

# Forum/Ethical Culture Club Records

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## Collection Summary

**Identifier:** MA 2

**Title:** Forum/Ethical Culture Club Records

**Dates:** 1908-1928

**Extent:** 0.21 linear feet (1 half-document case)

**Creator:** Ethical Culture Club (Brookings, S. D.)

**Language:** English

**Repository:** South Dakota State University Archives & Special Collections, University Station, Box 2115, 1300 North Campus Drive, Brookings, South Dakota, 57007

**Access Note:** Open. Materials must be used in-house and do not circulate.

**Preferred Citation:** Title or description of item, date, Collection number, box number, folder number, Collection Title, South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Brookings, South Dakota.

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## Abstract

The Ethical Culture Club, later known as the Forum, was organized in Brookings, South Dakota in 1906 as a group for discussion of social, civic, and public issues. Members drawn from the college and local community met to discuss topics such as child labor laws, public libraries, international peace efforts, and measurement standards, with some discussions leading to civic action. The collection includes meeting records from 1908 to 1910, minutes, a constitution, miscellaneous materials, and a history of the organization written by William Powers, documenting the Forum's activities and organization.

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## Biography

The Ethical Culture Club / Forum was organized in Brookings, South Dakota in January 1906. It was then called the Ethical Culture Club; according to one of its historians. It held its original meetings on Sunday and "was to be a substitute on a basis of liberal theology for church going". These early days notwithstanding, the Forum, as it became known after October 14, 1910, was essentially a meeting for the free discussion of any topic of interest. Topics included, child labor laws, the establishment of a public library, promotion of a league to enforce peace, and the use of metric measures. Many of these topics, particularly the building of a library, actually became calls to action.

The Forum was made up of members of both the college and the town with the majority being drawn from all parts of the College. According to William Powers, Forum historian, the outside membership has been distributed among different professions, including clergymen. Membership seems to have only been limited to men, with the added provision that all members were expected at some time to present a paper.

Governance of the organization was made up of a president, vice president and secretary treasurer who made up the executive committee. There were also two standing committees for programs and for membership.

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## Scope and Content

Composed of miscellanies from both the era of the Forum and the time of the Ethical Culture Club. Materials from the latter era consist of the record of meetings from the years 1908-1910. Material for the latter years includes the minutes of meetings, a copy of the constitution, some miscellaneous materials and a history of the club written by William Powers.

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## Access Points

### Subjects

- Men—Societies and clubs

### Names

- Powers, William H. (William Howard) 1868-1936

- Ethical Culture Club (Brookings, S.D.)
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## Container List

| Box | Folder | title                                    | Dates     |
|-----|--------|--|-----------|
| 1   | 1      | Constitution                             | undated   |
| 1   | 2      | Correspondence                           | 1919-1928 |
| 1   | 3      | History of the club                      | 1923      |
| 1   | 7      | Miscellaneous: program notes             | undated   |
| 1   | 5      | Programs                                 | 1919-1928 |
| 1   | 6      | Record of meetings: Ethical Culture Club | 1908-1910 |
| 1   | 7      | Minutes of meetings: The Forum           | 1919-1928 |