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West Sioux Classis

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Finding Aid

Reformed Church in America

WEST SIOUX CLASSIS ARCHIVES

1918 - 1974

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- Introduction
- Historical Notes
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Introduction

The West Sioux Classis Archives document the corporate institutional life of a regional classis of the Reformed Church in America based in northwest Iowa, southwest Minnesota, southeast South Dakota, and Colorado in the mid and late twentieth century. The records include the minutes of the classis and related material. Collectively, these archives provide evidence for the historical growth of a multi-generational Dutch-immigrant Protestant denomination in the trans-Mississippi prairies and northern plains over fifty-five years.

Size: 47.5 cm

Provenance: Presumably, these records were deposited by one or more classis official.

Restrictions, copying, and permission to publish and citations: Use of these materials, copying, permission to publish and citations are subject to the specifications of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America. Contact Archivist, Reformed Church in America Archives, 21 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, Fax (732) 249-5412, E-mail archives@rca.org.

Processing Notes: This arrangement and finding aid were completed in 2015 by Doug Anderson.

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Historical Notes

The [Reformed Church in America](#) 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 authorizing 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 body 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 West Sioux: West Sioux Classis, still flourishing, was organized in Rock Valley, Iowa, on September 11, 1918. This organization had been formally enabled by an earlier action of the Particular Synod of Chicago. The new classis was one of two created from dividing and dissolving Iowa Classis (the other new classis was East Sioux).

West Sioux was initially constituted by twenty-five congregations. Nine of them were in Iowa, eleven in Minnesota, four in South Dakota, and one in Colorado.

More recently, the classis boundaries have shrunk. Today, all but one of the twenty-three churches of West Sioux are in northwest Iowa.

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Related Materials

This collection is closely related to that of Iowa Classis (see its finding aid) and East Sioux Classis (see its finding aid). Further, when North Central Classis was dissolved in 1964 (see finding aid for Germania/North Central Classis), three of its congregations joined West Sioux.

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Arrangement

The West Sioux Classis Archives is divided into three units of a ledger, a carton, and box. The collection is essentially chronological. The detailed arrangement is as follows:

WEST SIOUX CLASSIS, 1918-1974			
BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	DATES
1 (ledger)		Minutes of Classis West Sioux	1918-1930
2 (carton)	ledger	Roll of Churches, Ministers, Licentiates, [etc.]	1918-1952
	ledger	Minutes of Classis West Sioux	1931-1943
	ledger	Minutes of Classis West Sioux	1943-1966
	binder	Minutes of Classis West Sioux	1966-1974
	ledger	Old Minutes [Temporary Notes]	1919-1927
	ledger	[Temporary Notes]	1922-1926
	ledger	[Temporary Notes]	1927-1928
	ledger	Temporary Notes	1928-1940
	ledger	Temporary Notes	1941-1954
3	1	Correspondence	1986
	2	[Minutes, mimeograph]	1951-1956