

Missouri State Archives

Finding Aid 133.10

Office of the Adjutant General

Civil War

Claims Commissions

Abstract: Claims Commission Records (1874)

Extent: 42.9 cubic feet (126 Hollinger boxes)

Physical Description: Paper

Location: Missouri State Archives

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Alternative Formats: N/A

Access Restrictions: No special restrictions.

Publication Restrictions: Copyright is in the public domain

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HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Authorized March 19, 1874, the “act to audit and adjust the war debt of the state,” created a commission with two members appointed by the Governor and the acting quartermaster-general as *ex officio* chairman. Their responsibility was to audit irregular and mixed claims of citizens, and pay claims of officers and soldiers that had remained unpaid since the end of the Civil War.

Both citizens and soldiers had “up to the first day of August, 1874” to file a claim or “be forever barred” (Laws, 1874, p. 104).

A certificate of state indebtedness would be issued for all claims allowed by the Commission, but, according to the law the claim would not be payable by the state until the claim was paid by the U.S. government. If the U.S. government did not pay the claim at all, the state was not liable to pay.

Corruption and speculation on the certificates was common over the next few years as Missouri’s representatives attempted to get a bill through Congress to provide payment on the approved claims. By 1876, seven people, including John D. Crafton, the Chairman of the Commission, had been indicted on fraud charges for knowingly approving fraudulent claims and for forging the signature of the Governor on some of the fraudulent claims.

With Congress continuing to refuse to pay the Missouri claims, the Missouri Attorney General filed suit in federal court in an effort to force the jurisdiction to change from Congress to the United States Court of Claims. The United States Supreme Court denied the suit in 1907 and did not authorize the change in jurisdiction, thereby ending Missouri’s effort to receive payment for any of the approved claims.

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Bibliography

Sinisi, Kyle S. *Sacred Debts: State Civil War Claims and American Federalism, 1861-1880*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2003. Print

SERIES

The records are arranged in the following series:

Claims Commission Records

Claims Commission Records, 1874

Extent: 42.9 cubic feet (126 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by county, and then alphabetically by last name.

Scope and Content

Claim records may include claim forms for items seized to support the union war effort, additional affidavits, powers of attorney, and correspondence. The claim form includes detail about the items supplied, date supplied and to whom supplied, along with the claimed value. Soldiers' claims may include requests for back pay or payment for the use of their own horses, wagons, and feed.

Container List

Box	Contents
1	Adair County
2	Andrew County, A – N
3	Andrew County, P – Z
3	Atchison County, A – L
4	Atchison County, M – Y
4	Audrain County, A – C
5	Audrain County, D – H
6	Audrain County, J – Si
7	Audrain County, Sm – W
7	Barry County
7	Barton County, B – H
8	Barton County, K – Y
9	Bates County, A – P
10	Bates County, R – W
10	Benton County, A – H
11	Benton County, I – W
11	Bollinger County
12	Boone County, A – Q
13	Boone County, R – W
13	Buchanan County, A – B
14	Buchanan County, C – F
15	Buchanan County, G – J
16	Buchanan County, K – N
17	Buchanan County, O – T
18	Buchanan County, U – Z
18	Caldwell County, B – C

19	Caldwell County, D – R
20	Caldwell County, S – Z
20	Callaway County, A – Bo
21	Callaway County, Br – C
22	Callaway County, D – G
23	Callaway County, H – K
24	Callaway County, L – O
25	Callaway County, P – S
26	Callaway County, T – Y
26	Camden County
27	Cape Girardeau County
27	Carroll County, A – E
28	Carroll County, F – R
29	Carroll County, S – Z
29	Cass County
29	Cedar County, A – F
30	Cedar County, H – W
30	Chariton County, A
31	Chariton County, B – C
32	Chariton County, D – G
33	Chariton County, H – K
34	Chariton County, L – O
35	Chariton County, P – Sp
36	Chariton County, St – Wil
37	Chariton County, Win – Z
37	Christian County
37	Clark County, A – T
38	Clark County, W
38	Clay County, A – G
39	Clay County, H – R
40	Clay County, S – W
40	Clinton County, A – C
41	Clinton County, D – S
42	Clinton County, T – W
42	Cole County, A – G
43	Cole County, H – T
44	Cole County, U – Z
44	Cooper County, A – C
45	Cooper County, D – J
46	Cooper County, K – P
47	Cooper County, Q – T
48	Cooper County, V – Y
48	Crawford County
48	Dade County, A – F
49	Dade County, G – W

50	Dallas County
50	Daviess county, A - D
51	Daviess County, E - M
52	Daviess County, N - V
53	Daviess County, W - Y
53	Dekalb County
54	Dent County
54	Douglas County
54	Franklin County
55	Gasconade County
55	Gentry County
56	Greene County
56	Grundy County
55	Harrison County, A- R
57	Harrison County, S - W
57	Henry County, A – C
58	Henry County, D – L
59	Henry County, M – V
60	Henry County, W
60	Hickory County
60	Holt County, A – R
61	Holt County, S - W
61	Howard County, A – H
62	Howard County, J – Y
63	Iron County
63	Jackson County
63	Jasper County
63	Jefferson County
64	Johnson County, A – G
65	Johnson County, H – S
66	Johnson County, T - Y
66	Knox County, A – L
67	Knox County, M - W
67	Laclede County
67	Lafayette County
68	Lawrence County
68	Lewis County, A – G
69	Lewis County, H – O
70	Lewis County, P – Y
71	Lincoln County, A- G
72	Lincoln County, H – P
73	Lincoln County, P – W
73	Linn County, A
74	Linn County , B – G
75	Linn County, H – R

76	Linn County, S - W
76	Livingston County
77	Macon County, A – R
78	Macon County, S - W
78	Madison County
78	Maries County
79	Marion County, A – C
80	Marion County, D – G
81	Marion County, H – L
82	Marion County, M – R
83	Marion County, S – Y
83	Mercer County
84	Miller County
85	Moniteau County, A – N
86	Moniteau County, O - W
86	Monroe County, A – Bl
87	Monroe County, Bo – C
88	Monroe County, D – F
89	Monroe County, G - H
90	Monroe County, J – Mc
91	Monroe County, Me – R
92	Monroe County, S – T
93	Monroe County, U - Y
93	Montgomery County, A
94	Montgomery County, B – F
95	Montgomery County, G – O
96	Montgomery County, P – Z
96	Morgan County, A – E
97	Morgan County, F - W
97	New Madrid County
97	Newton County
98	Nodaway County
98	Oregon County
98	Osage County, A – G
99	Osage County, H – Z
99	Ozark County
99	Perry County
100	Pettis County, A – J
101	Pettis County, K – S
102	Pettis County, T - Y
102	Phelps County
102	Pike County, A – D
103	Pike County, E – L
104	Pike County, M – S
105	Pike County, T – Z

105	Platte County, A – L
106	Platte County, M – W
106	Polk County, A – J
107	Polk County, L – Y
107	Pulaski County
107	Putnam County
107	Ralls County, A – B
108	Ralls County, C – L
109	Ralls County, M – Y
110	Randolph County, A – G
111	Randolph County, H – R
112	Randolph County, S – Y
112	Ray County, A – B
113	Ray County, C – G
114	Ray County, H – L
115	Ray County, M – P
116	Ray County, R – Th
117	Ray County, Tr – Y
117	Reynolds County
117	St. Charles County
118	St. Clair County, A – C
119	St. Clair County, D – Ha
120	St. Clair County, He – Mc
121	St. Clair County, Me – R
122	St. Clair County, S – Y
122	St. Francois County
123	St. Louis County
123	Saline County, A – B
124	Saline County, C – W
125	Schuyler County
125	Scotland County
125	Scott County
125	Shannon County
126	Shelby County
126	Stoddard County
126	Sullivan County
126	Taney County
126	Vernon County
126	Warren County
126	Washington County
126	Webster County
126	Out of State Claims