

Finding Aid

Reformed Church in America

DAKOTA CLASSIS

DISBANDED CHURCHES

RECORD GROUP

1886 – 1970s

RCA 4.2

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Introduction

The Dakota Classis Disbanded Churches Record Group documents the corporate institutional lives of various small congregations in Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Nebraska in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The records typically include the minutes of the consistory and membership books. Occasionally, other materials are also included, such as treasurer's records, young people's society records, clippings, letters of reminiscence, and photographs. Collectively, these archives provide evidence for the history of rural and small town religious life in the trans-Mississippi prairies and northern plains over the span of a hundred years.

Size: 3 linear feet

Provenance: These records were deposited at various times by congregational or classis officials.

Restrictions, copying, and permission to publish and citations: For more information about such specifications contact Russell Gasero, Reformed Church in America Archives, 21 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, Fax (732) 249-5412, E-mail rgasero@rca.org.

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Historical Notes

The Reformed Church in America (www.rca.org) traces its beginnings to the celebration of communion in the colony of New Amsterdam in 1628 (the local church begun then exists today as the Collegiate Reformed Church, New York City). Although the Dutch colony became the British colony of New York later in the 17th century, services in the English language did not begin until the mid-18th century. After the American War of Independence, the Reformed denomination also established its independence from the Netherlands. The denomination was incorporated in 1819 as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church; it became the Reformed Church in America in 1867.

Confessions: Historic statements of belief formally affirmed by the Reformed Church in America include the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort.

Polity: Each local Reformed church has a consistory, consisting of lay elders and deacons (elected by the congregation), and ordained minister(s). The clerk of consistory is responsible for the minutes; the consistory itself is responsible for the oversight of the life and order of the local church.

Multiple congregations in a geographic area form a classis. The classis consists of elected lay delegates (elders) and all the ministers enrolled in the classis. It has charge of the process of the training, examination, ordination, and oversight of clergy. It also has charge of overseeing local churches within its geographic bounds, including organizing new ones and disbanding ones deemed no longer viable.

Multiple classes (plural of classis) form regional synods. (An older terminology is "particular synod.") Regional synods consist of clergy and lay delegates from classes.

The denomination's highest assembly is the General Synod. Minister and lay delegates from classes and regional synods, along with other authorized delegates, together have general superintendence of the whole church.

The Classis of Dakota (www.dakotaclassis.com): Dakota Classis was organized in Centerville, Dakota Territory, on May 18, 1888. This organization had been formally enabled earlier in the month by the action of the Particular Synod of Chicago. Twelve already-existing congregations transferred from the Classis of Iowa to the new classis. (One of the original twelve was the Van Raalte Memorial Reformed Church; their records are included in this collection.)

At first, the classis extended all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Montana had a local church in the classis in 1896, and Washington had two churches by 1903. These and other congregations were

the fruit of not only local members but of the classical missionary, i.e., a minister assigned by the classis to plant and nurture new churches. The Rev. B.D. Dykstra was Classis Missionary from 1913-1921.

More recently, the classis boundaries have come to conform more closely to North and South Dakota as new classes have been organized.

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Related Materials

This collection is closely related to that of the Dakota Classis Archives. Since B.D. Dykstra was the classis missionary, his collection also has potential connections to this collection.

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Arrangement

The Dakota Classis Disbanded Churches Record Group is divided into six boxes of twelve series, one series for each congregation. The series are arranged alphabetically by name of congregation. The contents of each series are arranged structurally, then chronologically. Structurally, Reformed congregations are centered on the consistory. When available, the dates for the organization and disbanding of each congregation are based on *Historical Directory of the Reformed Church in America*, ed. Russell L. Gasero (modified by the evidence of each series as necessary). The detailed arrangement is as follows:

SERIES 1, AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH, Hull, Iowa, 1911-1920			
Notes: Org. 1911; disbanded 1921. English throughout. Formed from members of First Presbyterian Church, Hull.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
1	1 (ledger)	[Consistory Minutes.]	1911-1920

SERIES 2, AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH, Maurice, Iowa, 1925-1944			
Notes: Org. 1907; dropped 1947. English throughout.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
1	1 (ledger)	Consistory Minutes.	1925-1944
	2 (ledger)	Treasurer's Records.	1932-1943

SERIES 3, BEMIS REFORMED CHURCH, Bemis, South Dakota, 1915-1949			
Notes: Org. 1915; merged with Castlewood, SD, 1947. This congregation was begun as Presbyterian but in 1917 transferred to the RCA; primarily Dutch language through 1919			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
2	1 (ledger)	Minutes of Session and Church Register.	1915-1917

			[minutes] 1915-1949 [register]
	2 (ledger)	[Consistory Minutes.]	1917-1945
	3 (ledger)	[Consistory Minutes.]	1945-1947
	4 (ledger)	[Treasurer's Records; Consistory Minutes.]	1943-1946; 1917-1919

SERIES 4, BETHEL REFORMED CHURCH, Winnebago, Nebraska, 1951-1956			
Notes: Org. 1951; disbanded 1957. Formed by members of the Winnebago Presbyterian Church.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
3	1	[Consistory Minutes.]	1951-1956
	2	Membership Records.	1951-1957

SERIES 5, BROADLAND REFORMED CHURCH, Broadland, South Dakota, 1927-1940			
Notes: Dutch language throughout.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
3	1 (ledger)	Consistory Minutes.	1927-1940
	2 (ledger)	Membership Records.	1927-1939

SERIES 6, CHURCHVILLE REFORMED CHURCH, Churchville, Minnesota, 1911-1929			
Notes: Org. 1897; dropped 1930. Dutch language throughout.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
3	1 (ledger)	Consistory Minutes.	1911-1926
	2 (ledger)	Consistory Minutes.	1926-1929
	3 (ledger)	Membership Records.	1911-1939

SERIES 7, DOVER REFORMED CHURCH, Wimbeldon, North Dakota, 1917-1964			
Notes: Org. 1919; disbanded 1963. Mostly Dutch language until July 1947. Two offering plates are in the De Hoeven Room, carton of Matlock objects.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
4	1 (ledger)	[Consistory Minutes.]	1917-1958
	2 (ledger)	[Consistory Minutes.]	1958-1963
	3 (ledger)	[Membership Records and Accounts.]	[1917]-1964
	4 (notebook)	Treasurer's Records	1957-1961
	5 (notebook)	Young People's Society. Christian Endeavor Society [Members, Minutes, and Accounts.]	1918-1921
	6 (ledger)	Young People's Society. [Members and Accounts.]	1918-1922
	7 (notebook)	Sunday School Accounts.	1959-1963

SERIES 8, HULL REFORMED CHURCH, Hull, North Dakota, 1888-1893			
Notes: Org. 1889; disbanded 1894. Dutch language throughout.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
5	1 (ledger)	[Consistory Minutes.]	1888-1892
	2 (ledger)	Membership Records.	[1888]-1893

SERIES 9, LEBANON REFORMED CHURCH, Lebanon, South Dakota, 1926-1936			
Notes: Mostly Dutch language.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
5	1 (ledger)	[Consistory Minutes.]	1926-1936
	2 (ledger)	Membership Records.	1926-1952

SERIES 10, SALEM REFORMED CHURCH, Mapes, North Dakota, 1904-1907			
Notes: Org. 1905; disbanded 1908. Dutch language throughout.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
6	1 (ledger)	Consistory Minutes.	1905-1907
	2 (ledger)	[Membership Records.]	1904-1907

SERIES 11, TWIN BROOKS REFORMED CHURCH, Twin Brooks, South Dakota, 1913-1919			
Notes: Org. 1914; dropped 1920. Dutch language throughout.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
6	1 (notebook)	Consistory Minutes.	1913-1919
	2	Newspaper clipping [<i>De Volksvriend</i>]	n.d.

SERIES 12, A.C. VAN RAALTE REFORMED CHURCH, [Thule, South] Dakota, 1886-1970s			
Notes: Org. 1886; dropped 1905. Dutch language throughout consistory materials.			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
6	1 (ledger)	Consistory Minutes. [Photo of sod church building pasted to inside back cover.]	1886-1906
	2	Photocopy of parts of the consistory minutes.	1970s
	3	English translation of parts of the consistory minutes, by Nelson Nieuwenhuis.	1970s
	4	Miscellaneous. [Photocopies of <i>Church Herald</i> story and of sod church photo; two letters of reminiscence.]	1970s
	5	Negative of sod church photo	n.d.