

Manuscript Sources in Religious History at the Historical Resource Center

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Research in religious history—a field that is often ignored or approached through narrow and unimaginative methods—can be an effective vehicle for entry into fields of study much broader than the history of a single congregation or church. This is particularly true in South Dakota. There are few aspects in the history of this state that have not been influenced by religion.

Christian missionaries were among the first whites in South Dakota, and because they were literate, their records are among the few written accounts of an era dominated in the popular mind by the fur trapper. Later, as the Dakota Indians were gradually settled on reservations and as their lands were opened to white settlement during the second half of the nineteenth century, church missionaries were again deeply involved in the history of an important period—the settlement of the Dakota frontier. While some of their accounts are admittedly prejudiced, overly solicitous, poorly written, or simply devoid of detail, other accounts are, equally as often, articulate and objective. Because the missionaries were among the best educated men and women on the plains, their records provide researchers with valuable primary source material documenting the culture of the Dakotas and the history of homesteading.

The formation of organized church congregations was an

immediate result of settlement, and where the accounts of the missionary efforts of the Congregationalists and Episcopalians are frequently the accounts of a single missionary, the records of an organized congregation are the records of an institution. This gradual shift in the character of documentation from individual to corporate records illustrates the change in South Dakota from a frontier to a modern society.

As for the records themselves, the South Dakota Historical Resource Center possesses a wide selection of manuscript sources on religious history, but, unfortunately, these collections are not as substantial in depth or as numerous in quantity as could be hoped for. Nevertheless, as a record group, these collections provide a general outline of the history of Christian religion in South Dakota, particularly of the American Missionary Association, of various individual congregations, and of the Oahe Mission of the Riggs family.

In this article, the listing of these collections has been restricted to Christianity partly by design and partly by chance. Collections involving Dakota or Sioux religion, for example, have not been included simply because they will appear in a future article listing manuscripts in Dakota history and culture. On the other hand, records concerning other non-Christian religions, such as the records of Jewish synagogues, are not included because we simply do not yet possess any such records.

The following list of collections has been divided into two categories: processed and unprocessed collections. The processed collections have been organized, indexed, and described. Unpublished inventories of these collections are available at the repository. At the present time over two-thirds of the manuscript collections at the center have been processed. Of the collections that are unprocessed, we have attempted to locate and list as many collections concerning religious history as possible. Still, there are probably additional manuscript collections not yet discovered. It is hoped that the publication of this article will encourage research in this field as well as encourage the donation of additional records to our center. The Historical Resource Center also has on file considerable material in our library and photograph collection relating to the history of religion in South Dakota.

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PROCESSED COLLECTIONS: Collections have been listed in the order that they have been processed.

- H41.1 DANIEL NEWCOMB CHAPTER, DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, RADIO SCRIPTS, 1938-1941. 7 pages
- Transcripts of radio programs given on various topics of South Dakota history:
- "Early History of Scandinavian Lutheran Church," by Mrs. Gabriel Tweet, 2 April 1939. 13 pages
- "A Great Pioneer Bishop," by Mother Jerome of the Sacred Heart Convent, 19 February 1939. 4 pages
- "The Reverend Melancthon Hoyt, D.D., and His Family," by Dorothy Westhorpe Pederson, 5 March 1939. 5 pages
- "The Right Reverend William Hobart Hare, First Bishop of South Dakota," by Mary Louise B. Fulweiler, 26 March 1939. 6 pages
- "St. Mary's Schools History—Past and Present," by Katherine Kingsbury, 26 February 1939. 8 pages
- "Reminiscences of Father Nichols and the Congregational Church at Mission Hill, South Dakota," by Reverend Israel Daniels, 1 February 1941.
- H57.2 ROBERT HARDIE FAMILY PAPERS, 1874-1931. 9 items
- Diary, sermons, speeches, and clippings, mostly by Jeanie Lloyd Hardie, the Rev. Robert Hardie's wife. Robert Hardie was a Wesleyan Methodist preacher in Spink Co., S. Dak., during the 1880s.
- H74.3 GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES LETTERS, 1880-1902. 1½ linear feet
- These papers belonged to the Rev. William B. Hubbard, secretary for South Dakota for the General Association of Congregational Churches. His office correspondence, falling primarily between the years 1886 and 1902, concerns annual church reports that were compiled into an annual yearbook. As secretary, Rev. Hubbard was responsible for collecting South Dakota church reports and forwarding them to the national organization.
- H74.9 DOANE ROBINSON PAPERS, 1880-1946. 2 inches
- Robinson was the secretary of the South Dakota State

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Historical Society. Within his office files are found correspondence relating to the work of Mary C. Collins, a missionary to the Sioux; the first Congregational Church of Pierre; the Congregational Conference of South Dakota, 1915-1922; and a few items relating to Bishop William Hobart Hare, an Episcopalian.

- H74.10 WILLIAM MAXWELL BLACKBURN COLLECTION, 1858-1898.
8 linear feet

Correspondence, sermons, lectures, and scrapbooks collected and written by Blackburn. Born in 1828 in Indiana, Blackburn received his Master's degree in 1849 and then studied for the ministry at Princeton Seminary, graduating in 1854. During the next twenty years, Blackburn served as a pastor in Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio, and taught at a seminary in Chicago. In June 1885, he accepted the presidency of the Presbyterian Synodical College of South Dakota in Pierre. For thirteen years, he served as president, professor, and pastor at the institution. Many of the sermons, as well as the maps and textbooks, contained in this collection come from this period. In June 1898, the college was moved to Huron, S. Dak. Blackburn died that same year.

- H74.63 TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MADISON, S. DAK., SCRAPBOOK, 1959-1962.
1 item

One scrapbook containing clippings from the "*Spirit of Trinity*" and other newspapers. The clippings are mostly historical sketches of church members who pioneered in the Madison area.

- H74.73 DAKOTA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS, 1892-1966.
1½ linear feet

Founded in 1885 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, Dakota Wesleyan University is located in Mitchell, South Dakota. This collection contains annual catalogs and bulletins, 1892-1956; various miscellaneous monthly bulletins, 1907-1923; the *Middle Border Bulletin*, 1941-1956; miscellaneous *Friends of the Middle Border* publications, 1963-1966; and copies of *The Phreno Cosmian*, a student paper, 1924 and 1942-1946. The collection also contains O. W. Coursey's *A History of Dakota Wesleyan University For Fifty Years (1885-1935)*.

- H74.74 BAPTIST CHURCH RECORDS, 1872-1969.
1 linear foot

Miscellaneous minutes and programs of various conventions, bulletins, histories, and other papers concerning various Baptist churches in South Dakota.

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- H74.75 CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH RECORDS, 1871-1964. 1 linear foot
 Minutes, reports, manuals, constitutions, histories, and various publications concerning local South Dakota churches and the General Association of Congregational Churches of the Dakotas.
- H74.76 METHODIST EPISCOPAL/METHODIST CHURCH RECORDS, 1880-1959. 1 linear foot
 Minutes of annual meetings, yearbooks, histories, bulletins, clippings, newsletters, and other records relating to South Dakota churches.
- H74.77 EPISCOPAL CHURCH RECORDS, 1868-1963. 1 linear foot
 Annual bishop reports, journals of convocations, and other papers generated in the Missionary District of South Dakota, the District of Niobrara, and various South Dakota churches. Most of the papers deal with Indian missions and Bishop William Hobart Hare.
- H74.78 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RECORDS, 1881-1972. 1 linear foot
 Minutes of the annual meetings of the Synod of South Dakota, 1885-1942, 1969, and 1972; a short "History of the First Presbyterian Church of White" and miscellaneous papers.
- H74.79 LUTHERAN CHURCH RECORDS, 1923-1965. 3 inches
 Pamphlet and manuscript histories of various Lutheran congregations in South Dakota.
- H74.83 JOHN POAGE WILLIAMSON PAPERS, 1866-1915. 62 items
 Williamson (1835-1917) was the son of pioneer Minnesota missionary, Thomas Smith Williamson. He spent his youth in Minnesota, was educated in Ohio and Illinois, and returned to Minnesota as a missionary in 1860. In 1863 he followed the exiled Santee Sioux to Ft. Thompson on the Crow Creek Agency in Dakota Territory, and in 1866 he went with them to Niobrara, Nebraska. In 1869 he moved to Yankton Agency in Dakota, where he became general missionary to the Sioux for the Presbyterian Church. This collection contains correspondence, mostly personal in nature, and miscellaneous receipts and papers.
- H74.91 YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION RECORDS, 1891-1922. 8 items
 Miscellaneous bulletins, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings concerning the activities of the Y.M.C.A. in South Dakota, particularly in Pierre.

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- H74.119 SOUTH DAKOTA SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION RECORDS, 1875-1947. 3 inches
Programs, minutes, and other papers.
- H74.121 CATHOLIC CHURCH RECORDS, 1899-1960. 5 items
Miscellaneous histories and directories of various South Dakota Catholic parishes.
- H74.123 SOUTH DAKOTA CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR UNION RECORDS, 1895-1913. 5 items
Various annual programs and one missionary tract.
- H74.124 LEOLA CHRISTIAN MANUSCRIPT, [1961]. 1 item
A fifteen-page "History of the South Dakota Branch of the International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons, Years 1922-1961." The order is an inter-denominational Christian organization of men and women.
- H75.9 (FATHER) CHRISTIAN HOECKEN JOURNAL, 1840. 1 item
This collection consists of a positive photostatic copy of Father Hoecken's seventeen-page journal kept during his trip on the Missouri River from near Vermillion to Ft. Union, in 1840. The journal is actually a daily listing of the children he baptized along the way.
- H75.10 HELEN MEIGS COLLECTION. 10 items
Contains correspondence, pamphlets, and other publications concerning several missionaries, including Mary C. Collins, a Congregational missionary to the Sioux.
- H75.13 WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON BEADLE PAPERS, 1839-1944. 1 item
Beadle (1838-1915) came to Dakota as U.S. Surveyor General of the Territory in 1869 and served in that capacity until 1873. He was superintendent of public instruction from 1879 to 1885 and secretary of the codification commission of 1877. He is remembered for his work in controlling the sale of school lands. The collection contains an article by Beadle entitled "Congregationalism and Civic Growth."

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- H75.32 WILLIAM JOSHUA CLEVELAND COLLECTION, 1875-1910. 66 items
Cleveland, (1845-1910) a native of New Jersey, served as an Episcopalian missionary at various Sioux reservations in South Dakota for most of the forty-year period following 1870. The collection includes numerous newspaper and magazine clippings, a scrapbook, and a few letters.
- H75.37 THE WOONSOCKET PARISH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1883-1914. 6 items
A brief five-page history of the Woonsocket Parish comprises the major document in this collection. Written in 1914, the history covers the years 1883-1890.
- H75.51 THE EPISCOPAL MINISTRY TO THE SIOUX: BUSINESS RECORDS RELATING TO LANDS AND BUILDINGS ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS, 1874-1911.
These records are from the office of Bishop William Hobart Hare. As Bishop of Niobrara and later of the Dakotas, Bishop Hare inaugurated a program of building schools, chapels, and rectories at the Sioux and Ponca Indian Reservations in the region. The records include correspondence, building specifications, contracts, receipts, and material relating to the purchase, sale, consignment, and transfer of land.
- H75.56 REV. GEORGE EDMUND GREEN CORRESPONDENCE, 1902-1912. 20 items
This collection includes correspondence that relates primarily to financial assessments of Congregational Churches by the General Association of Congregational Churches of South Dakota. Green was the state treasurer of the organization.
- H75.73 REV. JOSHUA DAVIS NOTEBOOK, 1884-1907. 1 item (150 pages)
Davis, an officer of the Indian Rights Association, traveled widely in the American West, visiting various Indian reservations and missions. Sometime in the mid-1880s he began to keep a notebook as a record of his information on American Indians and their affairs.
- H75.77M LUTHERAN MEMORIAL CHURCH, PIERRE, S. DAK., RECORDS, 1883-1968. 4 rolls (35 mm microfilm)
Records include minutes, accounts, annual reports,

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and ministerial acts of the Lutheran Memorial Church, the Grace Lutheran Church of Hayes, S. Dak., their predecessors, and affiliated organizations.

- H75.99 BERTHA W. CLARK MANUSCRIPTS ON THE HUTTERITES, 1921.
2 items
(11 pages)

In the early 1920s, while working in Hutchinson County, S. Dak. for the YMCA, Clark became acquainted with local Hutterites. As a result of her experience, Clark wrote two manuscripts discussing their history, culture, and community life. [The two manuscripts, in edited form, were published in the Winter 1976 issue of *South Dakota History*.]

- H75.130 THE PATRIOTIC CHRISTIAN LEAGUE, FIRST SOUTH DAKOTA INFANTRY: CONSTITUTION AND MINUTES, 1898-1889.
1 item

This collection consists of a five-page hand-written constitution of a religious organization—formed by soldiers as they were about to be shipped to the Philippines—“which would embody the principles of the Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor.” The actual minutes of the society were destroyed through careless handling, but a summary of them is supplied.

- H75.163 WOONSPE WANKANTU—THE SANTEE NORMAL TRAINING SCHOOL, SANTEE AGENCY, NEBRASKA: SCHOOL CATALOGS, 1881-1933.
9 items

Established in 1870 by the American Missionary Association (Congregational), the Santee Normal Training School was organized for “the purpose of raising up preachers, teachers, interpreters, business men, and model mothers for the Dakota Nation.” The catalogs list students, faculty and staff, and courses of instruction.

- H75.166 GERTRUDE STICKNEY YOUNG MANUSCRIPT, 1920: “THE MENNONITES IN SOUTH DAKOTA.”
1 item

An eighty-one-page study on South Dakota Mennonites, which was awarded the Beadle Prize in history by the State Historical Society in 1920. Her manuscript includes information on Mennonite origins, migrations, locations, and citizenship in South Dakota.

- H75.246 JOHN PFEIFFER COLLECTION, 1909-1972.
6 inches

This collection includes an eight-page typescript manuscript written by John Pfeiffer of Aberdeen,

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S. Dak., in 1971, entitled "A Historical Sketch of St. Mary's Parish of Aberdeen, South Dakota." The parish was organized by German-Russians at the turn of the century.

- H75.331 CHALMERS MARTIN JOURNAL, 1881. 1 item

In May 1881, Chalmers Martin, a Presbyterian divinity student, left for Dakota Territory for a summer ministry. His journal (fifty-seven typescript pages) details his experiences in eastern South Dakota, where he visited various towns, delivered sermons, and met people.

UNPROCESSED COLLECTIONS: The titles of these collections may be changed when they are processed.

1. Father Pierre Jean De Smet, ca. 1840. 5 items
Copies of baptismal records.
2. Women's Missionary Federation Convention Proceedings, 1941. 1 item
An eleven-page pamphlet of the proceedings of the convention held in Canton, South Dakota.
3. Thomas Lawrence Riggs Family Papers. 8 linear feet
Papers from the Oahe Mission (ca. 1880 ff), and from the ranching and other business interests of the Riggs family.

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