



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

U.S. GENERAL LAND OFFICE An Inventory of Its Railroad Selection Lists

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

- Agency:** United States. General Land Office.
- Series Title:** Railroad selection lists,
- Dates:** 1860-1926.
- Abstract:** Lists of land parcels selected by congressional land grant railroads from the public domain as indemnity for land that was unavailable from their original grants.
- Quantity:** 10.5 cu. ft. (14 boxes).
- Location:** See Detailed Description section for box locations.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF THE RAILROAD SELECTION LISTS

The several Minnesota railroads that received congressional grants of public lands to assist in meeting their construction expenses were entitled to receive specified amounts of land for each mile of track completed, usually the odd-numbered sections within six miles each side of the track. When the route of the line was definitely set, the odd-numbered sections were reserved to the railroad pending completion of construction. If, however, any of these sections were deficient in land area or had been preempted, homesteaded, or reserved to some other public purpose before the route was determined, the railroad was entitled to select an equivalent amount of public land as indemnity.

The railroad company filed selection lists with the local office of the U.S. General Land Office for land within specified limits of the original grant, usually 10, 15, 20, or 30 miles. The selection lists established the railroad's claim to the selected parcels pending approval from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The General Land Office, the state (auditor), and the railroad each received a copy of each selection list.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

This group of selection lists for congressional land grant railroads represents a merged file of records originally held by both the U.S. General Land Office and the Minnesota state auditor's office. There are duplicate copies of many of the lists in this merged file, but in some cases only one copy is present.

The lists contain the following information: list number; type of selection; "limits" of the selections; land district through which the selections were made; legal description of the indemnity lands selected, citing range, town, section, and fractional section; parcels in the original grant relinquished to the Secretary of the Interior and in lieu of which the indemnity selections were made; date the selections were made by the railroad land officer; and date the selections were certified by the register and receiver of the local U.S. land office.

The records for several railroads include lists designated "Rearranged Lists." Prior to about 1888, these companies filed their selections on an aggregate basis, the total acreage of indemnity selections equaling the total acreage lost from the original grant. After this date, the General Land Office ordered the railroads to rearrange those lists on a tract for tract basis. The original lists appear at the beginning of each railroad's records, and the rearranged lists are filed in their appropriate locations.

Occasional relinquishment, homestead indemnity, and railroad approved lists were also present and have been interfiled with the railroad selection lists. The relinquishment lists relinquish to the Secretary of the Interior the railroad's claim to lands named in prior selection lists. The homestead indemnity lists were filed pursuant to an act of Congress of June 24, 1874, entitled "An Act for Relief of Settlers on Railroad Lands" and include the following information: land district in which the list was filed; railroad entitled to the indemnity selections; description of the parcels selected as indemnity and the corresponding parcels of already homesteaded land; limits of the original selections; claimant's name and homestead number; and date filed with the General Land Office. The approved lists contain the same information as the corresponding selection lists, but have also been certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being free of any adverse claim or reservation.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE RECORDS

The lists are arranged by railroad, and thereunder by the land office through which the selections were made and date the selections were filed.

RELATED MATERIALS

Northern Pacific Railway Company Records: Land Department: Selection lists.

INDEX TERMS

This collection is 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:

- Public lands—Minnesota.
- Railroad land grants—Minnesota.
- Railroad land grants—United States.

Organizations:

Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway Company.
Great Northern Railway Company (U.S.).
Hastings and Dakota Railway Company.
Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad Company.
Minneapolis and Cedar Valley Railroad Company.
Minnesota and Pacific Railroad Company.
Minnesota Central Railway Company.
Minnesota Valley Railroad Company.
Northern Pacific Railroad Company.
Saint Paul and Pacific Railroad Company.
Southern Minnesota Railway Company.
Southern Minnesota Railway Extension Company.
St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad Company.
St. Paul and Northern Pacific Railroad Company.
St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Company.
Transit Railroad Company.
Western Railroad Company of Minnesota.
Winona and St. Peter Railroad Company.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the cited railroad, selection list, and page here]. U.S. General Land Office.
Railroad selection lists. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:

Accession number(s): none

Processing Information:

As the selection lists were organized and the description prepared, they were compared with the master sets of approved lists and land patents kept by the State Land Office. Memos clipped to many of the miscellaneous lists in boxes 6 and 7 note the extent to which they do or do not correspond to the State Land Office records.

Condition: Tied in packets; a few individual items are loose and need protective covers. Many of the lists should be cleaned, repaired, and refoldered.

The original control form and list for the railroad selection lists, filed in the unnumbered accession file, gives possible accession numbers. Many packets have typed numbers pasted onto the first item in the packet; these are similar to other old State Archives accession markings, but do not correspond to any recorded accession data.

PALS ID No.: 800001951 RLIN ID No.: MNHV2456-A

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

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

Location	Box	
114.J.1.1B-1	1	Northern Pacific Railroad/Railway Company: Duluth Land Office: Original lists nos. 3-23. 1 packet. Lists filed prior to 1886 which the Secretary of the Interior later ordered rearranged to match the indemnity selections tract for tract with the parcels they were selected in lieu of. These lists were in effect superceded by the new lists nos. 1-25. Duluth Land Office, 1873-1907[?]: Lists 1-50 (incomplete)
114.J.1.1B-2	2	Duluth Land Office, [ca.1905-1907?]. Lists 51-150 (90 missing).
114.J.1.2F-1	3	Duluth Land Office, 1905-1906: Lists 151-300 (incomplete).
114.J.1.2F-2	4	Duluth Land Office, 1906-1907. Lists 301-400 (incomplete).
114.J.1.3B-1	5	Duluth Land Office, 1907-1908. Lists 401-500 (complete).
114.J.1.3B-2	6	Duluth Land Office, 1908-1925. Lists 501-597 (incomplete). Miscellaneous duplicate lists. 1 folder.
114.J.1.4F-1	7	St. Cloud Land Office, 1873-1899: Lists 2-70.
114.J.1.4F-2	8	St. Cloud Land Office, 1900-1906: Lists 71-104. Taylors Falls Land Office, 1889-1894. Includes rearranged lists from 1881. Alexandria Land Office, 1894: List no. 1. Fergus Falls Land Office, 1873. Marshall Land Office, 1903-1906.
114.J.1.5B-1	9	Oak Lake Land Office, 1873: Lists 1, 4, 5. Detroit Land Office, 1877: List 6. Crookston Land Office, 1883-1923. Northern Pacific Patented Lands (miscellaneous lists). 1 folder.
114.J.1.5B-2	10	Cass Lake Land Office, 1903-1926.

Location	Box	
114.J.1.6F-1	11	<p>Minnesota and Pacific Railroad Company: St. Cloud Land Office, 1860-1861. Cambridge Land Office, 1860. Taylors Falls Land Office, 1864. Forest City Land Office, 1860-1864. Greenleaf Land Office, 1866.</p> <p>St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company: Includes some selections for its St. Vincent Extension. St. Cloud Land Office, 1860-1896. Includes a list of settlers on SP&P land along the Brainerd branch line. Taylors Falls Land Office, 1861-1872. Greenleaf Land Office, 1867. Alexandria Land Office, 1871-1876. Litchfield Land Office, 1871. Fergus Falls Land Office, 1877-1879. Detroit Land Office, 1874. Crookston Land Office, 1879-1880.</p> <p>Great Northern Railway Company: Duluth Land Office, 1922-1925.</p> <p>St. Vincent Extension of St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba (acquired from St. Paul and Pacific): St. Cloud Land Office, 1874-1889. Fergus Falls Land Office, 1880-1881. Crookston Land Office, 1880-1889. Includes some approved lists.</p>

Location	Box	
114.J.1.6F-2	12	<p>St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad: Fergus Falls Land Office, undated and 1880-1888. Benson Land Office, 1880-1886. Taylors Falls Land Office, 1881-1890. Marshall Land Office, 1883-1891. St. Cloud Land Office, 1885-1902. Duluth Land Office, 1893-1923. (Following 1907, selections went to the Great Northern Railway, successor to the SPM&M.) Crookston Land Office, 1880-1895. Cass Lake Land Office, 1904-1926.</p>

Location	Box	
114.J.1.7B-1	13	Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad and its successor, St. Paul and Duluth Railroad: Taylors Falls and Duluth land offices, 1869-1902. Also includes some approved lists, 1868-1875. St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad and its predecessor, Minnesota Valley Railroad: Winnebago Land Office, 1867-1868. St. Peter Land Office, 1867-1877. Jackson Land Office, 1870-1874. Worthington Land Office, 1875-1877. Marshall Land Office, 1893. Minnesota Central Railway and its predecessor, Minneapolis and Cedar Valley Railroad: Winnebago City and Chatfield land offices, undated. Jackson Land Office, 1870-1873. Worthington Land Office, 1874. Redwood Falls Land Office, 1874, 1878. New Ulm Land Office, 1890[?]

Location	Box	
114.J.1.7B-2	14	Southern Minnesota Railway Company: Minneapolis Land Office, 1864. St. Peter Land Office, 1864. Includes selections for conflicting limits with the Winona, St. Peter and Missouri River Railroad and with the Minneapolis and Cedar Valley Railroad. Winnebago City Land Office, 1864-1870. Jackson Land Office, 1871-1877. Worthington Land Office, 1875-1892. Southern Minnesota Railway Extension Company and its successor, Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Company: Worthington Land Office, 1880-1888. Marshall Land Office, 1887-1900.

Location	Box	
114.J.1.7B-2	14	Winona and St. Peter Railroad and its predecessor, Transit Railroad Company: Chatfield Land Office, 1861. Redwood Falls Land Office, 1860[?]-1877. Includes lists from predecessor districts. St. Peter Land Office, 1868. Jackson Land Office, 1873. Litchfield Land Office, 1871-1873. Worthington Land Office, 1877. Benson Land Office, 1879. Tracy Land Office, 1881-1887. Hastings and Dakota Railroad: Litchfield Land Office, 1873. Benson Land Office, 1880, 1885. Marshall Land Office, 1893-1902. Redwood Falls Land Office, 1873-1875. St. Paul and Northern Pacific Railroad: St. Cloud Land Office, 1889-1917. Western Railroad Company of Minnesota (predecessor of St. Paul and Northern Pacific): St. Cloud Land Office, 1877, 1879, 1895.