EPSTEIN, EPHRAIM M.
PAPERS, 1882-1883
(bulk dates, 1882-1883)
Quantity .5 linear ft.

ACCESS: This collection is open for research without restriction.

PRINTED MATERIAL: Printed materials are found in Box 1.

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PROCESSED BY: Gayla Koerting, February 2004
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History

The University of Dakota, the predecessor to the University of South Dakota, began its existence as an institution of higher education in 1882. Ephraim Menahhem Epstein was the first leader of the university. He was born on March 17, 1829. Epstein, a Russian Jew who converted to Christianity, graduated from Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. He was also fluent in several languages. He practiced medicine in Leavenworth, Kansas and in Cincinnati, Ohio and taught at Heidelberg College for a short time. Epstein, at the time of his appointment, was a Baptist minister, first preaching in Yankton until moving to Vermillion. The new president kept very busy at his duties; he conducted most of the classes, kept university records, and sold textbooks to the 69 students enrolled at the time. Epstein was an excellent teacher who enjoyed inspiring young minds, but held controversial religious views. Eventually, Epstein was removed as president due to political motives by certain members of the Regents of Education when the territory assumed control of the university in 1883. There was also speculation that Dr. Epstein had amassed a significant debt for contracting a house in Vermillion. He moved to Chicago, continued to practice medicine, and became an editor/contributor for the *American Journal of Clinical Medicine* until his death in 1913 at the age of 84.

Scope and Content Note

The Ephraim M. Epstein Collection is composed of two series: *Correspondence and Printed Materials*. Unfortunately, the records for the Epstein administration, particularly for correspondence, are extremely limited in scope due to the 1893 fire of University Hall (Old Main) which destroyed many of the records.

The *Correspondence* series contains letters written by individuals requesting a catalog of courses or seeking admission into the university. A majority of the correspondence relates to the incorporation of the “University of Dakota” by the Board of Regents. General correspondence is contained in one folder entitled, “A-Z.” Incoming and outgoing correspondence for a person or organization with more than 2 letters are contained in one folder; these are listed directly after “General” files.

The *Printed Materials* series includes photocopies of articles written by Dr. Epstein or information pertaining to his career after leaving the university.
**Additional Resources**


**Subjects**

Epstein, Ephraim, 1883-1884--Archives

University of South Dakota – History—19th century--Sources

College presidents—South Dakota—Vermillion--Archives
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