



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

AUDITOR Land Department

An Inventory of Its Land Letters

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

Agency:	Minnesota. State Auditor. Land Department.
Series Title:	Land letters,
Dates:	1873-1930.
Abstract:	Correspondence concerning the administration of state-owned lands and their disposition to the public.
Quantity:	12.9 cu. ft. (87 v. in 13 boxes).
Location:	See Detailed Description section for box locations.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

Letters received, and copies of letters sent, by the state auditor as state land commissioner, regarding all aspects of the administration of state-owned (trust fund) lands and their disposition to the public, including purchase, payment, and transfer of title; land taxes and tax forfeitures; mineral leases and royalties; stumpage and logging; railroad rights of way; other uses of state lands; and school district and municipal loans and bonds; as well as general matters regarding lands in the state and the administration of the auditor's office.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RECORDS

These records are organized into the following sections:

- Land Letters Received, 1875-1914. 42 volumes.
- Land Letters Sent, 1873-1914. 35 volumes.
- Land Letters Received and Sent, 1911-1930. 10 volumes.

These three series constitute a single numbered set; volumes 38, 57, and 77 are missing. The volumes are numbered in a general chronological progression, although with several gaps or overlaps in date spans, even where the volume numbers are consecutive.

RELATED MATERIALS

This set precedes and overlaps with the Land Department's Correspondence, 1921-1939 (cataloged separately).

OTHER FINDING AIDS

Each volume is indexed by name of correspondent, usually including county and/or corporate names also.

INDEX TERMS

These records are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

- Ditches--Minnesota.
- Forests and forestry--Minnesota--Valuation.
- Land titles--Registration and transfer--Minnesota.
- Land value taxation--Minnesota.
- Logging--Minnesota.
- Mineral lands--Minnesota.
- Mines and mineral resources--Minnesota.
- Mining leases--Minnesota.
- Municipal finance--Minnesota.
- Public land sales--Minnesota.
- Public lands--Minnesota.
- Public lands--Minnesota--Valuation.
- Railroad land grants--Minnesota.
- Railroads--Right of way--Minnesota.
- School districts--Minnesota--Finance.
- School lands--Minnesota.
- Special funds--Minnesota.
- Swamp lands--Minnesota.
- Tax forfeiture--Minnesota.
- Timber trespass--Minnesota.
- Timber--Minnesota.
- Trust fund lands--Minnesota.

Organizations:

- United States. General Land Office.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the cited section, volume, and page here]. Minnesota. State Auditor: Land Department. Land letters. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:

Accession number(s): none; 982-3

Processing Information:

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

Land Letters Received, 1875-1914. 6.9 cu. ft. (42 volumes).

A bound compilation of letters received by the state auditor's office regarding all aspects of the administration of state (trust fund) lands, including ownership, transfer, purchase, payment, and use of school and swamp lands; land taxes and tax forfeitures; mineral leases, ore shipments, and royalties paid for mining done on state lands; stumpage and logging; railroad rights of way; and school district and municipal loans and bonds, as well as general fiscal matters regarding lands in the state, trust fund and otherwise.

The majority are letters of transmittal or requests for information, although many others are substantial. Correspondents include county auditors and treasurers transmitting purchase and tax data and receipts, as well as members of the general public and officers or representatives of land and logging companies, railroads, law firms, and other organizations.

All volumes are identified on their covers as "Land Letters." Their index headings often refer to them as "Land Dept." or "State Land Office" letters. Other variations in identification are noted on the volume list, below.

Letters within the volumes are bound alphabetically by first letter of county name and/or correspondent's surname, occasionally by date, and several in no readily discernible order. Each volume is internally paginated via a stamped number on each letter or page; however, some letters were skipped. Month and day dates on the spine titles are often inaccurate; where they were determined definitely to be inaccurate, the volume list gives only the inclusive year(s).

Location	Box	
116.F.12.3B	1	[Volume 1B]. 1870-1874. 1 folder. Volume 2. 1875. 5 folders. Bound by correspondent's surname. Volume 3. 1879-1881. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Volume 6. 1881-1894, A-C. Bound in no discernible order. The index contains lesser numbers of correspondent and county names for D-Y. Volume 7. January 1 – June 30, 1882. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Volume 9. July 1 – August 31, 1882. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Volume 10. September 1 – November 30, 1882. Bound by correspondent's or county name.

Location	Box	
116.F.12.4F	2	Volume 12. 1883-1892. Bound in no discernible order. The index identifies it as "Transfer Volume," but there is no obvious difference in content. The majority of index entries are for letters M and Mc. Volume 13. May 1 – September 11 [i.e., September 1], 1884. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Volume 14. September 1, 1884 – March [i.e., April] 9, 1885. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Volume 15. 1884-1890. Bound in no discernible order. The index entries are concentrated in letters S and T. Volume 16. 1884-1902. Bound in partial alphabetical order. The index entries are concentrated in letters F and G. Volume 17. 1885. The index says "Sept. 1, 1884 – 1885," but all or most letters are 1885, primarily May-August.

Location	Box	
116.F.12.5B	3	Volume 18. April 9 – May 9, 1885. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Volume 19. May 10 – December 31, 1885. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Volume 20. May 19 – July 8, 1885. Bound by correspondent's or county name. Includes a few letters for earlier and later months. Volume 22. 1886-1890. Bound in partial alphabetical order. The index entries are concentrated in letters H and J. Volume 23. 1886-1892. Bound roughly by year. Includes one letter for 1885. The index entries are concentrated in letters R and S. Volume 24. 1886-1892, A-Z. Bound roughly by year. Includes at least 2 letters for 1884. The index entries are especially full for letters V-Y.

Location	Box	
116.F.12.6F	4	Volume 25. 1886-1892, B. Index entries are mostly under "B." Volume 27. Land and School Bond Letters, 1886-1894. Bound in no discernible order. Volume 28. Land and School Bond Letters, 1886-1894. Bound in no discernible order. Volume 29. 1886-1893. The index identifies it as "Si-Sy Transferred Volume," although there are index entries throughout the alphabet. Volume 30. January 1886 – December 1897, A-K. The index identifies it as "Loan & Trust Co. A-K."

Location	Box	
116.F.12.7B	5	<p>Volume 31. 1888-1896[?]. The index identifies it as “Auditor’s Dept. Letters From 1886 to 1894 Inc.” Many of the letters refer to loans from state trust funds, bonds, relief funds, and agricultural society appropriations, as well as land and tax matters. Bound in no discernible order. The index entries are concentrated in letters B, F, and G.</p> <p>Volume 35. June 4, 1890 – December 23, 1895, A-W. The bulk of the letters are 1895. Pages 33, 95, and 110 are 1905. Page 58 is 1900. Also includes a few 1896 letters. Bound in no discernible order.</p> <p>Volume 37. September 6, 1893 – June 26, 1894. Bound in partial alphabetical order. A large proportion of the letters concern stumpage sales and related matters.</p> <p>Volume 39. 1893-1894. Bound by correspondent’s or county name.</p> <p>Volume 40. 1893-1894. Bound by correspondent’s or county name.</p> <p>Volume 41. 1893-1894. Bound by correspondent’s or county name.</p> <p>Volume 44. 1894-1895. Bound by correspondent’s or county name.</p>

Location	Box	
116.F.12.8F	6	<p>Volume 46. June 25, 1895 – November 29, 1898, A-Z. Actually covers all of 1896-1898, plus one item for 1895 (May 25). Bound by year, thereunder by correspondent’s name.</p> <p>Volume 50. January 3, 1899 – February 15, 1918, A-Z. The bulk is 1899, apparently arranged by first letter of correspondent’s name, thereunder chronologically. These are followed by a few letters for 1900 and 1916-1917, and a group for 1918.</p> <p>Volume 51. 1900, A-Z. Bound by correspondent’s name.</p> <p>Volume 53. 1901, A-Z. Bound by correspondent’s name.</p> <p>Volume 55. 1902-1903, A-D. The letters span all of 1902 and at least half of 1903, and all letters of the alphabet. Bound in no discernible order.</p> <p>Volume 56. 1903, A-Z. Page numbers continued from the previous volume.</p>

Location	Box	
116.F.12.9B	7	Volume 58. 1904-1905. Volume 59. 1904-1906. Volume 60. 1904 – March 1909, A-W. Bound in a rough chronological progression. Volume 64. March-December[?], 1908. Appears to be bound alphabetically by county. The index identifies it as “Pertaining to Land & School Bonds.” Volume 67. 1909-1910. The index further identifies it as “File #4.” Volume 70. 1910-1914. The bulk is 1913. The index further identifies it as “Mineral Land Letters.” Bound by correspondent’s name. Includes a few letters sent.

Land Letters Sent, 1873-1914. 4.5 cu. ft. (35 volumes).

Letterpress copies of outgoing letters of the state auditor as state land commissioner, regarding all aspects of the administration of state-owned lands and their disposition to the public, including purchase, payment, and transfers of title; land taxes and tax forfeitures; appraisals and reappraisals of state lands and the timber thereon; timber and grass cutting contracts and timber trespass (unauthorized cutting); and unsettled or contested titles. Letters during the 1870s and 1880s also deal with railroad land selections. Mineral leases, including many notifications of payments due on mining contracts, comprise a large proportion of the letters for ca.1903-ca.1908; and discussion of ditch assessments appears around 1910. Some letters deal with other aspects of the administration of the auditor’s office.

Many are letters of transmittal, responses to queries from the public about land offerings and sales or the status of specific parcels, and various notifications and authorizations to county auditors and treasurers regarding taxation and land payment matters. Other recipients include the registers and receivers of U.S. district land offices in Minnesota, the commissioner of the U.S. General Land Office, officials of railroad and mining companies, and land appraisers.

All volumes are identified on their covers as “State Land Letters” or “Land Department Letters” unless otherwise noted on the volume list. Most of them were numbered and labeled, often inaccurately, some time after their creation; the volume list notes, in brackets, corrections to the original labels. Letters within each volume are chronological, with some aberrations. Many of the pre-1900 letters are so faint as to be illegible.

Location	Box	
116.F.13.2F	[8]	Volume 1. 1870 [actually, January 1973 – January 1874]. Volume 49. [December 8, 1877 – September 17, 1878.] Labeled 1898-1899. Volume 4. September 28, 1882 [i.e., 1880] – June 14, 1882. Volume 5. January 14, 1881 – December 4, 1886. Letters of W. P. Jewett, state land agent. They seem to relate largely to record-keeping matters: status of various land parcels, corrections to records, and routing and recording of data from selection lists. Volume 8. June 14 – December 6, 1882. Front of cover says Land Office Volume 10. Many pages are blurred from ink bleed and/or water damage. Volume 11. December 7, 1882 – July 24, 1883. Volume 26. Land and School Bond Letters, 1886-1892 [actually July 25, 1883 – January 13, 1885]. Volume 21. September 10, 1885 – March 15, 1887. unnumbered. April 13, 1887 – November 13, 1889.

Location	Box	
116.F.13.3B	[9]	Volume 32. November 14, 1889 – February 2[i.e., 17], 1891. The bulk is November 1889 – June 1890. Volume 33. June 25, 1890 – January 14, 1892. Volume 34. January 14, 1892 – April 18, 1893. Volume 36. January 14 – September 19, 1893. Volume 42. 1893-1894 [September 6, 1893 – June 26, 1894]. Volume 43. January 5 – June [i.e., May] 25, 1894. Volume 45. June [i.e., May] 16, 1895 – September 16, 1896. Volume 47. [September 17], 1896 – February 23, 1898. With 1 letter dated July 25, 1896.

Location	Box	
116.F.13.4F	[10]	Volume 48. February 23, 1898 – June 16, 1899. unnumbered. June 16, 1899 – July 17 [i.e., 26], 1901. Volume 52. August 15, 1900 – June 20, 1901. About half are general auditor's office letters, relating to assessment and tax matters in general, gubernatorial appointments (mainly auditor Dunn's disgust with Governor Van Sant), school district loans, and state expenditures. Volume 54. July 17, 1901 – March 17 [i.e., 19], 1904. Includes a lengthy letter to the commissioner of the GLO regarding adjustment of Minnesota's swamp land grant (Nov 6, 1901). unnumbered. March 19, 1904 – March 1, 1905. Volume 61. March 2, 1905 – March 26, 1906. Volume 62. March 26, 1906 – February 19, 1906 [i.e., 1907].
Location	Box	
116.F.13.5B	[11]	Volume 63. February 19 – December 16, 1907. Volume 65. December 16, 1907 – February 3, 1909. Volume 66. February 3, 1909 – February 17, 1910. Volume 68. February 11 – December 20, 1910. Volume 69. December 21, 1910 – October 20, 1911. Volume 72. October 21, 1911 – December 13, 1912. Volume 74. December 13, 1912 – March 17 [i.e., 12], 1914.
Location	Box	
116.F.12.11B	[12]	Volume 75. February [i.e., March] 14 – December 30, 1914. Volume 76. 1914 [i.e., November 10, 1914 – January 4, 1915]. Appears to relate entirely to mineral lands and leases. E. H. Walden letterpress books, 1909-1915. 2 volumes. Volumes of outgoing letters apparently maintained by Walden, auditor's office land clerk, although the majority of the letters are signed by state auditor S. G. Iverson. Many are to county treasurers and others regarding transfers of receipts for land sales. February 1909 – January 1913. March 1913 – October 1915.

Land Letters Received and Sent, 1911-1930. 1.5 cu. ft. (10 volumes).

Bound compilations of correspondence concerning the administration of state-owned lands and their disposition to the public, including purchase and transfer of title, land taxes and tax forfeitures, mineral leases and royalties, municipal and school district loans and bonds, and related matters. Many are letters of transmittal, requests for information, and routine replies.

All volumes are identified on their spines as "Land Letters." Each volume is internally paginated via a stamped number on each letter or page. The volumes are numbered in a general chronological progression. Letters within the volumes are usually bound alphabetically by first letter of county name or correspondent's name. Incoming and outgoing letters are interfiled.

Location	Box	
116.F.12.9B	7	Volume 71. 1911-1912. Bound alphabetically by county.
116.F.12.10F	[13]	Volume 73. 1911-1916 (bulk 1915). Bound alphabetically by personal or corporate name. The index further identifies it as "Land Dept. Appraisals." Volume 78. 1923-1925, A-W; 1926, A-K. Two separate sections, separately paginated, with separate indexes. 1926 is bound roughly alphabetically by correspondent; 1923-1925 in no readily discernible order. Volume 79. 1926, L-W. Page numbers continued from Volume 78. Volume 80. 1927, A-[H]. Bound alphabetically by correspondent. Volume 81. 1927, J-W. Page numbers continued from Volume 80. Volume 82. 1928, A-H. Bound alphabetically by correspondent. A few J-W intermingled.
116.F.12.11B	[12]	Volume 83. 1928-1930 (bulk 1928), A-Y. Bound in no discernible order. Page numbers continued from Volume 82. Volume 84. 1929, A-J. Bound alphabetically by correspondent. Volume 85. 1929, K-W. Page numbers continued from Volume 84.