



STATE OF MISSOURI  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE  
RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
AND  
ARCHIVES SERVICE

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**MISSOURI'S PUBLIC DOMAIN:  
UNITED STATES LAND SALES,  
1818-1922**

**VOL. II, No. 3  
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JAMES C. KIRKPATRICK  
SECRETARY OF STATE

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**ARCHIVES INFORMATION BULLETIN**

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SECRETARY OF STATE  
STATE OF MISSOURI  
JEFFERSON CITY  
65101

JAMES C. KIRKPATRICK

My Fellow Missourians:

It is a pleasure to present to you another issue of the Archives Information Bulletin.

Now in its second year of publication, the Archives Information Bulletin continues to be a widely available and up to date source of archival information. The Bulletin was designed to make available to as many Missourians as possible information on the holdings of the State Archives.

We believe this goal has been accomplished. Without visiting Jefferson City, it is now possible to quickly discover the wide range of historical materials permanently preserved in the Archives.

In our continuing labors to serve the citizens of Missouri, I remain

Cordially

*James C. Kirkpatrick*

Secretary of State

## PREFACE

Since its inception in 1965, the Missouri State Archives has accessioned and arranged more than 9,000 cubic feet of permanent state records. During the same period, guides to the archival holdings were published in 1970 and 1975 to aid potential researchers.

Now in its second year of publication, the goal of the *Bulletin* remains to provide more immediate and more complete information on the records held by the Archives. The purpose of the *Bulletin* is to provide a more detailed description of the various records held than is possible in the periodic guides. The *Bulletins* will allow a flexibility previously unobtainable including possible subject guides to records.

The *Archives Information Bulletin* represents the first phase in an expanded descriptive program to provide greater access to the records held by the Missouri State Archives.

Gary W. Beahan  
State Archivist

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION TITLE	PAGE
INTRODUCTION .....	1
FRENCH AND SPANISH LAND POLICY .....	4
FEDERAL LAND POLICY .....	8
Credit Sales .....	8
Preemption .....	10
Military Bounties .....	14
Graduation Act of 1854 .....	14
Homestead Act of 1862 .....	15
RECORD OF LAND SALES IN MISSOURI .....	16
St. Louis Land Office Sales .....	16
Franklin Land Office Sales .....	17
Jackson Land Office Sales .....	17
Lexington Land Office Sales .....	19
Palmyra Land Office Sales .....	20
Fayette Land Office Sales .....	21
Springfield Land Office Sales .....	22
Plattsburg Land Office Sales .....	24
Clinton Land Office Sales .....	25
Milan Land Office Sales .....	26
Warsaw Land Office Sales .....	26
Boonville Land Office Sales .....	26
Calhoun Land Office Sales .....	27
Ironton Land Office Sales .....	27
REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE CONSOLIDATION AND RELOCATION OF LAND OFFICES .....	29
LIST OF MAPS	
District of Louisiana, 1804 .....	3
Territory of Missouri, 1812 .....	5
Territory of Missouri, 1813 .....	7
Territory of Missouri, 1816 .....	9
Territory of Missouri, 1819 .....	11
State of Missouri, 1821 .....	13
Land Office Districts:	
1818 .....	19
1823 .....	20
1824 .....	21
1826 .....	22
1834 .....	24
1842 .....	25
1849 .....	27
1880 .....	28



## INTRODUCTION

The abstracts of United States Land Sales in Missouri comprise one of the more utilized series of records available at the State Archives. Spanning the period from 1818 to 1922, the records provide an excellent means of analyzing the patterns of settlement within the state, and are of equal value to the genealogist in locating that elusive ancestor. The purpose of this *Bulletin* is to encourage greater use of these records both through a better understanding of the historical context leading to their creation, and a detailed examination of the nature and extent of the records available.

The origin of the abstracts of sale is somewhat unique as is their relationship to similar records in the National Archives and the Bureau of Land Management. The records comprise a part of Record Group 27, Records of the Land Department, Office of Secretary of State.

Under the ordinance declaring the assent of the people of the State of Missouri to the conditions and provisions of Congress for the admission to the Union, the proviso declared "that every and each tract of land sold by the United States . . . shall remain exempt from any tax laid by order, or under the authority of the State, whether for State, county or township, or any other purpose whatever, for the term of five years from and after the respective day of sale thereof; and that the bounty lands granted, or hereafter to be granted for military services during the late war, shall, while they continue to be held by the patentees or their heirs, remain exempt as aforesaid from taxation for the term of three years from and after the date of the patents respectively . . . ." The initial loss of tax revenue to the state by this provision was partially offset by the Three-percent Fund whereby Missouri received three percent of the total of sales within the state each year. However under an Act of the Legislature approved March 9, 1835, the Auditor of Public Accounts was to "procure from the proper officers an abstract and description of all taxable land within the state . . . and, annually here after, abstracts and descriptions of such lands as shall become taxable." Further, the Auditor was "to transmit to the clerk of each county court, annually, a descriptive list of all taxable lands in such county."

With the creation of the office of state Register of Lands on February 3, 1841, the Auditor was required to "deliver to the Register all . . . books, records, documents and papers that properly belong to the Land Department and are not necessary to the proper discharge of the appropriate duties of the Auditor of public accounts." Thus it became the duty of the Register to procure descriptive lists of land sales and submit lists of taxable property to each county. A difficult, time-consuming job, the Register was further burdened by the Act of Congress of June 10, 1852, which allowed land to be taxed from date of entry. The tedious procedure involved was noted in the 1853 Report of the Register of Lands: "I now come to the increase of duties in this office, and the first subject which I shall notice in order, is the land sold at the different U.S. land offices, which under the system of this office, are handled in the following order: As the entries are reported to this office in a promiscuous manner, without

reference to the county where situated, they are first recorded in like manner. 2nd. They are located from the map placing each tract in its respective county. 3rd. A copy of each county as located is made for the use of the office. 4th. A copy is transcribed and mailed to each county for taxation." This procedure remained largely unchanged until the office of Register of Lands was abolished in 1891 and the functions transferred to the Office of Secretary of State as the Land Department of that office.

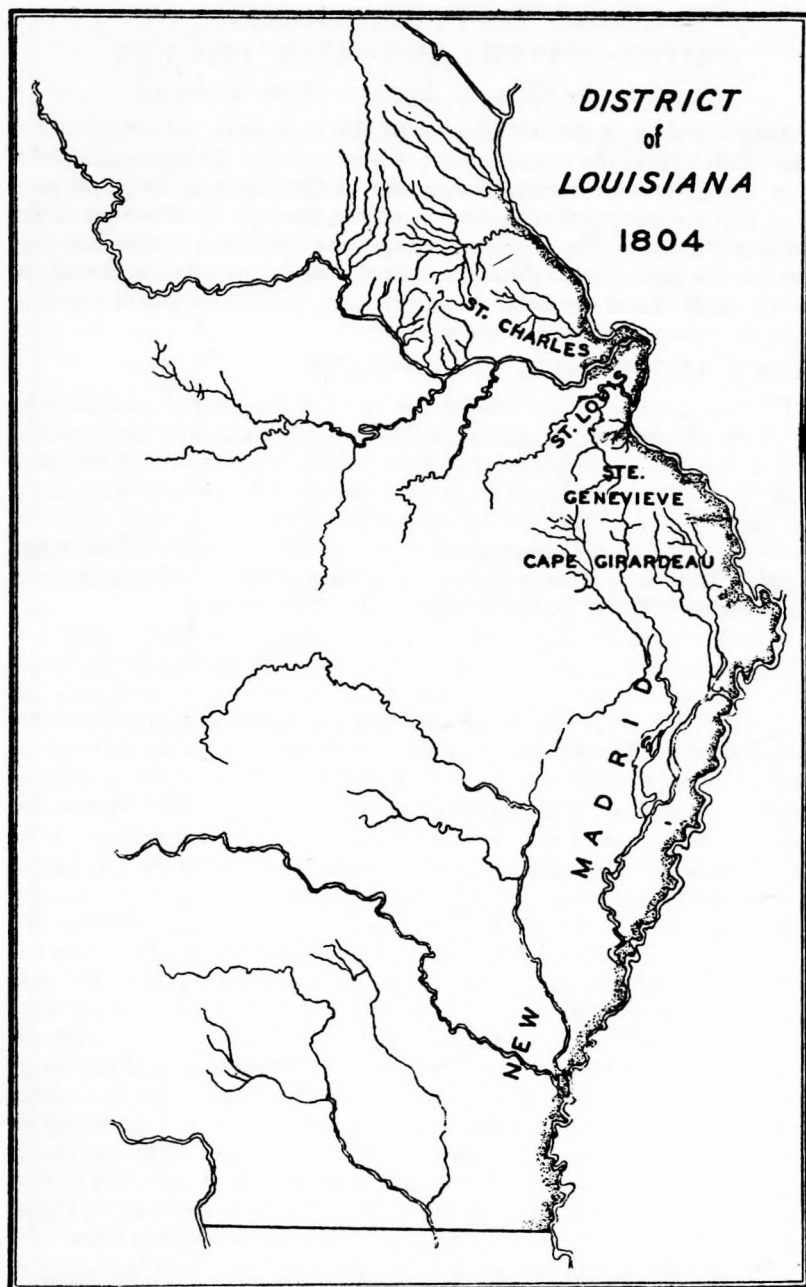
Under the land clerk of the Secretary of State's Office, the initial office copy was dispensed with and the original land office lists bound together. With the closing of the last land office at Springfield on May 24, 1922, this function of the Land Department ceased.

As the abstracts of sale were intended only for taxation purposes they lack the detail found on the original land office registers and tract books in the National Archives and the Bureau of Land Management. For example, price paid and entries under the Graduation Act are not included in the copies submitted to the State of Missouri. Researchers should note this difference and if their projects require the original data, should utilize the records at the National Archives and Bureau of Land Management. Only the Missouri abstracts have been indexed by name of the purchaser.

Reference inquiries by mail are limited to one entry each for no more than two different individuals per request. There is no limit on the number of requests. Please use the request form provided by the Archives. There is no charge.

We hope this *Bulletin* will assist those interested in the disposal of the Public Domain in Missouri. As an aid to the researcher, selected maps of Missouri and the land office districts have been included.

Gary W. Beahan  
State Archivist



Map by V. D. Neff, from original supplied by Floyd C. Shoemaker.

The five districts shown on this map were the five Spanish districts of Upper Louisiana at the time the United States assumed control on March 10, 1804. They were retained as the administrative divisions when the area was organized as the District of Louisiana by Act of Congress of March 26, 1804.

## MISSOURI'S PUBLIC DOMAIN: UNITED STATES LAND SALES, 1818-1922

*Compiled by Gary W. Beahan, State Archivist*

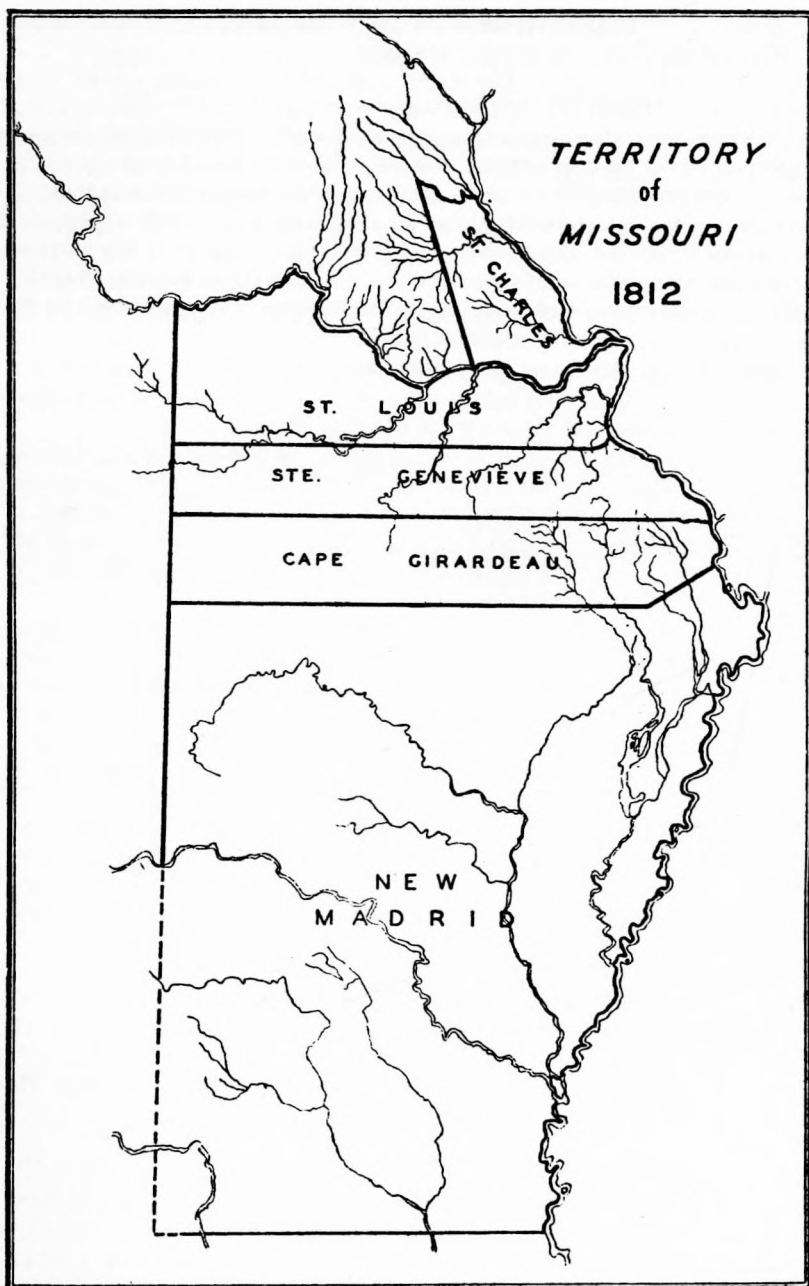
Authorized by an Act of Congress of March 3, 1811, the actual sale of public lands within the present State of Missouri did not begin until 1818 due to the protracted struggle over the confirmation of Spanish land claims, and the concomitant delay in public surveys. Created out of the Louisiana Purchase, the area now comprising the State of Missouri was subject to the laws of both France and Spain during its colonial period. To properly understand the delay in public sales, a brief review of the land policies of both governments is necessary.

### FRENCH AND SPANISH LAND POLICY

Prior to the Treaty of Fontainbleau in 1762 whereby all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi including the city and island of New Orleans was ceded to Spain, France had exercised jurisdiction over this vast territory dating from 1682 when La Salle took possession in the name of King Louis XIV. Spain failed to take formal possession of Louisiana until 1769, but exercised control over the acquired territory until October 1, 1800 when she ceded it back to France under the Treaty of San Ildefonso. In turn, France ceded it to the United States on April 30, 1803.

During the period of French and Spanish control, extensive grants of land were made to settlers in Upper Louisiana. Donations of land were given freely by both governments. Neither France nor Spain sold land, nor was it taxed. The procedure for obtaining a grant or concession of land was relatively simple. The prospective grantee first sought permission from the commandant of the district where he wished to settle. He then petitioned the local commandant stating his circumstances, the size of his family, the amount of land desired and why he wanted a grant. If approved by the commandant, he forwarded it with his recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor for his approval. Upon the approval of the Lieutenant Governor, a concession was issued for the land as described in the petition. The commandant was then directed to have the surveyor mark off the land and place the petitioner in possession. This procedure provided the settler with a concession, or incomplete title to the land. Generally concessions were classed as either general or special. The latter set forth the metes and bounds of the grant while the former specified only that the quantity would be located at a later date. This was termed a "floating" claim and caused innumerable problems for those desiring confirmation after the transfer.

If the settler desired a complete title, his concession had to be sanctioned by the governor general and later the royal intendant in New Orleans. No more than eighteen complete titles were granted in Upper Louisiana. Complete titles were not a necessity as incomplete titles were sufficient to hold, sell, or bequeath land. The ease with which land could be granted encouraged a rush of speculators prior to the transfer. Expectations were buoyed by Article 3 of the Treaty of Cession which stated that "the inhabitants of the ceded territory . . . shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property and



Map by V. D. Neff, from original supplied by Floyd C. Shoemaker.

The District of Louisiana became the Territory of Louisiana by Act of Congress of March 3, 1805, effective July 4, 1805. By Act of Congress of June 4, 1812, effective December 7, 1812, the Territory of Louisiana was named the Territory of Missouri. By proclamation of Governor Benjamin Howard, issued October 1, 1812, the territory was divided into five counties and their boundaries were defined as shown above.

religion . . . ” Thus many believed their claims would be expeditiously confirmed by United States government.

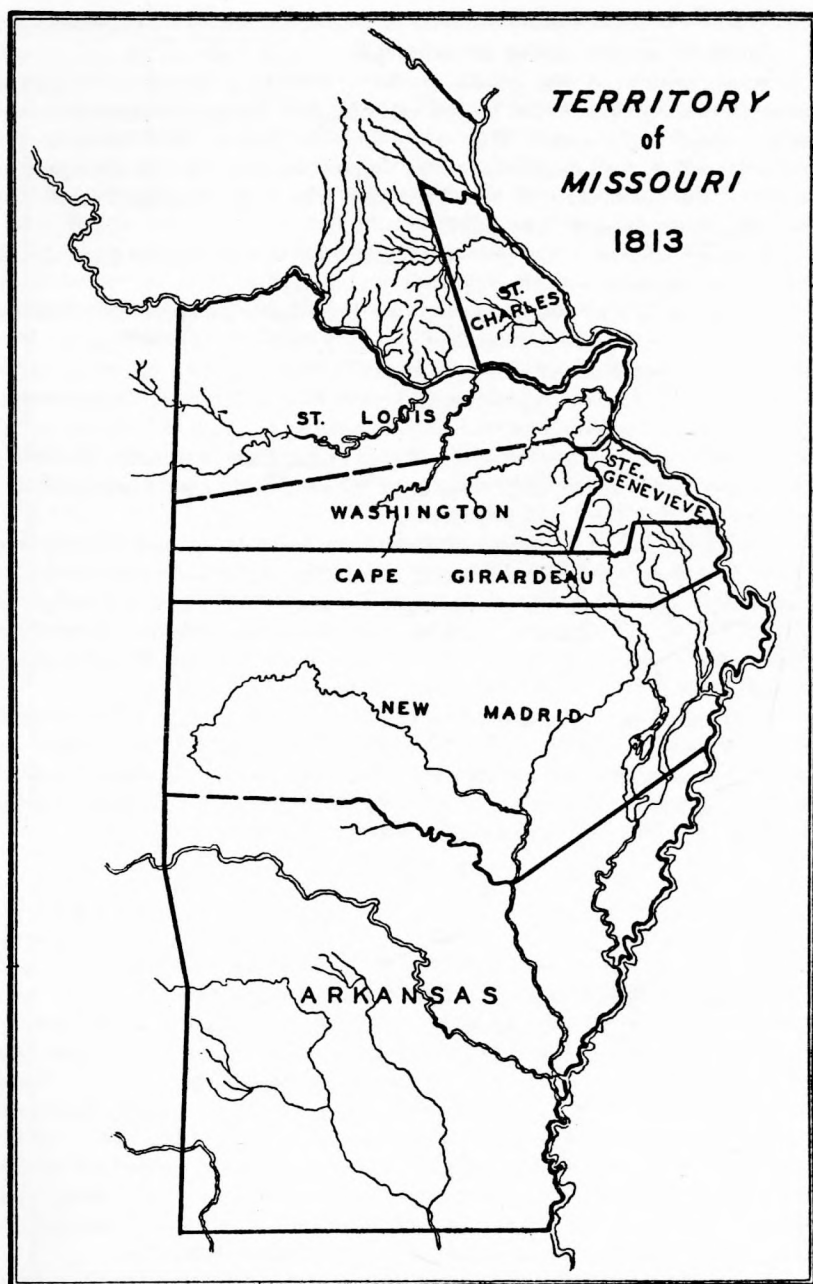
When Major Amos Stoddard took formal possession of Upper Louisiana on March 10, 1804, the enormous task of confirming legitimate claims and protecting against fraudulent speculation confronted Congress. Confused by a lack of official records, the adjudication of claims was further complicated by a lack of surveys and the mass of incomplete titles. Surveys were not deemed indispensable, and until 1795, the Spanish government lacked any provision for the surveying of lands in Upper Louisiana. Congress was faced with “ . . . complete and incomplete titles, titles at various stages of completion, Indian titles, squatters with no titles whatsoever, special concessions and general concessions . . . and concessions to land in amounts far larger than Spanish rules allowed . . . ” Erasure of names and insertion of others on concessions and a variety of antedated claims were commonplace.

In view of the complexities surrounding the private claims, claimants were requested to exhibit evidence of their titles before government officials charged with confirming all claims. A time consuming task, this effort dominated the politics of the territorial period and continued until well after the Civil War as Congress approved act after act “for the final adjustment” of land claims in Louisiana.

Under an Act of Congress approved February 28, 1806, the powers vested by law in the surveyor-general were extended over all public lands of the United States in the Territory of Louisiana. Although Silas Bent was appointed principal deputy surveyor for the territory in 1807, he was limited by the provision of the act to surveying tracts of private claims as directed by the Board of Land Commissioners. The Act of June 13, 1812, provided for surveys of public lands in Missouri at the direction of the President; however, the surveys of confirmed and recorded claims continued unabated. Problems were numerous as claimants’ plats of survey could not be connected to avoid interference without running the township and range lines required under the rectangular survey system of United States. With the appointment of William Rector in 1813 as Surveyor-General for Illinois and Missouri, several township and range lines were run, and in 1815, the Fifth Principal Meridian was established serving as the basic of all future public surveys in Missouri. A final complication occurred in 1815 when Congress passed an act of relief for those whose lands were damaged by the New Madrid earthquake. Those with injured land could relocate a like amount up to 640 acres on the public domain.

In 1817, President Monroe directed that the tract of lands for military bounties in North Missouri should comprise Townships 53-55 in Ranges sixteen to twenty-three inclusive, except lands within these limits lying south of the Missouri River. Thus, total area of 500,000 acres was set aside for veterans of the War of 1812.

Surveys had progressed rapidly between 1813 and 1817, and sales of public land were scheduled to begin in 1818 — fourteen years after the United States took possession of Louisiana.



Map by V. D. Neff, from original supplied by Floyd C. Shoemaker.

The above map shows the seven counties into which the Territory of Missouri was divided in 1813. Washington and Arkansas were created by Acts of the Territorial Legislature approved respectively on August 21 and December 31, 1813.



## FEDERAL LAND POLICY

Contrary to the policy of the French and Spanish governments, Congress considered the public lands primarily a source of revenue. Through revenue generated by the sale of lands, the public debt incurred during the Revolutionary War could be eliminated. With revenue the prime objective, responsibility for the disposition of the public domain was assigned the Secretary of the Treasury where it remained until the creation of the General Land Office in 1812.

Through a series of Congressional Acts beginning with the Land Act of 1796, a federal land system gradually developed.

Under the Act of 1800, the so-called Harrison's Frontier Bill, district land offices were established each with a register and receiver. The register received applications for entries of land, noted the entry on tract and plat books, and made monthly reports to the Treasury Department. The receiver accepted all payments for land and maintained his own set of entries for which payments were received and transmitted to the Treasury Departments. In theory, each acted as check on the other with two complete accounts of all entries and payments.

Under an Act of Congress of March 26, 1804, tracts could be sold in minimum lots of 160 acres. All tracts were offered at public auction, and if unsold were open to "private" entry at the minimum price. Classified as "offered" land, any amount could be entered for cash, script or warrants. Later the distinction between offered and unoffered land would become important under the preemption and homestead acts.

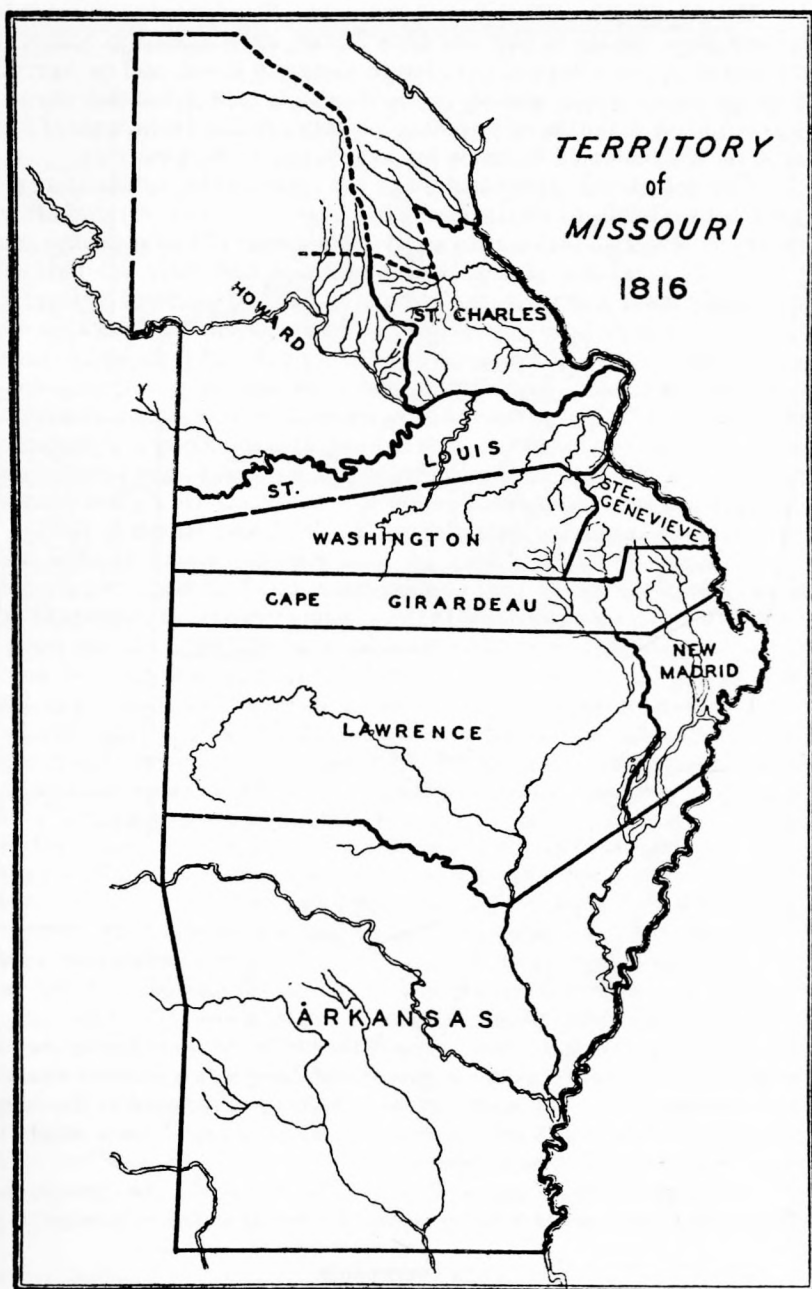
Although a substantial amount of public land legislation was enacted by Congress that affected the operations of the district land offices in Missouri, a complete study of all legislation is not possible. However, a brief analysis of those laws relating directly to the individual purchaser is necessary to place the land sale records in their proper context.

### Credit Sales

Initially, the sale of all public land was conducted under a credit system. A successful bidder at public auction went first to the receiver, paid an initial deposit of one-twentieth of the total purchase price and received a duplicate receipt. The first receipt was presented to the register as proof of payment and in return the buyer received a certificate of purchase. The first installment of one-quarter of the unpaid balance was due within 40 days. The second one-quarter became due in two years and the third and fourth within 3 and 4 years respectively. A rate of 6% interest was levied on the due date of all installments except the first. In the event payments were not made, the land and all payments reverted to the government with the land being auctioned and sold for the amount due. Between 1812 and 1820 numerous Acts of Congress extended credit for the relief of purchasers unable to meet the installment deadlines.

After the final installment was paid along with any interest, a final certificate of purchase was issued by the register. A notice of issuance was forwarded to the General Land Office in Washington where a patent would issue. The register at the appropriate land office would be sent all patents issued to purchasers in his district and was responsible for their delivery.





Map by V. D. Neff, from original supplied by Floyd C. Shoemaker.

The Territory of Missouri included nine counties in 1816, two new counties, Lawrence and Howard, having been created by Acts of the Territorial Legislature. The Act creating Lawrence County was approved on January 15, 1815, and the Act creating Howard County on January 23, 1816.

The credit system soon proved untenable. Many purchasers extended beyond their ability to pay and land offices were unable to collect the amount due. The Crash of 1819 forced Congress to act, and on April 24, 1820, the credit system was abolished. As of July 1, 1820, full cash payment was required on the day of purchase but at the reduced minimum of \$1.25 an acre. Entries could be made for as small as an 80 acre tract.

The cash system eliminated many problems but the outstanding debt from unpaid balances under the credit system remained. A relief act was passed on March 2, 1821 to help assist debtors. All credit purchasers could relinquish a portion of the land purchased and have all payments previously made applied to the remaining land. All accrued interest was forgiven. If one had paid one-quarter of the amount due, he was allowed to pay the balance in 8 annual payments. If one paid  $\frac{1}{2}$  due, he had 6 years to complete payment. If he paid  $\frac{3}{4}$ , he had 4 years to complete. Debts bore 6 percent interest but if payments were made on time, interest was forgiven. If the purchaser completed payments on original purchases by September 30, 1822, without benefit of relinquishment, he was to have a reduction of 37- $\frac{1}{2}$  percent on amount due. Further extensions, each of 2 years duration, were allowed under the Acts of April 20, 1822, and March 3, 1823.

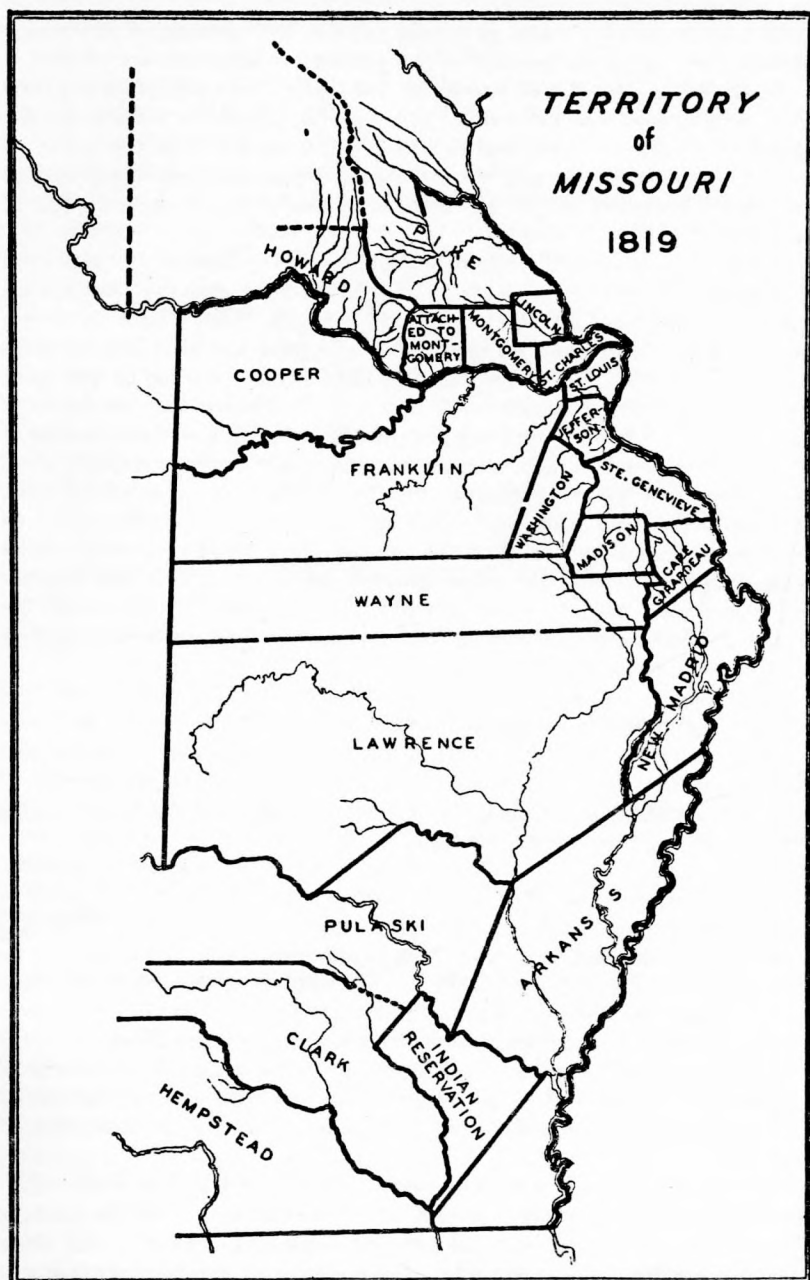
An Act of Congress of May 18, 1824, allowed debtors who had taken advantage of the Act of 1821 or subsequent relief measures to relinquish part of their land provided that the payments already made were sufficient to meet the obligations on the remainder or if each payment was made in full. In the latter case a 37- $\frac{1}{2}$  percent reduction was allowed on the payment. Under the Act of May 4, 1826, purchasers who had renegotiated their purchase contract, but who had lost other tracts through forfeiture could redeem them by payment of the balance due minus 37- $\frac{1}{2}$  percent. Further acts in 1828 and 1832 provided that all purchasers who had lost money on land contracts through forfeited land script (essentially land office money) could apply amounts lost toward any future land purchases. Thus the experiment with the credit system ended in 1832. Eleven relief measures had been passed between 1821 and 1832.

Under the cash sale provision of the Act of April 24, 1820, the procedure remained essentially the same as under the credit system except that full payment was required on the day of purchase. If the land remained unsold after public auction, it was then open to private entry in unlimited amounts at \$1.25 per acre. If the bidder failed to pay on the date of sale, the land reverted to the government and was auctioned again. It was not open to private entry unless no bids were received at the second offering. On lands open to private entry, when two applicants sought the same tract it was sold to highest bidder.

Although settlers opposed a "public auction", the government supported it in hopes of getting a price higher than the minimum.

### **Preemption**

Squatters on the public lands had generally been conceded since the Revolution but with the adoption of a revenue system for the public lands in 1796 such intrusions could no longer be tolerated. However, the problem



Map by V. D. Neff, from original supplied by Floyd C. Shoemaker.

By 1819, the Territory of Missouri had assumed the above aspect, embracing twenty counties. On March 2, 1819, Missouri's present southern boundary was established by Act of Congress, creating the Territory of Arkansas and thus cutting off Missouri a part of Lawrence County, all of the counties of Arkansas, Clark, Hempstead, and Pulaski and the Indian Reservation shown on this map.

was not easily solved and preemption, "the preferential right of a settler on public lands to buy his claim at a reasonable price," developed as a major sectional issue until the passage of the general preemption act of 1841.

In Louisiana, the Act of March 26, 1804 provided a fine of up to \$1000 and imprisonment not to exceed one year for all guilty settlers in the Louisiana Territory, "settlers had long since gotten into the habit of preceeding the surveyor and the proclamation of sale, selecting land as they wished contrary to the intrusion laws, and demanding the right of preemption."

While some preemption rights were extended exclusively to settlers in the Missouri Territory in 1814 and 1816, the first general preemption legislation was approved by Congress on May 29, 1830. Under its terms, every "settler or occupant" on the public lands who had been in possession of and cultivated a part of his claim in 1829 could enter up to 160 acres including any improvements at \$1.25 per acre. Each settler could enter these claims within one year from the date of enactment without having to bid for them at auction. However, entry and payment were required before public sale and any assignments prior to the issuance of a patent were declared to be null and void. This act did not allow preemption on unsurveyed lands. Section 2 of the act did allow rival claimants whose improvements were on the same quarter section to divide the quarter section and take "floats" entitling each to an additional half-quarter (80 acres) in the district. Affidavits were required of all claimants stating evidence in support of their claims.

Under an Act of Congress of April 5, 1832 the smallest unit of land that could be purchased was reduced to forty (40) acres, and eighty (80) acre preemptions were extended to all "actual settlers being house-keepers upon the public land," provided entry was made within six months of passage of legislation. Affidavits were required of the purchaser as to his intent to use the land for cultivation. The act did not, however, specify on what date the settlers had to have occupied the land in order to qualify.

The Act of July 14, 1832 extended preemption rights to occupants or settlers who were entitled to such rights under the law of 1830 but who were unable to make proof in the time specified.

In 1834 Congress reenacted the Act of 1830 and extended its provisions for two years. Settlers occupying land in 1833 were entitled to enter a quarter section where improvements had been made at \$1.25 an acre prior to public auction. Further legislation in 1838 allowed the right of preemption to every settler who was the head of a family or 21 years of age and in possession by personal residence on the public lands at the time of passage.

An Act of Congress of September 4, 1841 (Benton's "Log Cabin Bill") had far-reaching effects for preemption claimants and for the State of Missouri. Settlers were allowed preemption rights on up to 160 acres provided they had inhabited and improved the land, erected a dwelling on it and paid the required \$1.25 per acre. Those eligible for preemption included heads of families, widows or single men over 21 years who were either citizens or whom had filed a declaration of intent to acquire citizenship. Those owning 320 acres or who had quit residence on their own



Map by V. D. Neff, from original supplied by Floyd C. Shoemaker.

This is how Missouri looked when admitted to statehood in 1821. There were twenty-five counties, most of which have since been subdivided to make up the present 114 counties, which, with the city of St. Louis, also a separate county, make up the Missouri of today. Only the Platte Purchase, embracing the present counties of Atchison, Nodaway, Holt, Andrew, Buchanan, and Platte, has been added to the state since that time.

land to reside on public land in the same state or territory were ineligible. Each settler was entitled to a single preemption under this act. Settlers on unoffered land were required to prove up ("proof that settlement and inhabitation carried out as prescribed by law.") and pay for the land at the opening of the public sale. Settlers on previously offered land were required to file declaratory statements either within three (3) months of passage of the act or within thirty (30) days after settlement indicating their intent to preempt their tracts and within twelve (12) months prove up and pay for the land. The Act of 1841 excluded settlement prior to the act, limited preemption to surveyed lands and was not extended to the purchasers of forty (40) acre tracts. The same act provided for the granting of 500,000 acres of land to each of several states, including Missouri, to be

used to finance internal improvements. State agents were appointed in Missouri to select tracts and report selections to the proper land office for removal from sale. The lands selected by the state often came into conflict with the preemption claims of settlers. It was not until 1862 that the right of preemption was extended to settlers on unsurveyed land in all states and territories. In 1891 the preemption act was repealed.

### **Military Bounties**

The first of a series of acts resulting from the Mexican War was passed on February 11, 1847. This act granted military bounty warrants for 160 acres but was restricted to noncommissioned officers and privates who had served at least one year in the Mexican War.

Unlike the warrants issued for service in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, they were not limited to any specific bounty area but could be used to acquire any lands open to private entry. In addition the warrants were not divisible, that is, if a veteran selected a fractional tract of 135 acres, the entire 160 acre entitlement had to be surrendered.

Acts approved September 28, 1850, March 22, 1852, and March 3, 1855, extended the provisions of the original act and allowed bounty grants to any veteran or his heirs who had served a minimum of fourteen days in any war since 1790. These warrants were assignable to others.

### **Graduation Act of 1854**

The Graduation Act of August 3, 1854 reduced the price on land which had been available for sale for ten or more years except mineral land and lands reserved for railroads and canals. Land was reduced in price in proportion to the length of time it had remained on the market unsold:

TIME ON MARKET	PRICE PER ACRE
10-15 yrs.	\$1.00
15-20 yrs.	.75
20-25 yrs.	.50
25-30 yrs.	.25
30 yrs.	.12½ (1 bit)

The act took effect from the date of passage. Settlers could preempt the land on which they had settled, and if they had resided on the land for a time and not purchased it before it was entitled to a further reduction they could file a declaratory statement and take up to eleven (11) months to pay. Each purchaser was required to make an affidavit that the land was intended for his own use or for use of an adjoining farm owned by him and that he had not acquired more than 320 acres under the act.

MISSOURI'S GRADUATION ENTRIES TO 1862		
Acreage Available	Acreage Entered	Percentage Entered
13,850,020	8,897,714	64%



### The Homestead Act

The Homestead Act of May 20, 1862 granted to every citizen and to those who had declared their intentions to become such, the right to a homestead on surveyed lands. Individual entries were limited to a maximum of one quarter section, of 160 acres, at \$1.25 per acre, any organized district embracing the surveyed public lands. Upon application for homestead, the party was required to make an affidavit before the register or receiver of the land office that he was over the age of twenty-one, or head of a family; that he was a citizen of the United States, or had declared his intention to become such; and that the entry was made for his exclusive use and benefit and for actual settlement and cultivation. For homestead entries in Missouri the following fees were required:

ACRES	PRICE PER ACRE	COMMISSIONS		FEES	TOTAL FEES AND COMMISSIONS
		Payable when entry is made.	Payable when certificate issues.	Payable when entry is made.	
160	\$1.25	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$10.00	\$18.00
80	1.25	2.00	2.00	5.00	9.00
40	1.25	1.00	1.00	5.00	7.00
80	2.50	4.00	4.00	10.00	18.00
40	2.50	2.00	2.00	5.00	9.00

NOTE - Where entries are made on \$2.50 lands by officers, soldiers, and sailors, under the act of 15th July, 1870, double the amount of the above rates were paid; that is, for 160 acres of \$2.50, \$8.00 at the date of entry, and \$8.00 upon proving up.

Upon payment of the above fees and commissions, the receiver issued a receipt, furnished the applicant with a duplicate receipt, logged the entry and reported same to the General Land Office. The settler was allowed six months after the original application before he was required to reside on the land. He was required by law to settle and cultivate the land entered for a continuous period of five years and at the expiration of that time, or within two years thereafter, upon proper proof to the satisfaction of the land officers, and payment to the receiver, the register would issue a final certificate and make returns to the General Land Office from which a patent or complete title for the homestead would be issued.

If the homestead settler did not wish to remain on his tract for five years, he could pay for it with cash or warrants and upon making proof of settlement and cultivation for a period not less than six months from the date of entry to the time of payment would be granted a patent.

After 1872, Civil War veterans were permitted to deduct time spent in military service from the homestead requirement, but had to reside on the land a minimum of one full year.

All railroad lands, state lands and Indian land was closed to homesteading and cash sales continued. Homesteads were not allowed on unsurveyed land until 1880.

In addition to the federal legislation enacted on behalf of the individual purchaser of public land, a variety of other acts indirectly affected the lands available for purchase. The donation of swamp lands to the various states in 1850 and the several railroad land grants had the largest impact. Under these grants, public lands in Missouri were excluded from sale for the use of the state and the railroads. Of less impact were the donations to the State of Missouri upon admission to the union on August 10, 1821. Under the provisions of admission section 16 in each township was reserved to the state for the use of schools, twelve salt springs with six sections of land adjoining each were reserved for the use of the state, four sections of land were granted the state for a permanent seat of government, and thirty-six sections or one entire township was reserved for the use of a seminary of learning. The State of Missouri later patented the majority of this land to individual purchasers.

## **RECORD OF LAND SALES IN MISSOURI**

The abstract of Missouri land sales consist of twenty-six bound volumes and one unbound volume dating from 1818 to 1922. The sales of each office were bound together chronologically under the direction of the Historical Records Survey in 1940. Due to the complexity of describing the records on a volume by volume basis, the sales have been arranged first by land office and thereunder chronologically by date of sale with reference to volume and page number where recorded. Some gaps do exist in the records and are so noted. Each entry gives the following information: name of purchaser, date of purchase (in some instances only the year is given), land office, legal description (e.g. NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$  of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ), location (section, township, range), acreage, and type of entry (cash, homestead, or bounty warrant). As the abstracts are copies of entries provided the State of Missouri for taxation purposes, they differ from the records found in the National Archives and Bureau of Land Management with respect to the amount of detail. For example, price paid is not indicated.

To properly utilize the records, the researcher must have access to a map of Missouri showing township and range line in order to locate the county where the land is situated. Maps are available at the Archives. Individual name indexes are available for each of the twenty-six bound volumes.

### **St. Louis Office**

Authorized by Act of Congress on March 3, 1811, sales were not proclaimed to begin until Monday, August 3, 1818 when 5,736,960 acres were offered for sale. However, the first recorded sale actually occurred on July 13, 1818 when one Samuel Cantley entered 160 acres. The St. Louis and Franklin offices were the only ones to operate under the credit system. The office was removed to Boonville, September 1, 1861.



Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
13 JUL 1818-31 DEC 1827	1	1-67
3 JAN 1828-30 DEC 1830	2	98-111
1 JAN 1831-1 JAN 1836	3	138-214; 416-440
2 JAN 1836-1 FEB 1839	5	9-94; 375-433; 599-633
2 FEB 1839-31 JAN 1842	6	100-132; 297-309; 421-433
1 FEB 1842-28 FEB 1845	7	14-22; 53-61; 289-297
1 MAR 1845-28 FEB 1847	7	368-381; 419-427
1 MAR 1847-28 FEB 1848	8	65-88
1 MAR 1848-28 FEB 1850	9	19-38; 287-311
1 MAR 1850-28 FEB 1851	18	57-83
1 MAR 1851-28 FEB 1852	14	254-306
1 MAR 1852-10 JUN 1852	15	1-14
10 JUN 1852-15 DEC 1852	8	89-110
16 DEC 1852-15 NOV 1854	9	38-74; 312-405
15 NOV 1854-1 NOV 1855	11	367-486
	12	1-67
1 NOV 1855-15 NOV 1856	14	306-351
15 NOV 1856-15 NOV 1857	15	15-65
16 NOV 1857-15 NOV 1858	17	243-256
16 NOV 1858-15 NOV 1860	19	80-95; 232-234

NOTE: No record of sales after November 15, 1860.

### Franklin Office

Authorized by an Act of Congress on February 17, 1818, sales were initially proclaimed for September 7, 1818, but were delayed until February 8, 1819. Initial sales were under the credit system. This office was relocated to Fayette on July 5, 1832.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
8 FEB 1819-31 DEC 1826	2	NO RECORD
1 JAN 1827-31 DEC 1830		1-33

NOTE: Sales after December 31, 1830 are included in the records of the Fayette office.

### Jackson Office

Authorized by an Act of Congress on February 17, 1818, sales were proclaimed to begin on September 2, 1820, but due to lagging surveys did not occur until February 5, 1821. The Jackson office operated until July 8, 1861 when it was relocated to Ironton.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
5 FEB 1821-30 DEC 1826	2	NO RECORD
31 DEC 1826-1 JAN 1834		72-75; 166-178
3 JAN 1834-26 NOV 1834		235-242
27 NOV 1834-31 DEC 1835	3	NO RECORD
1 JAN 1836-1 FEB 1837		496-561
2 FEB 1837-1 FEB 1840		247-286; 635-652; 709-738
1 FEB 1840-31 JAN 1842		406-419; 434-441

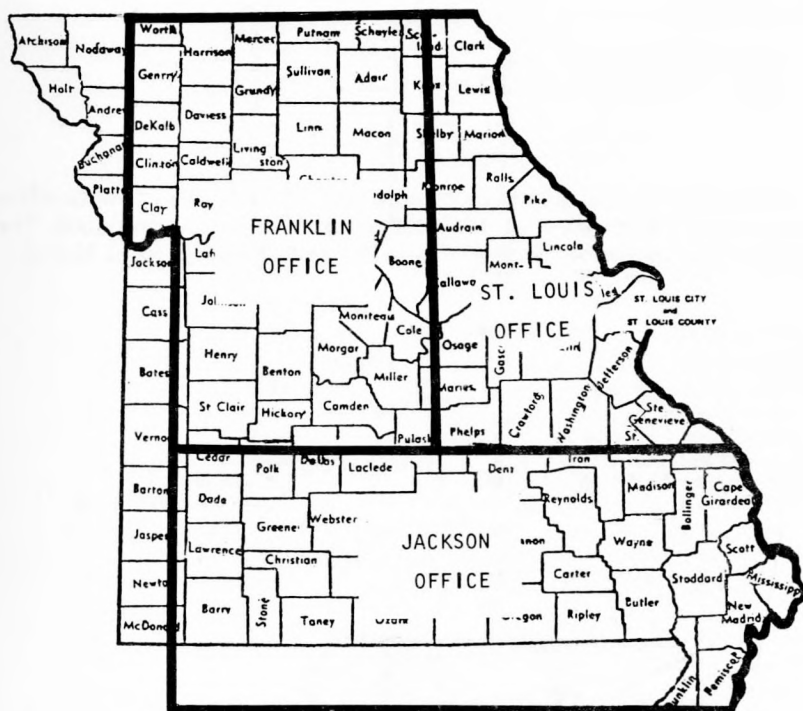
1 FEB 1842-28 FEB 1847	7	9-13; 72-77; 308-317; 388-397; 442-450
1 MAR 1847-28 FEB 1849	8	136-151; 569-590
1 MAR 1849-28 FEB 1850	9	131-150
1 MAR 1850-28 FEB 1851	18	39-56
1 MAR 1851-28 FEB 1852	13	394-414
1 MAR 1852-10 JUN 1852	18	169-350
10 JUN 1852-31 JAN 1853	8	152-170
1 JAN 1853-15 NOV 1853	10	270-319
16 NOV 1853-31 DEC 1853	9	12-18
1 JAN 1854-15 NOV 1854	10	373-448
15 NOV 1854-14 NOV 1855	12	68-236
15 NOV 1855-15 NOV 1856	13	414-495
	14	1-22
15 NOV 1856-15 NOV 1857	18	169-350
	19	1-67
16 NOV 1857-15 NOV 1858	17	481-498
	18	351-495
16 NOV 1858-15 NOV 1859	NO RECORD	
16 NOV 1859-15 NOV 1860	19	235-285
16 NOV 1860-30 JUN 1861	19	470-493

NOTE: No record of sales after November 15, 1860. Sales for March 1-June 10, 1852 and November 15, 1856-November 15, 1857 were recorded together and cannot be distinguished.

#### DISTRICT LAND OFFICES IN MISSOURI

Location	When established	Date discontinued or removed
St. Louis	Act March 3, 1811	To Boonville, September 1, 1861
Franklin	Act February 17, 1818	To Fayette, July 5, 1832
Jackson	Act February 17, 1818	To Ironton, July 8, 1861
Lexington	Act March 3, 1823	To Clinton, July 3, 1843
Palmyra	Act May 26, 1824	To Boonville, August 24, 1858
Fayette	July 5, 1832	To Boonville, May 18, 1857
Springfield	Act June 26, 1834	To Boonville, March 25, 1863; reestablished May 19, 1866 and closed May 24, 1922
Plattsburg	Act August 29, 1842	To Boonville, March 31, 1859
Clinton	July 3, 1843	To Warsaw, July 18, 1855
Milan	Act February 26, 1849	To Boonville, March 31, 1859
Warsaw	July 18, 1855	To Calhoun, July 26, 1861
Boonville	Act August 1, 1857	To Springfield, June 30, 1905
Calhoun	July 26, 1861	February 12, 1863
Ironton	July 8, 1861	To Springfield, June 30, 1905

Compiled from Annual Reports of General Land Office, 1826-1922



## LAND OFFICE DISTRICTS, 1818

### Lexington Office

Authorized by an Act of Congress approved March 3, 1823, this office began operation on May 17, 1824. On July 3, 1843, the office and records were moved to Clinton.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
17 MAY 1824-14 MAR 1827		NO RECORD
15 MAR 1827-1 JAN 1831	2	76-97
1 JAN 1831-1 JAN 1836	3	1-61; 243-303
2 JAN 1836-1 FEB 1837	4	462-588
	5	1-7
2 FEB 1837-31 JAN 1839	5	287-364; 537-597
1 FEB 1839-31 JAN 1842	6	161-258; 342-385; 483-508
1 FEB 1842-31 JAN 1843	7	31-46

No record of sales after January 31, 1843.

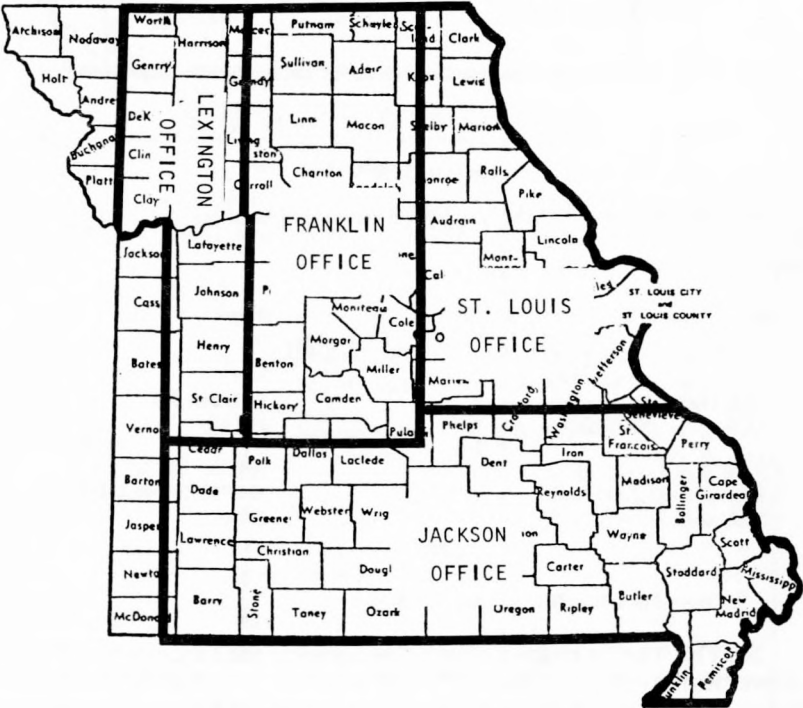
NOTE: The Lexington office also handled the initial sales of the so-called "Kansas School Lands". Under a treaty with the Kansas tribe on December 30, 1825, a portion of ceded lands to be sold for support of Indian schools.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
31 DEC 1826-1 JAN 1831	2	97
1 JAN 1831-1 JAN 1834	3	61
1836	4	8

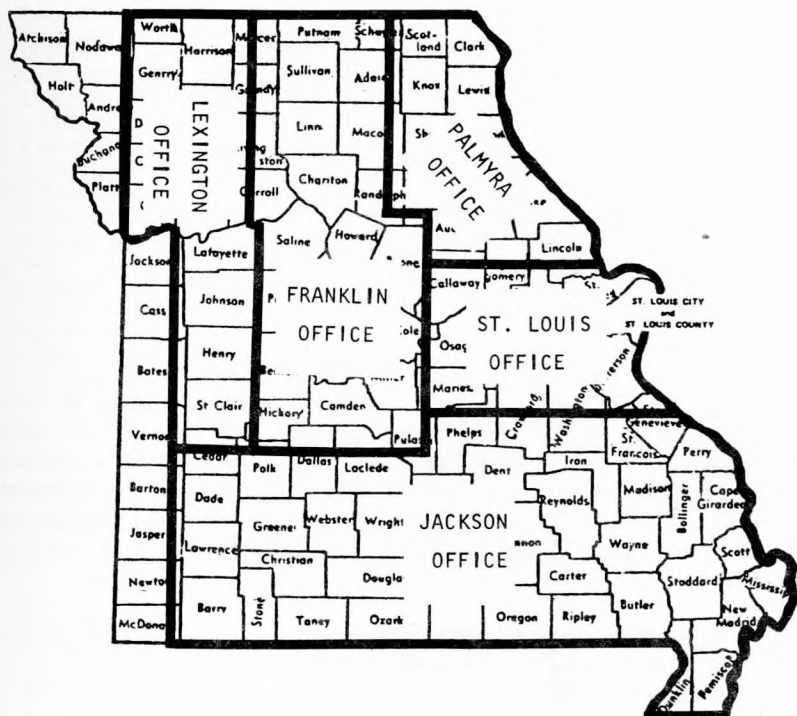
Palmyra Office

Authorized by an Act of Congress on May 26, 1824, the Palmyra office operated until September 14, 1858 when the office was discontinued. The records were moved to the Boonville office and officially closed March 2, 1859.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
?? 1824-31 DEC 1826	NO RECORD	
1 JAN 1827-1 JAN 1834	2	34-71; 111-166
2 JAN 1834-31 DEC 1834	NO RECORD	
1 JAN 1835-1 JAN 1836	3	303-415
2 JAN 1836-1 FEB 1837	4	6-269
2 FEB 1837-1 FEB 1839	5	185-245; 435-475
2 FEB 1839-31 JAN 1842	6	133-160; 386-405; 510-520
1 FEB 1842-28 FEB 1847	7	48-52; 68-71; 318-324; 382-387; 414-418
1 MAR 1847-28 FEB 1849	8	292-300; 449-460
	9	1-11



LAND OFFICE DISTRICTS, 1823



### LAND OFFICE DISTRICTS, 1824

1 MAR 1849-28 FEB 1850	9	151-172
1 MAR 1850-28 FEB 1851	18	10-38
1 MAR 1851-28 FEB 1852	13	304-353
1 MAR 1852-10 JUN 1852	18	150-168
10 JUN 1852-28 FEB 1853	8	460-504
1 MAR 1853-1 JAN 1854	10	320-372
1 JAN 1854-15 NOV 1854	9	173-197
15 NOV 1854-1 NOV 1855	12	290-377
1 NOV 1855-15 NOV 1856	13	353-394
16 NOV 1856-14 NOV 1857	NO RECORD	
15 NOV 1857-14 SEP 1858	17	197-200

### Fayette Office

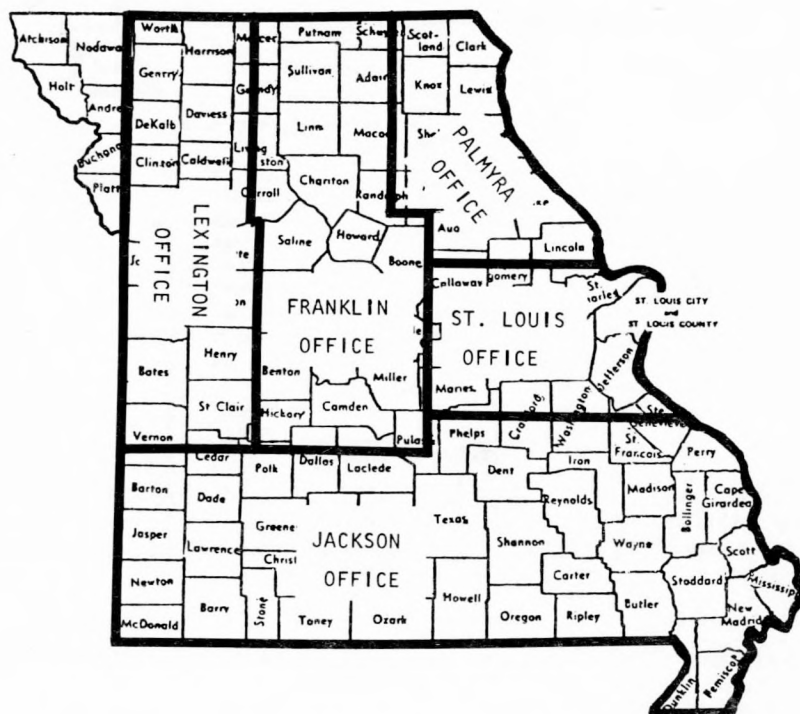
The Franklin office was relocated to Fayette and began operation on July 5, 1832. Sales ceased on November 15, 1857 and the office was removed to Boonville. The Franklin-Fayette records overlap for the period January 1, 1831 to July 5, 1832 and are not separated by office.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
1 JAN 1831-31 DEC 1835	3	64-137; 214-235; 442-491
1-31 JAN 1836	NO RECORD	
1 FEB 1836-1 FEB 1837	4	270-452
2 FEB 1837-1 FEB 1840	5	95-184; 477-533; 739-795
	6	1-47

1 FEB 1840-31 JAN 1842	6	310-341; 461-481
1 FEB 1842-28 FEB 1847	7	23-30; 91-100; 273-288; 352-267; 451-463
1 MAR 1847-28 FEB 1849	8	171-188; 505-531
1 MAR 1849-28 FEB 1850	9	197-212
1 MAR 1850-28 FEB 1851	10	490-498
	18	1-9
1 MAR 1851-28 FEB 1852	13	1-20
1 MAR 1852-10 JUN 1852	NO RECORD	
11 JUN 1852-15 NOV 1853	8	188-192; 531-560
16 NOV 1853-15 NOV 1854	9	212-286
16 NOV 1854-31 OCT 1855	11	85-182
1 NOV 1855-31 OCT 1856	13	23-61
15 NOV 1856-15 NOV 1857	18	103-148

### Springfield Office

Initially authorized by an Act of Congress approved June 26, 1834, sales did not begin until June 13, 1835. The office closed March 25, 1863, but was restored on May 19, 1866 and continued to operate until terminated on May 24, 1922. During the period 1863 to 1866, the records were removed to the Boonville office. On June 30, 1905, the land offices at Boonville and Ironton were removed to Springfield making it the last operating land office in the State of Missouri.



LAND OFFICE DISTRICTS, 1826

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
13 JUN 1835-1 FEB 1837	3	492-495
2 FEB 1837-1 FEB 1839	5	365-374; 653-695
1 FEB 1839-31 JAN 1842	6	48-99; 261-296; 443-459
1 FEB 1842-28 FEB 1846	7	1-8; 62-67; 298-306; 325-332
1 MAR 1846-29 FEB 1848	8	48-64; 248-269
1 MAR 1848-28 FEB 1850		NO RECORD
1 MAR 1850-28 FEB 1851	18	84-102
1 MAR 1851-28 FEB 1852		NO RECORD
1 MAR 1852-10 JUN 1852	15	66-80
10 JUN 1852-6 DEC 1852	8	269-271
6 DEC 1852-15 NOV 1853	8	414-449
16 NOV 1853-31 OCT 1854		NO RECORD
1 NOV 1854-1 NOV 1855	12	237-289
2 NOV 1855-15 NOV 1856	14	351-495
15 NOV 1856-15 NOV 1857	15	80-340
16 NOV 1857-15 NOV 1858	17	256-345
16 NOV 1858-15 NOV 1860	19	95-152; 187-212

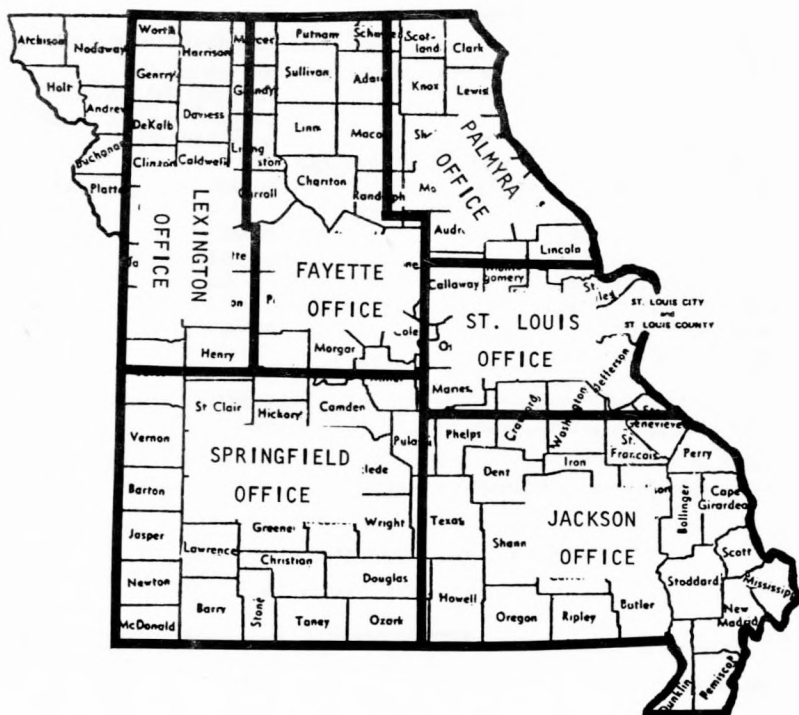
No record of sales after November 15, 1860.

**OFFICE DISCONTINUED MARCH 25, 1863  
AND RESTORED MAY 19, 1866**

No record of sales prior to July 1, 1866.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
1 JUL 1866-30 JUN 1867	20	22-34; 62-68
1 JUL 1867-30 JUN 1868	20	158-196
	24	1-58
1 JUL 1868-30 JUN 1871	20	400-428
1 JUL 1871-30 JUN 1874	20	500-535; 664-713; 734-751
	24	129-223
1 JUL 1874-31 MAY 1887	21	1-66; 95-117; 165-182; 204-210; 217-222; 230-235; 260-267; 292-303; 312-325; 358-372; 389-400; 422-438
	24	225-541
1 JUN 1887-31 MAY 1893	21	464-479; 506-527; 555-586; 617-653; 683-711; 735-757
	23	1-293
1 JUN 1893-31 MAY 1902	23	298-892
1 JUN 1902-31 MAY 1903	22	325-329
	23	894-924
1 JUN 1903-31 MAY 1905		NO RECORD
1 JUN 1905-31 MAY 1918		UNBOUND, PAGES NOT NUMBERED
1 JUN 1918-31 MAY 1919		NO RECORD
1 JUN 1919-31 MAY 1921		UNBOUND, PAGES NOT NUMBERED

No record of sales after May 31, 1921.



## LAND OFFICE DISTRICTS, 1834

### Plattsburg Office

Authorized by an Act of Congress on August 29, 1842, the Plattsburg office was established to handle sales in the Platte Purchase area. Sales began February 1, 1843. The office was removed to Boonville on March 31, 1859.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
1 FEB 1843-28 FEB 1847	7	101-192; 333-351; 428-441
1 MAR 1847-29 FEB 1848	8	193-226
1 MAR 1848-28 FEB 1849	9	75-100
1 MAR 1849-28 FEB 1851	NO RECORD	
1 MAR 1851-28 FEB 1852	14	22-254
1 MAR 1852-10 JUN 1852	16	169-181
10 JUN 1852-31 DEC 1852	8	226-247
31 DEC 1852-15 NOV 1853	9	100-131
16 NOV 1853-15 NOV 1854	NO RECORD	
16 NOV 1854-31 OCT 1855	11	183-366
1 NOV 1855-15 NOV 1856	14	22-254
16 NOV 1856-15 NOV 1857	16	182-392
16 NOV 1857-15 NOV 1858	17	220-243

NOTE: No record of sales after November 15, 1858.



### Clinton Office

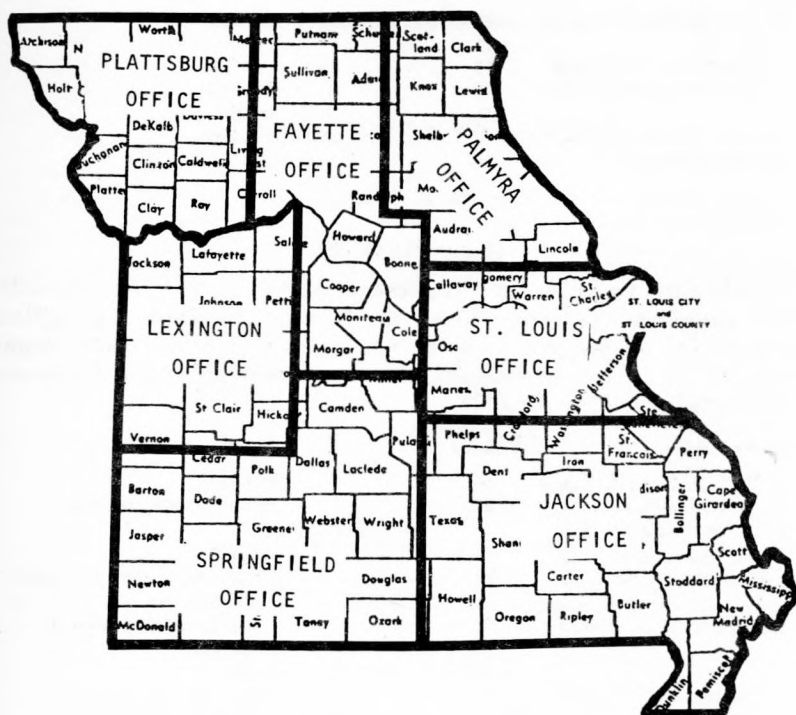
The Lexington office was moved to Clinton on July 3, 1843. The Clinton office operated until July 18, 1855 when it was removed to Warsaw.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
3 JUL 1843-31 JAN 1844	7	78-90
1 FEB 1844-28 FEB 1845	7	193-272
	8	1-37
1 MAR 1845-1 MAR 1846	7	398-413
3 MAR 1846-28 FEB 1849	8	38-47; 111-130; 300-319
1 MAR 1849-28 FEB 1851	9	406-501
1 MAR 1851-10 JUN 1852	13	62-183
	15	340-355
10 JUN 1852-18 JUN 1852	8	130-135
19 JUN 1852-30 JAN 1853	NO RECORD	
31 JAN 1853-15 NOV 1853	8	319-401
16 NOV 1853-15 NOV 1854	10	1-190

Sales after November 15, 1854 are included with those reported by the Warsaw office for the same reporting period: 15 NOV 1854-31 OCT 1855.

### Kansas School Land Sales

14 JUL-1 SEP 1853	8	360
16 NOV 1853-15 NOV 1854	10	13



LAND OFFICE DISTRICTS, 1842

### Milan Office

Authorized by an Act of Congress on February 26, 1849, the Milan office opened April 24, 1849 and was removed to Boonville on March 31, 1859. The records were closed April 8, 1859.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
No record of sales prior to June 10, 1852.		
10 JUN 1852-28 FEB 1853	8	272-291
1 MAR 1853-15 NOV 1853	NO RECORD	
16 NOV 1853-15 NOV 1854		191-269
16 NOV 1854-15 NOV 1855	12	377-489
16 NOV 1855-31 OCT 1856	16	491-499
	17	1-196
15 NOV 1856-15 NOV 1857	16	393-490
16 NOV 1857-15 NOV 1858	17	346-357

No record of sales after November 15, 1858.

### Warsaw Office

The Clinton office was moved to Warsaw on July 18, 1855 and operated there until moved to Calhoun on July 26, 1861. The first sales reported include those made at Clinton during the same reporting period.

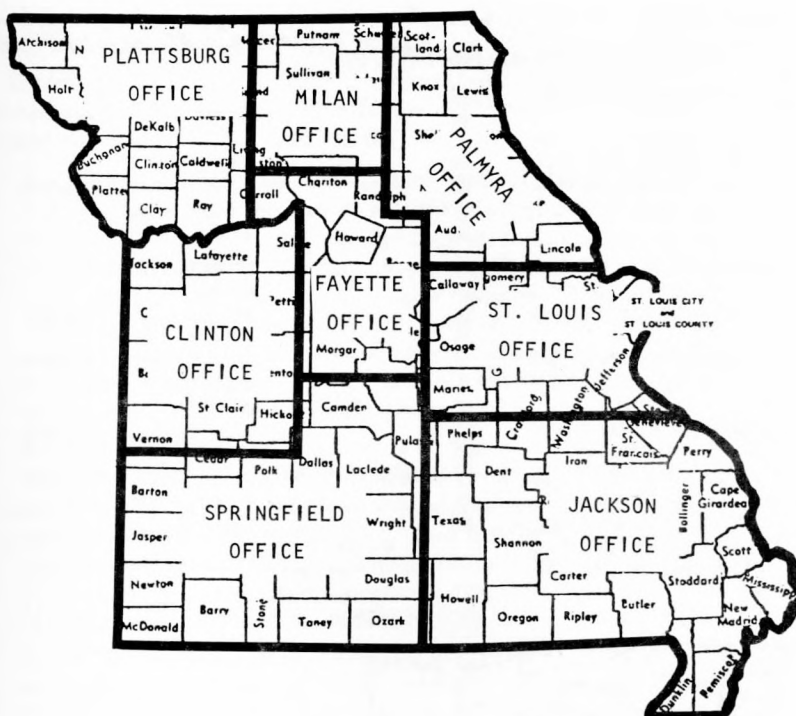
Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
15 NOV 1854-31 OCT 1855	10	449-490
	11	1-84
1 NOV 1855-15 NOV 1856	13	183-303
16 NOV 1856-15 NOV 1857	15	355-499
	16	1-168
16 NOV 1857-15 NOV 1858	17	357-480
16 NOV 1858-15 NOV 1860	19	153-186; 212-227

No record of sales after November 15, 1860.

### Boonville Office

Authorized by an Act of Congress on August 1, 1857, the Boonville office absorbed the land offices at Fayette, Palmyra, Springfield (temporarily), Plattsburg and Milan into its district. Sales began November 16, 1857 and continued until the office was closed and removed to Springfield on June 30, 1905.

Date of Sales	Volume	Pages
16 NOV 1857-15 NOV 1858	17	201-219
16 NOV 1858-30 JUN 1861	19	68-79; 228-232; 286-288
1 JUL 1861-31 JUN 1865	NO RECORD	
1 JUL 1865-30 JUN 1866		289-469
1 JUL 1866-30 JUN 1871		7-22; 34-62; 80-103; 146-158; 197-281; 444-476
1 JUL 1871-30 JUN 1875		558-595; 630-658; 754-775; 792-814
	26	1-156
1 JUL 1875-30 JUN 1881	21	79-84; 119-134; 151-164; 198-203; 211-216; 236-241
	26	162-374



### LAND OFFICE DISTRICTS, 1849

1 JUL 1881-31 MAY 1887	21	268-273; 274-281; 304-311; 340-346; 373-378; 401-409
	26	377-482
1 JUN 1887-31 MAY 1893	21	453-463; 496-505; 528-536; 587-598; 654-664; 712-720
	26	484-594
1 JUN 1893-31 MAY 1903	22	216-320
1 JUN 1903-31 MAY 1905		NO RECORD
1 JUN 1905-30 JUN 1905		UNBOUND, PAGES NOT NUMBERED

### Calhoun Office

The successor office to offices located at Lexington, Clinton and Warsaw, the Clinton office opened July 26, 1861 and the records were closed February 12, 1863. No records of sale were reported from this office.

### Ironton Office

The Jackson office moved to Ironton July 8, 1861 and operated there until June 30, 1905 when it moved to Springfield.



## REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE CONSOLIDATION AND RELOCATION OF LAND OFFICES

District land offices were often relocated, discontinued, divided or annexed to adjacent districts. Briefly the legal provisions regulating those changes were as follows:

1. Whenever the quantity of public land remaining unsold in any land district is reduced to a number of acres less than one hundred thousand, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Interior to discontinue the land office of such district; and if any land in any such district remains unsold at the time of discontinuance of a land office, the same shall be subject to sale at some one of the existing land offices most convenient to the district in which the land office has been discontinued, of which the Secretary of Interior shall give notice. (5 Stat. 385)
2. The Secretary of the Interior may continue any land district in which is situated the seat of government of any one of the States, and may continue the land office in such district, notwithstanding the quantity of land unsold in such district may not amount to one hundred thousand acres, when, in his opinion, such continuance is required by public convenience, or in order to close the land system in such State. (5 Stat. 455)
3. Whenever the cost of collecting the revenue from the sales of the public lands in any land district is as much as one-third of the whole amount of revenue collected in such district, it may be lawful for the President, if, in his opinion, not incompatible with the public interest, to discontinue the land office in such district, and to annex the same to some other adjoining land district. (10 Stat. 189, 194)
4. The President is authorized to change the location of the land offices in the several land districts established by law, and to relocate the same from time to time at such point in the district as he deems expedient. (10 Stat. 204, 244)
5. Upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, approved by the Secretary of the Interior, the President may order the discontinuance of any land office and the transfer of any of its business and archives to any other land office within the same State or Territory. (12 Stat. 409)
6. The President is authorized to change and re-establish the boundaries of land districts, whenever, in his opinion, the public interests will be subserved thereby . . . (14 Stat. 252)
7. In case of the division of existing land districts by the erection of new ones, or by a change of boundaries by the President, all business in such original districts shall be entertained and transacted without prejudice or change, until the offices in the new districts are duly opened by public

announcement under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. All sales or disposals of the public lands heretofore regularly made at any land office, after such lands have been made part of another district by an act of Congress, or by any act of the President, are confirmed, provided the same are free from conflict with prior valid rights. (17 Stat. 192)

## NOTES



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**RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES SERVICE**  
1001 Industrial Drive  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102 Phone: (314) 751-3280

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