as deputy United States marshal, and was Fargo municipal judge. In 1887, Slack moved to Superior, Wisconsin.

The **St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Company** was organized in 1879 and its incorporation was confirmed in 1881 by the Minnesota state legislature. In 1879 James J. Hill took over the struggling St. Paul and Pacific Railroad and set out to create what would become the largest rail system in the nation: the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway, which would later become the Great Northern Railway Company.

The St. Paul Railway bridge over the Red River was completed in 1882 and a second railroad entered Fargo. The tracks ran through Fargo about five city blocks north of the Northern Pacific tracks. From Fargo, the railroad turned north to Grand Forks and then west. On September 18, 1889, the railroad became known as the Great Northern Railway Company.

### Fargo, Dakota Territory

Before Fargo and neighboring Moorhead, in Minnesota Territory, there were a few settlers in the area.

The first farm in the Red River Valley was established in 1858 by Edward Connelly, on 50 acres near Georgetown, which was created to serve the Hudson Bay Company. However, there were only about 100 acres of farmland in North Dakota in 1870.

The birth of Fargo and Moorhead can be directly linked to the surveys for the Northern Pacific Railroad. After considering a more northerly route, a decision was made in the Spring of 1871 that the line should cross the Red River from Minnesota into Dakota Territory at the site of the present Moorhead and Fargo.

Following the announcement of the crossing point, two small communities appeared on the west side of the river. "Fargo in the Timber" was located along the banks of the Red River while "Fargo on the Prairie" was a tent town built near the present intersection of Broadway and Front Street. "Fargo on the Prairie" was the headquarters of the Northern Pacific engineers, surveyors and their families, as well as the Army officers that accompanied the railroad engineers. The community consisted of approximately 100 persons living in about fifty tents. On October 6, 1871 a post office was established at Fargo on the Prairie. The



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town was named Centralia. However, shortly thereafter, Thomas Canfield of the Northern Pacific Railroad had the name changed to Fargo, to honor William G. Fargo, of the Wells-Fargo Express Company, a director and investor in the Northern Pacific, with the official name change of the post office effective February 14, 1872.

Cass County was organized in 1873, with Fargo designated as the county seat. However, Fargo incorporated until January 5, 1875. The city's first election was held on April 5, 1875, with 137 voters. George Egbert was chosen mayor and six aldermen were elected. They first met as the city government April 12, 1875.

Fargo grew very quickly. *The Northern Pacific Railway Business Directory 1883-84*. . . published by Mowry & Fairbanks in 1883 reported as follows:

*Fargo, Cass county, Dak, 274 miles from St. Paul, has 8,000 inhabitants, twelve hotels, seven churches, four banks, and five newspapers (two daily and three weeklies) two public halls, new opera house, a court house, car wheel works, street railway, high school, electric light, three elevators, two planing mills, manufactories, and all the various branches of trade which make a thrifty and prosperous city. . . It is, in fact, the commercial center of the New Northwest, being favorably situated on the Red river in the center of a rich agricultural belt, and especially adapted to the raising of wheat, rye, and potatoes. The Northern Pacific has round houses and car shops, this being the end of the Fargo and Southwestern Branch.*

### **Earliest Maps of Fargo**

The earliest maps and view of Fargo listed in OCLC are:

- 1880: *Bird's eye view of Fargo, Dakota 1880*. T.M. Fowler; J.J. Stoner (1 copy -- New York Public Library)
- circa 1880: Rand McNally & Co. map of Fargo and environs, printed on stationary (1 copy -- Clements Library)
- 1881: *Map of the City of Fargo*, by E.W. Lewis. No size given. (1 copy - New York Public Library)
- circa 1882: *Morton & Co.'s Map of the City of Fargo*, published in Fargo in about 1882, published by Grant & Polk in about 1882 (Wall Map). A similar map is listed in Phillips's *Maps of America*, p. 277. (2 copies known -- Yale and North Dakota State University Library)
- 1884: *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Fargo, Cass County, North Dakota* (Library of Congress)



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**Plat of the City of Fargo**

**Rarity**

The map is apparently unknown and previously unrecorded.

**Detailed Condition:**

Corners chipped with loss with minor loss to text advertising.