RAMSEY COUNTY: Sheriff

An Inventory of the Jail Construction Records

OVERVIEW

Agency: Ramsey County (Minn.). Sheriff.

Series Title: Jail Construction Records.

Dates: 1883-1939.

Quantity: 0.5 cubic feet (1 partial box and 1 oversize folder).

Location: See Detailed Description section for locations.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

The Minnesota Legislature on February 23, 1887, authorized the issuance of up to $50,000 in bonds to both Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul to be used for the purchase of a new jail site (Laws 1887, ch. 170). A Jail Site Selection Committee was appointed, consisting of county commissioners Daly, Mitsch, and Murray along with apparently three members of the St. Paul city council.

All thirty-nine of the original bids (September-December, 1887; one folder) were rejected by the committee, and county auditor M. F. Kain was instructed to re-advertise. The second notice garnered six bids, three of which were rejected. The committee's majority report of January 17, 1888 (found in the Ramsey County board of commissioners minutes) recommended, by a 4 to 2 vote, the southeast corner of 5th and Cedar Streets as the new site, with the northwest and northeast corners of the same intersection being the alternatives.

Apparently the need for a new jail was not as urgent as originally thought since on October 20, 1890, the Ramsey County board declared the present jail sufficient for another ten to fifteen years and recommended that the Minnesota Legislature repeal the original bonding legislation (which it did, Laws 1891, ch. 25).

Construction on a new jail did not begin until May of 1901, on lots 5, 6, 7, and 8 in Block 22 of St. Paul proper, several blocks from the old jail on Block 20, Court House Square. E. J. Donohue was the architect and John H. Donohue was the general contractor for the new jail, which was completed in April 1903.

Sources: Laws of Minnesota; minutes of Ramsey County board of commissioners; jail construction records.
SCOPE AND CONTENTS

Correspondence, contracts, specifications, blueprints, and extracts from minutes of the board of county commissioners regarding site acquisition, construction (1902-1903), upkeep, and remodeling (1925-1929) of the former Ramsey County jail in St. Paul (later razed).

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:
Prisons—Minnesota—Ramsey County.

Types of Documents:
Blueprints.
Contracts.
Specifications.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

Accession Information:
Accession numbers: None; 981-114

Processing Information:
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note the location shown below.

Location

131.I.15.6F

Real estate bids for new jail site, September-December 1887.
Offers of real estate for purchase as a jail site, received by the site selection committee. Transferred from the records of the county auditor.

Correspondence regarding contract and inquiries about new facility, 1883, 1895-1896.
Correspondence, minutes, bids, and specifications, 1900. 2 folders.
Correspondence regarding temporary jail and new site, 1901.
Correspondence regarding construction of jail, 1902.
Correspondence regarding jail completion, 1903.
Correspondence regarding upkeep and contracts for upkeep, 1904-1924. 3 folders.
Contracts for remodeling, 1925-1929.

Location            Drawer

A3/ov4             9

Miscellaneous blueprints of the Ramsey County jail, circa 1902-1903. 1 oversize folder.