15 rolls positive microfilm. Originals are in the Minnesota Historical Society.
Collation of the originals: 5.5 ft., incl. 20 vols.

INTRODUCTION

The Ransom Judd Powell papers in the Minnesota Historical Society's Division of Library and Archives relate to Powell's involvement with the Ojibwe (Chippewa) Indians of the White Earth (Minnesota) Reservation 1) as a member of government commission established by Congress in 1913 to compile a roll of land allotments within the White Earth Reservation and determine the blood status of each allottee; and 2) as legal counsel to various lumber companies seeking title to Ojibwe lands and to various White Earth Reservation Indians. The collection includes Ojibwe genealogical and census records, transcripts of legal testimony, correspondence, notes, abstracts of legal title, plats, deeds, and other papers.

The collection is divided into five series that appear on the microfilm as follows:

- Correspondence and Related Papers, undated and 1896-1938 (rolls 1-4).
- Legal Case Files, undated and 1906-1936 (rolls 4-7).
- Subject Files, undated and 1911-1916 (roll 8).
- Plat Maps, 1912-1916 (roll 15).

The volumes and subject files were microfilmed in 1984, with the volumes appearing on rolls 1-7 and the subject files on roll 8. The correspondence, legal case files, and plat maps were microfilmed in 1987. At that time the original eight rolls were renumbered, as listed above.
The original manuscripts, which are in poor physical condition, are closed to use by the public. However, volumes 3, 4, 18, and 19 and legal case file no. 19 contain color-coded information, and some information in volume 9 is not legible on the film due to the poor quality of the original. In addition, some items in the correspondence and related papers, especially handwritten pencil notations and carbon copies of letters and other items, may not be legible on the microfilm due to the poor quality of the original manuscripts. Researchers wishing to examine these items should consult with the Reference staff.

Two additional aids to the researcher follow this introduction at the beginning of each microfilm roll: a Biographical Sketch provides information on Ransom Judd Powell, and a combined Description of the Papers and Roll Contents List enumerates and describes the papers in the order in which they appear on the microfilm. Introductory "flash" targets precede each unit of the collection on the microfilm. A running target beneath each film frame gives the title and publisher of the film and the frame number.

In citing materials from this microfilm, include the following information:

[Author] to [recipient], date, roll number, frame number.

Volume or file number, title, date(s), roll number, frame number. Ransom Judd Powell Papers. Microfilm edition. Minnesota Historical Society.

Deborah Kahn
July 1987
Ramson Judd Powell was born in Pine Island, Minnesota, on March 14, 1865, the son of the Reverend John Walker and Rhoda B. (Grey) Powell. He was educated in Minnesota rural public schools and at Hamline University, St. Paul. He received his law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1898.

Before receiving his law degree, Powell was engaged in a number of other enterprises. For two years he was superintendent of the Mankato Gas Light Company, and later he supervised the first electric light plant in Mankato. In 1890 he opened the plumbing firm of Willard and Powell in Duluth. After receiving his law degree, Powell practiced for a short time in Mankato and then moved to Minneapolis. He went into practice with A. Y. Merrill and remained in the firm until his retirement in 1932.

Powell's practice centered on timber-related lawsuits, especially those dealing with Indian land transfers, and he acquired a good deal of specialized knowledge with regard to the legal status of Indians.

He represented many lumber companies in such matters in Minneapolis and, for a year (1904-1905), in Nome, Alaska. In 1907 he was retained by the federal government to defend the Ojibwe (Chippewa) Indians in Minnesota in cases involving trespass on the timberlands within Indian reservations.

In 1913 Powell was appointed to a commission established by Congress on June 30, 1913, to determine the genealogy of some 200 Ojibwe families living on the White Earth Reservation, in order to judge conclusively which families were mixed bloods and, therefore, possessed the legal right to alienation over their reservation land allotments. The commission's work was carried out with the assistance of Dr. Albert E. Jenks of the anthropology department of the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Ales Hrdlicka of the Smithsonian Institution, an anthropologist specializing in the physical characteristics of American Indians.
Throughout the period (1913-1920s) during which the commission functioned and during which the resulting lawsuits were prosecuted, Powell served as counsel for the lumber company defendants in suits brought by the United States government seeking the return of timberlands purchased from allottees. A more complete description of the commission's work and the related lawsuits is found in William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, rev. ed., 4:261-296 (St. Paul, 1969). During the 1920s Powell also represented White Earth mixed bloods whose allotment selections were in conflict with State of Minnesota swampland claims.

Powell married Abbie Davis of Mankato in 1891. She died in 1928. One son, Kenneth W., was listed in the obituaries. They also had a daughter, Alyce Powell Vick. Powell died in Anoka on November 14, 1937.

The above information was taken from the records; from the *Minneapolis Journal*, November 15, 1937, p. 1; and from the papers of the Hennepin County Bar Association in the Division of Library and Archives, MHS, as well as from Folwell, *A History of Minnesota* (o.p. cit.).
DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPERS
AND ROLL CONTENTS LIST

CORRESPONDENCE AND RELATED PAPERS

The correspondence and related items are arranged chronologically and include information on the commission appointed to compile the roll of reservation Indians and their genealogies; on the blood status of particular Indians; on the claims of various Ojibwe Indians to allotments on the White Earth Reservation; and on related matters. Much of the correspondence for the 1896-1921 period relates to legal cases involving Powell's various lumber company clients who generally were defendants in U.S. government suits seeking the return of timberlands to their Ojibwe Indian sellers. The undated papers contain several completed genealogical questionnaires completed by White Earth residents.

Letter writers include Daniel B. Henderson (Washington, D.C.), Halvor Steenerson, Knute Nelson, Albert E. Jenks, Newel H. Clapp, Frank B. Kellogg, Ales Hrdlicka, and N. B. Hurr (Ponsford, Minnesota). There also are a number of letters from officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior.

Roll 1

Undated; 1896 - 1918.

Roll 2

1919.

Roll 3

1920.

Roll 4

1921 - 1938.
LEGAL CASE FILES

This series consists of case files relating to the blood status of various Ojibwe Indians (files 1-14), Indian estate claims (files 15-19), swamplands on the White Earth Reservation (file 20), and land titles and transfers (files 21-24). Files 1-14 contain transcripts of legal testimony; files 15-22 include correspondence and related materials; and files 23-24 are notes and correspondence. Each file is arranged chronologically.

Roll 4


File No. 2. U.S.A. vs. Fred Sanders et al, 1914 (case no. 46).


File No. 5. U.S.A. vs. Park Land Company, 1914 (case no. 125).


Roll 5


File No. 11. [Testimony re the blood status of White Earth Reservation Indians]: United States District Court, District of Minnesota, Sixth District, In Equity. Testimony, July 23 - August 13, 1914, pages 1-94.
Roll 5 (cont.)

File No. 12. [Testimony re the blood status of White Earth Reservation Indians]: Testimony Taken Before J. J. Cameron, Special Examiner, July 27 and October 31, 1914 (case no. 779).

Roll 6

File No. 13. [Testimony re the blood status of White Earth Reservation Indians]: Testimony Taken Before C. E. McNamara, Notary Public, August 26 - October 3, 1914, pages 1-315 [document is incomplete].


File No. 15. James A. Sebesta vs. Mis-co-ge-shig (aka James Rock) and Elizabeth Rock, 1920.


Roll 7


SUBJECT FILES

Roll 8

File No. 1.  Indian Genealogies: Paul H. Beaulieu Family [and other families?], undated, 1914-1915.

File No. 2.  Indian Genealogies: John H. Fairbanks Family, undated and 1914-1915.

Family number 82.

File No. 3.  Indian Genealogies: Roy Family, undated and 1914-1915.

Family number 31.

File No. 4.  Indian Genealogies: Ke-Che-Sohn-zo-way (Brunette) Family, undated.

Family number 48.


Arranged numerically by original allotment number for each number gives name and [residence?]; may indicate whether examined, deceased, and in suit.

File No. 6.  Unidentified List, undated.

Each entry includes serial number, Indian name, allotment number, suit number, relationships, and residence and may indicate whether examined, refused. Compiled by Albert E. Jenks.


Arranged numerically by serial number. Each form gives Indian and American names, tribe, band, age, residence, physical characteristics and measurements, kinship, blood status, remarks, original allotment number, family number, and serial number.


Continuations, numbers 2797-3137; Corrections, numbers 217-3054.

VOLUMES

Roll 9

Volume 1. Unidentified, undated.
Contains columns of original allotment numbers (numbers 1-5166) and additional allotment numbers (numbers 1-3137). Many of the numbers are accompanied by an additional, unidentified number.

Volume 2. Index to Land Allotments and Roll Numbers for 1906.
Arranged alphabetically by name. For each name gives roll number, original allotment number, and additional allotment number.

Volume 3. Allotment Record, undated.
Contains three lists giving 1) original allotment numbers, family/issue number, blood status, and additional annotations; 2) original allotment numbers and corresponding suit (case) numbers; and 3) names of allottees (listed alphabetically), with the suit (case) number for each allottee.

Shows Indian allotments, timber lands, agricultural lands, and ten reserved sections.

Volume 5. Index to "Book of Indian Families" (volume 6), undated.
Arranged alphabetically by name. Information for each individual includes case number, original and additional allotment numbers, and family/issue numbers. The latter numbers are used to locate individuals in volume 6. Also contains an introduction by Powell, dated May 29, 1933, describing his compilation of the genealogies and his estimation of their value.
Roll 10

Volume 6. ["Book of Indian Families"], undated.

Genealogies of White Earth Reservation Indians, compiled by Powell ca.1913-ca.1915. Arranged numerically by family (numbers 1-92) and within each family by issue. Each family member is assigned an issue number. Contains an index to heads of families that gives "old" and "new" family numbers. (See subject files 1-4 for additional genealogies).

Roll 11


Genealogical charts, arranged numerically by suit (case) number (numbers 1-899). For each allottee gives names of parents, paternal and maternal grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents.

Roll 12

Volume 8. Genealogies of Allottees (continued), undated.

Continuation of volume 7 (suit numbers 900-1417; 1-1 --- 3-68).

Roll 13

Volume 9. "Schedule of Allowances of Land Made to the White Earth Band of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota on the White Earth Indian Reservation in that State by the Chippewa Commission under the Provision of the Act of Congress Approved January 14, 1889 (25 Stats. 642) and the Instructions of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," [1907?].

Arranged numerically by census number. Each entry includes census number, number of allotment, Indian and English names, sex, age, legal description of land, number of acres, and remarks.
Roll 13 (cont.)

For each signer gives number of family members (men, women, children, total) and distributive share.

Each list is arranged numerically by case number. Entries give name(s) of defendant(s), case number, allotment number, amount paid, date of purchase, value at time of purchase, present value, name of allottee, and description of the property. Some lists are annotated with information re the status of the case.

Arranged numerically by case number. Each entry gives case number, allotment number, name of Indian, description of property, defendants, appearances, checkings, remarks, family number, and account.

Roll 14

Arranged numerically by original allotment number, with description of the original allotment; the number and description of any additional allotment; the name, sex, age, blood status of the allottee; whether living or dead; and date of birth or death.

First approved roll. Same arrangement and information categories as volume 13.
**Roll 14 (cont.)**


Second approved roll. Same arrangement and information categories as volumes 13 and 14.


Apparently a preliminary version of volume 17. Same arrangement and information categories as volumes 13-15.

**Roll 15**


Final roll. Same arrangement and information categories as volumes 13-16.


Shows ownership of land, by allotment number, of townships 141-146 ranges 37-42. Also indicates which lands were selected by the state and which were patented to the state.


Shows ownership of land, by suit number, of townships 141-146, ranges 37-42.


Shows ownership of land, by suit number, on the White Earth Reservation.
PLAT MAPS

Five supplemental plats of White Earth Reservation land parcels. The plats apparently were prepared to show subdivisions of old lots, thereby providing more accurate descriptions of certain Ojibwe Indian allotments. The plats presumably were used by Powell in his work on the federal commission.

Roll 15

Map No. 1. Sections 6 and 7, Township 142 N, Range 41 W, showing subdivision in section 6 in which lots 8 and 9 take the place of old lot 4, and showing subdivision in section 7 in which lots 5 and 6 take the place of old lot 4. U.S. General Land Office, Washington, D.C., June 20, 1912.

Map No. 2. Section 6, Township 142 N, Range 42 W, showing subdivision in which lots 16 and 17 take the place of old lot 13. U.S. General Land Office, Washington, D.C., June 20, 1912.


AUTHOR ENTRIES

Ayer, Lyman Warren, 1834-  .

Clapp, Newel Harvey, 1850-1922.

Henderson, Daniel B
Hinton, John H
Hrdlička, Aleš, 1869-1945.
Hurr, N  B

Jenks, Albert Ernest, 1869-1953.

Kellogg, Frank Billings, 1856-1937.

Linnen, Edward B

McDonald, Donald, 1803-  .
McDonald, John.

Nelson, Knute, 1843-1923.

Rima, Arthur.

Steenerson, Halvor, 1852-1926.

Van Nett, James, 1820-  .
SUBJECT HEADINGS

Abstracts of Title.
Annuities, Indian.

Beaulieu Family.

Chippewa Indians - Census.
Chippewa Indians - Genealogy.
Chippewa Indians - Land Tenure.
Chippewa Indians - Land Transfers.
Chippewa Indians - Legal Status, Laws, etc.
Chippewa Indians - Mixed Bloods.
Chippewa Indians - Reservations.

Deeds.

Fairbanks Family.

Genealogy.

Hinton Roll.

Indians of North America - Mixed Bloods.

Land Titles - Registration and Transfer - Minn.
Lawyers - Minn.
Leech Lake Indian Reservations.
Lumbering - Minn.

Maps - White Earth Indian Reservation.
Mille Lacs Indian Reservation.

Nichols-Chisholm Lumber Co., Minneapolis, Minn.

Roy Family.

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Trespass - Minn.

U. S. Department of the Interior.

Warba, Minn.
White Earth Indian Reservation, Minn.