

Donald Berg Papers

Collection Summary

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| Identifier: | UA 53.47 |
| Title: | Donald Berg Papers |
| Dates: | 1985-2012 |
| Extent: | 1.63 linear feet (1 record box, 1 document case, 1 half-document case) |
| Creator: | Berg, Donald |
| 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, UA 53.47, box number, folder number, Donald Berg Papers, South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Brookings, South Dakota.

Abstract

The papers of Professor Donald Berg document his career as a geographer and historian at South Dakota State University and his sustained engagement with American Indian history and regional issues. The collection primarily consists of records from the Conference on American Indian History and Culture, including materials from the first through eighteenth annual conferences held between 1993 and 2010.

Additional materials include Berg's research files on the Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad, focusing on railroad safety, environmental impact, and proposed expansion projects in South Dakota and the upper Midwest. Together, the papers reflect Berg's application of historical and geographic research to public, environmental, and infrastructure concerns.

Biography

Professor Donald Berg earned a B.A. in History from North Dakota State University in 1964 and an M.A. in History in 1966. He completed a second M.A. at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1971 and received his Ph.D. in Geography from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1976.

Berg served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1969, including service in the Vietnam War from 1967 to 1968. During the summers of 1970, 1971, and 1972, he was employed as a seasonal ranger naturalist at Sequoia National Park in California.

He joined South Dakota State University as a professor of geography and history in 1990 and retired in May 2011. He also held earlier appointments at SDSU from 1983 to 1986. Berg taught courses primarily in physical geography, world regional geography, and environmental disasters and hazards, as well as seminars in regional geography, transportation, energy, and illegal drugs. His teaching also included courses in the history of the American West and American Indian history and culture. For more than fifteen years, he provided orientation sessions for students participating in the International Partnership for Service-Learning program.

Berg served as secretary treasurer of the Great Plains Rocky Mountain Division of the Association of American Geographers from 1994 to 2008 and was faculty sponsor for the Delta Zeta Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon beginning in 1994. He was the first instructor at South Dakota State University to offer live, real time interactive television courses on the Brookings campus and received two Governor's Grants in 2000 and 2002 for the application of computer technology to online instruction in physical geography.

His research, professional presentations, and publications addressed topics including Native American casinos, the historical geography of railroads, federal defense and water development programs, and related book reviews and encyclopedia contributions. His later work focused on the historical geography of the Dust Bowl era in the northern Great Plains and the development and significance of the American Indian Reservation system in South Dakota.

Scope and Content

The Donald Berg Papers are composed primarily of materials documenting the Conference on American Indian History and Culture, including records from the first through eighteenth annual conferences held between 1993 and 2010. These materials include organizational records, conference letterhead, and participant lists dating from 1993 to 2004. The collection also contains research files assembled by Berg related to the Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad, with a focus on railroad safety in Brookings, South Dakota, and proposed expansion projects. These materials include extensive newspaper clippings from 1997 through 2012, draft and supplemental environmental impact statements, Powder River Basin Coal Expansion Project maps, photographs of railroad infrastructure in Rochester, Minnesota, and digital files stored on floppy disks. Additional materials include a Brookings Railroad Safety Plan dated 2007 and a small amount of professional ephemera such as business cards

This collection documents of Berg's sustained scholarly and public engagement with American Indian history and culture through nearly two decades of conference activity. The railroad research files document local and regional responses to proposed rail expansion, environmental review processes, and railroad safety concerns, illustrating Berg's application of geographic and historical research methods to contemporary infrastructure and policy issues in South Dakota and the upper Midwest.

Access Points

Subjects

- Coal—Transportation
- Indians of North America
- Railroad safety
- Railroads--Environmental aspects

Names

- Berg, Donald
 - Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation
-

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research, but please note that the materials in the Archives do not circulate and can only be used in the SDSU Archives and Special Collections Reading Room.

Please contact us in advance so we can prepare for your visit.

If you cannot visit the Archives in person, please reach out to us. We will do our best to help you find the information you need.

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Container List

| Box | Folder | Description | Date(s) |
|-----|--------|--|---------|
| 1 | 1 | Brookings Railroad Safety Plan | 2007 |
| 1 | 2 | Business Cards | undated |
| 1 | 3 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 1st Annual | 1993 |
| 1 | 4 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 2nd Annual | 1994 |
| 1 | 5 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 3rd Annual | 1995 |
| 1 | 6 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 4th Annual | 1996 |
| 1 | 7 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 5th Annual | 1997 |
| 1 | 8 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 6th Annual | 1998 |
| 1 | 9 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 7th Annual | 1999 |
| 1 | 10 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 8th Annual | 2000 |
| 1 | 11 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 9th Annual | 2001 |
| 1 | 12 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 10th Annual | 2002 |
| 1 | 13 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 11th Annual | 2003 |
| 1 | 14 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 12th Annual | 2004 |
| 1 | 15 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 13th Annual | 2005 |
| 1 | 16 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 14th Annual | 2006 |
| 1 | 17 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 15th Annual | 2007 |

| Box | Folder | Description | Date(s) |
|------------|---------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | 18 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 16th Annual | 2008 |
| 1 | 19 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 17th Annual | 2009 |
| 1 | 20 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: 18th Annual | 2010 |
| 1 | 21 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: Letterhead | undated |
| 1 | 22 | Conference on American Indian History and Culture: Participants List | 1993-2004 |
| 1 | 23 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 1997 |
| 1 | 24 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 1998 January-June |
| 1 | 25 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 1998 July-December |
| 1 | 26 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2000 January-June |
| 1 | 27 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2000 July-December |
| 1 | 28 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2000 |
| 1 | 29 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: 2 floppy disks | 2000 |
| 1 | 30 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2001 |
| 1 | 31 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Photographs of the railroad in Rochester, Minnesota | 2001 |
| 1 | 32 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2002 |
| 1 | 33 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2005 |
| 1 | 34 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2006 |
| 2 | 1 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2007 |
| 2 | 2 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2008 |
| 2 | 3 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Clippings | 2009-2010, 2012 |
| 2 | 4 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Draft Environmental Impact Statement | 2000 |
| 2 | 5 | Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement | 2005 |
| 2 | 6 | Powder River Basin Coal Expansion Project Maps | 1998 |
| 2 | 7 | Powder River Basin Coal Expansion Project Maps | 2000 |
| 3 | 1 | Handouts for Service-Learning Program Orientation at SDSU | 1997 |
| 3 | 2 | International Partnership for Service Learning at SDSU | 2008 |