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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

AUSTIN, HORACE J.

Papers 1840 - 1891
(bulk dates 1864-1891)

Quantity: .75 linear ft.

ACQUISITION: This collection was donated to the University of South Dakota in 1984 by Dorothy Olson, a descendent of Austin.

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PROCESSED BY: Amy Cooper, December, 2000

Accession #: RC84-0001

Location: E9:5

History

Horace J. Austin was born in Washington County, New York in 1837. He moved west to seek out business opportunities. He traveled to Iowa and eventually moved to Dakota Territory where he gained employment as a land surveyor. He originally settled in Yankton and later relocated to Vermillion. In 1863, Austin served as a sergeant in Company A of the First Dakota Cavalry. Austin was elected a Territorial Legislator in the House in 1865 and continued to serve in the South Dakota legislature until his death on February 27, 1891, in Pierre, South Dakota.

Relations to Horace J. Austin as they appear in this collection:

Henry Austin -- Brother; Jane Austin, his wife; Charley Austin, their son
 Rosannah Austin -- Mother
 Rachael Austin -- Wife; Helen Pansy Austin, their daughter
 Angelina Austin -- Sister; Clark, her husband
 Silas Palmer -- Friend; Hattie Palmer, his wife
 Roy Stevens -- Nephew
 Mary E. Stafford -- Aunt
 Harriet Sykes -- Aunt

Scope and Content Note

The Horace J. Austin papers are organized in five series, **Correspondence, Diaries, Manuscripts, Printed Materials** and **Ephemera**.

The **Correspondence** series comprises the bulk of the collection and holds not only letters to and from Horace Austin, but also several letters from other family members. Incoming Correspondence is primarily made up of letters to Austin from family members. Also present are letters from Issac Higbee, who was a part of the Surveyor General's office and Silas Palmer, Austin's friend. Palmer's letters indicate his intention to move west, and he frequently asks Austin for advice on the potentials for business. Correspondence from Austin's wife, Rachael, details daily affairs and gives news of their daughter, Pansy. All letters sent from Austin's mother, Rosannah, are undated.

Horace Austin's Outgoing Correspondence is entirely devoted to letters he wrote to family members. Letters to Rosannah Austin and family make up the bulk of this sub-series. Organized chronologically, the folders roughly represent different time periods of Austin's life, each of which is also associated with a particular location. The first folder, from September, 1857 - August 1860 chronicles Austin's time in Dubuque and Jefferson, Iowa, where he seems to be working in lead mines. The letters from February 1861 through March 1862 are addressed from Yankton, where Austin has set up a farming homestead. Letters from September, 1862 - August of 1864 document Austin's time in the military, with letters from Fort Randall and other military installments. In these letters, Austin speaks of the hardships of the life of a soldier and of his dislike for the Indians. Letters from April, 1865 through January 1873 encompass Austin's election to the legislature in Yankton and move to Vermillion, and his beginning political career.

Other Correspondence includes letters to and from other members of the Austin family. Among the most interesting items here are the letters from Henry Austin, Horace's brother. All of Henry's letters are addressed to his mother, Rosannah, and include accounts of his involvement in the Civil War. Henry belonged to Company I, in the 16th Michigan Infantry. His letters are addressed from Washington, Lynchburg and Petersburg. He returns to Michigan after the war, and later letters detail his life on the farm in Freesoil in Mason County, Michigan. In addition to these letters, Henry's wife Jane Austin frequently writes to "mother," which may possibly be to Rosannah Austin, calling her mother or to her own mother. The folder of Single Letters includes letters of

condolence addressed to Rachael Austin upon Horace Austin's death, and letters addressed to Hon. J. A. Williamson in support of Austin.

The **Diaries** series includes two diaries of the years 1868 and 1887. During this time, Horace Austin had already established himself in South Dakota's political picture. The diaries are typical daily registers, usually recounting specific events, weather and daily happenings. The diary of 1868 is re-printed in the **Printed Materials** series, as "The Year 1868 from the Diary of Horace J. Austin." It is during the later part of 1868 that Austin meets Rachael and begins his courtship of her.

The **Manuscripts** series includes various legal documents such as leases between Austin and others for land. Also included are three legal documents surrounding the will of Job Stafford.

In the **Ephemera** series, there is a child's letter written by Charley Austin, Henry's son, and a lock of hair that can be presumed to be Charley's. Envelopes that belonged to the Correspondence are also included in this series.

Related Subjects:

Dakota Territory -- Politics and government

South Dakota -- Politics and government

Dakota Indians -- Wars, 1862-1865

Box No. Description**Box 1**

CORRESPONDENCE

Incoming

Austin, Henry (2 items)
 July 26, 1866
 February 16, 1868
 Austin, Rachael (2 folders)
 n.d.
 September 11, 1871 - February 13, 1891
 Austin, Rosannah, n.d. (1 folder)
 Higbee, Issac M. (1 folder)
 July 14, 1869 - October 8, 1874
 Lathrop, A. H. (2 items)
 December 13 and 23, 1868
 Palmer, Silas (1 folder)
 August 31, 1866 - March 14, 1869
 Stafford, Mary E. (1 folder)
 December 22, 1867 - November 19, 1871
 Sykes, Harriet (1 folder)
 Jan 11, 1869 - July 11, 1869
 Single letters (1 folder)
 Armstrong, M. K. April 11, 1872
 Austin, Pansy, n.d.
 Ball, John, March 16, 1891
 Beadle, January 25, 1871
 Higbee, Ed (?), September 15, 1876
 Inasberg (?), Hans, January 9, 1891
 Palmer, Hattie, n.d.
 Pickett, A., September 9, 1882
 Stevens, Roy, October 26, 1884
 Sullivan, B. M., August 25, 1890
 Sullivan, J. (?), August 10, 1876

Outgoing

To Austin, Angeline (Ange) (1 folder)
 May 17, 1888 - December 1, 1890
 To Austin, C. D. (?), June, 1, 1861 (1 item)
 To Austin, Rachael (1 folder)
 January 6 - February 12, 1891
 To Austin, Rosannah (and family) (4 folders)
 n.d. and September 27, 1857 - August 26, 1860
 February 3, 1861 - March 20, 1862
 September 16, 1862 - August 19, 1864
 April 7, 1865 - January 12, 1873

Other

Austin, Angelina (4 items)
 To Mother, 1857 (includes a note from Henry Austin)
 To Brother, August 1868 (to Henry?)
 To Grandma, n.d.
 To Brother and sister, June 30, 1879
 Austin, Calista (?) to Ma, June 12, 1840
 Austin, Charley to Grandmother, n.d.

Box No. Description**Box 1, cont.**

CORRESPONDENCE, cont.

Other, cont.

Austin, Henry

To Mother, n.d. and July 28, 1863 - July 7, 1872

Austin, Jane

To ?, n.d.

To Mother, February 18, 1865

To Sister, April 2, 1865

To Mother, May 7 (?), 1865

To Mother, June 16, 1865

To Mother, February 1, 1866

Austin, Rachael

To Mother, April 18, (?)

Heurlbut (?) M. J.

To Rachael Austin, February 8 and March 15, 1891

Single Letters (1 folder)

From Ayres, T. H. To Mrs. H. J. Austin, March 1, 1891

From (?) Beadle. To Hon. J. A. Williamson, August 1, 1876

From Bennett, Granville. To Hon. J. A. Williamson, August 2, 1876

From Brown, Maggie D.. To Grandma Austin, March 13, 1876

From Cross, Fred J.. To Gen. J. A. Williamson, August 1, 1876

From Norelius, E. To Mrs. H. J. Austin, June 1, 1891

From Shaw, Josie. To Rachael, April 3, 1891

From Unidentified. To "My Dear 'Friend of Everybody,'" n.d.

Box 2

DIARIES

1868

1887

MANUSCRIPTS

Legal Documents

April 1, 1859; Copy, Will of Job Stafford

December 29, 1868; Letter certifying Horace J. Austin's dismissal from membership in St. John's (?), No. 166.

April 15, 1871; Subpoena of Eliza Stafford et al re: will of Job Stafford

November 30, 1874; Certification of Horace J. Austin's election as Member of Council of the Territorial Legislature of the Territory of Dakota

February 4, 1884; Lease, J. Farhinger and H. J. Austin [April, 1885], Lease, J. H. Jones and H. J. Austin

PRINTED MATERIALS

"The Year 1868 from the Diary of Horace J. Austin."

EPHEMERA

Austin, Charley, lock of hair and child's letter

Envelopes (1 folder)