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Minnesota State Archives

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STATE LAND OFFICE: An Inventory of Its Railroad Deed and Patent Records:

OVERVIEW

Agency:	Minnesota. State Land Office.
Series Title:	Railroad Deed and Patent Records.
Dates:	1864-1943.
Abstract:	Copies of patents transferring title to railroad grant lands from the federal government to the state of Minnesota; and copies of deeds issued by the state of Minnesota to railroad corporations for grant lands and rights of way.
Quantity:	6 microfilm reels; 7.5 cubic feet (4 boxes and 3 partial boxes); 109 microfiche.
Location:	See Detailed Description section for shelf locations.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The land grants represented by these patents and deeds were authorized either by Congress or by the state legislature to aid in the construction of railroads. Upon completion of specified sections of line, the railroad company was entitled to a deed to the land stipulated in its grant. In the case of congressional grants, the federal government transferred title to the state of Minnesota, which in turn deeded them to the railroad company. The grants authorized by the state legislature were for designated swamp lands to which Minnesota had previously received title from the federal government.

Also included are scattered railroad relinquishment and right of way deeds, as well as a few deeds and relinquishments for state roads, Indian reservations, salt spring lands, and indemnity school lands.

ARRANGEMENT

These records are arranged in the following sections:

Railroad Land Grant Patents, United States to Minnesota, 1875-1935 (Microfilm 45, Reel 59)
Railroad Deed Record, 1864-1942 (Microfilm 45, Reel 60-63)
Miscellaneous Deeds, 1887-1943 (Microfilm 45, Reel 64)
Closed Originals
Closed Master Microfiche

OTHER FINDING AIDS

There is a general index to all parcels of land patented under the congressional railroad grants on pages 218-239 of the United States Land Grant Index, cataloged separately in the State Land Office's Indexes to State Land Records. It is organized by range and town and cites the volume(s) and page(s) on which patents for a particular township can be found.

As an aid to researchers, it has been filmed prior to Volume 1.

Each volume also has its own index, filmed at the beginning of the volume.

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:

Indians of North America--Reservations--Minnesota.
Land titles--Registration and transfer--Minnesota.
Public lands--Minnesota.
Railroad land grants--Minnesota.
Roads--Minnesota.
Salt spring lands--Minnesota.
School lands--Minnesota.
Swamp lands--Minnesota.

Types of Documents:

Deeds.
Microforms.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Restrictions:

Microfilmed originals (7.5 cubic feet) and master microfiche (109 microfiche) are held by the Minnesota Historical Society and closed to general use. In the case of records being

illegible on the microfilm, the original records may be consulted. They are located off site in Remote Storage, however, and advance arrangements are required in order to view the files.

Preferred Citation:

Minnesota. State Land Office. Railroad Deed and Patent Records. *[Indicate the cited volume and page here]*. *[For microfilm, add:]* SAM 45, *[Reel number]*. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.

See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Microfilm Production:

Saint Paul, MN : Minnesota Historical Society, 1982-1983.

Microfiche. Burbank, CA and Saint Paul, MN : P.F.A., Inc. and Minnesota Historical Society, 1984. 109 microfiche : 16 mm.

Microfilm available for sale or interlibrary loan from the Minnesota Historical Society.

Accession Information:

Accession numbers: 984-41; 987-52

Processing Information:

Catalog ID No.: 1735186

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note the location and, if applicable, reel number shown below.

Railroad Land Grant Patents, United States to Minnesota, 1875-1935 (Microfilm SAM 45, Reel 59)

The land grants represented by these patents were authorized by the United States Congress to aid designated railroad companies in construction of their lines. Upon completion of specified sections of line, a railroad received title to the lands it selected under the terms of its grant. These patents record the transfer of title to the selected lands from the federal government to the state of Minnesota. The state in turn deeded them to the railroad company named in the patent (see Railroad Deed Record, below).

The patents in these seven volumes were issued for the St. Paul and Duluth Railroad; the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway; its predecessor, the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad; the St. Paul and Northern Pacific Railway (formerly the Western Railroad Company); and the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad.

The patents for each railroad summarize the provisions of the congressional authorization, including the proposed line's route and the conditions of the grant; date(s) the governor of Minnesota certified completion of the specified section(s); date(s) the selected lands were certified to Minnesota by the General Land Office; legal descriptions of the patented lands; total acreage patented within each township; aggregate acreage in the entire patent; and the date the patent was issued.

Arrangement: By railroad; thereunder by chronologically assigned patent number until 1920, and after 1920 by "list" number.

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	59	Index.

Original index is cataloged separately in the State Land Office:
Indexes to State Land Records.

Volume 1. St. Paul and Duluth Railroad.

Patent numbers: 2-11. List number: 21.

Volume 2. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, Main Line.

Patent numbers: 1-8, 18-19, 22.

Clear list number: 60.

Patent numbers: 33, 36.

Clear list numbers: 8, 67, 9, 68-74, 74 (Cass Lake).

Volume 3. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, Additional Patents (St. Vincent Extension):

Crookston and St. Cloud Land Districts. Patent numbers: 1-18.

Marshall Land District. Patent numbers: 10-11.

Grant Forks Land District. Patent number: 12.

Marshall Land District. Patent numbers: 13-15.

Crookston and St. Cloud Land Districts. Patent numbers: 15-17.

Grand Forks Land District. Patent number: 25.

Crookston Land District. Patent numbers: 26-27.

Duluth Land District: Patent numbers: supplemental no. 7, 28-30.

Volume 4. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, Branch Lines.

Patent numbers: 2-5.

Volume 5. St. Paul and Northern Pacific Railway (formerly Western Railroad Company).

Patent numbers: 1-2, 7-9, 20, supplemental 20, 21, 23-24, 31-32, 34-35.

Clear list numbers: 13-15.

Volume 6. Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad.

Patent number: 1.

Volume 7. St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, St. Vincent Extension.

Patent number: 1.

Railroad Deed Record, 1864-1942 (Microfilm SAM 45, Reels 60-63)

Handwritten copies of deeds issued by the state of Minnesota to private corporations, primarily for land grants authorized either by the United States Congress or by the state legislature to aid in the construction of railroads.

Under the terms of its congressional grant, a railroad company was entitled to a specified amount of public land for each mile of track constructed, usually the odd numbered sections within six miles each side of the track. The state of Minnesota acted as trustee for these grants, certifying fulfillment of the terms of the grant and issuing the deeds. The grants authorized by the state legislature were for designated swamp lands to which Minnesota had previously received title from the federal government.

Each railroad grant deed gives the type (congressional or swamp) and number of deed; railroad company to which the land was deeded; date the deed was executed; recapitulation of the original authorizing grant and its terms; citation to any legislation supplemental to the original grant; date of incorporation of the original grantee corporation; any assignees or successors of the original grantee; grounds for forfeiture of the grant; date the specified sections of the line were completed; governor's certification that the terms of the grant had been fulfilled; legal description or list, sometimes lengthy, of the lands conveyed, citing range, town, section, and fractional section for each parcel; total acreage deeded; and the signatures of the governor and secretary of state.

Also present, especially in volumes A-C (1864-1884), are scattered railroad relinquishment and right of way deeds, as well as a few deeds and relinquishments for state roads, Indian reservations, salt spring lands, and indemnity school lands. After about 1886, these are found in Miscellaneous Deeds (below).

The relinquishment deeds were issued by the state to the federal government for railroad lands that had been settled prior to the authorization of the grant; the settler then received title to the land from the United States as if it were homestead land. These deeds give claimant's name; legal description of the parcel deeded, citing range, town, section, and fractional section; and total acreage.

The right of way deeds were issued by the state to the railroad company for small strips of school land (sections 16 and 36) through which a railroad line passed. These deeds give a citation to the legislation granting the right of way privileges; legal descriptions of the parcels deeded, citing range, town, section, and fractional section; acreage in each parcel; total acreage included in the deed; total purchase price; and date the deed was executed.

Each volume is prefaced on the microfilm by its own location index, organized in the same manner, as well as by a chronological list that gives date of deed, grantee, total acreage, type of land, page number, and remarks. In addition, each volume includes an index to the relinquishment and right of way deeds recorded in the volume; these indexes are organized by grantee and cite the page on which the deed appears.

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	60	Index.

Consolidated index to the railroad deeds, organized by range and town and citing the book(s) and page(s) on which deeds for land in a particular township can be found. It does not give railroad names.

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	60	<p>Volume A, September 15, 1864 - November 10, 1870; May 6, 1872. Also contains a chronological "List of Railroad Land Grant deeds recorded in this book" [1864-1870]. Railroads listed are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">St. Paul and Pacific (main and branch line)Winona and St. PeterMinnesota ValleySouthern MinnesotaMinnesota CentralLake Superior and MississippiSt. Paul and Sioux City <p>At the rear of the volume are tables showing dates of deeds and total acreage deeded from certified lists by each deed, for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">St. Paul and Pacific (main and branch line)St. Paul, Stillwater and Taylors FallsStillwater and St. PaulWinona and St. PeterMinnesota CentralMinnesota ValleySouthern MinnesotaLake Superior and MississippiSt. Paul and Chicago <p>Other tables show acreage of railroad lands (congressional grants) annually contracted for each railroad, in each county, for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lake Superior and MississippiSt. Paul and PacificSt. Paul and Sioux CityMinnesota Central [Milwaukee and St. Paul]Winona and St. PeterSouthern Minnesota

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	60	<p>Volume B, November 23, 1870 - September 7, 1875. The chronological list of land grant deeds recorded notes deeds for the following railroads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">St. Paul and Chicago (swamp land)St. Paul and Sioux City (congressional)Stillwater and St. Paul (congressional)St. Paul and Pacific (congressional)Southern Minnesota (congressional)Sioux City and St. Paul (congressional)St. Paul, Stillwater and Taylors Falls (congressional)Minnesota Central (congressional)Winona and St. Peter (congressional)Lake Superior and Mississippi (congressional)Hastings and Dakota (congressional)
SAM 45	61	<p>Volume C, December 16, 1875 - April 3, 1884. The chronological list of land grant deeds recorded notes deeds for the following railroads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">St. Paul and Pacific (congressional)Minnesota Central (congressional)St. Paul and Sioux City (congressional)Sioux City and St. Paul (congressional)Winona and St. Peter (congressional)Southern Minnesota (congressional and swamp)St. Paul and Chicago (swamp)Hastings and Dakota (congressional)St. Paul and Duluth (congressional and swamp)St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba (congressional) <p>Also noted in the list is the Cannon River Manufacturer's Association (swamp), to construct slack water navigation on the Cannon River. The volume also contains relinquishment deeds, Minnesota to U.S., for salt spring lands (pages 578, 617).</p>

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	61	Volume D, August 17, 1882 - November 17, 1886. The chronological list of land grant deeds recorded notes deeds for the following railroads: St. Paul and Chicago (swamp) St. Paul and Duluth (swamp) Cannon River Manufacturer's Association (swamp) Minnesota Central (swamp) Taylors Falls and Lake Superior (swamp) St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba (congressional) St. Paul and Sioux City (congressional) St. Paul and Northern Pacific (congressional) Minneapolis and St. Cloud (swamp) Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pacific (Minnesota Central) Little Falls and Dakota (swamp)
SAM 45	62	Volume E, August 10, 1887 - February 21, 1891. List of deeds in front of volume, by railroad: Duluth and Iron Range (swamp) Duluth and Winnipeg (swamp) Great Northern (swamp) Hastings and Dakota (swamp) Little Falls and Dakota (swamp) Minneapolis and St. Cloud (swamp) St. Paul and Duluth (swamp) St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba (congressional) St. Paul and Northern Pacific (congressional) St. Paul and Chicago (swamp) Taylors Falls and Lake Superior (swamp) Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pacific (swamp)

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	62	Volume F, January 5, 1891 - August 19, 1897. Grantee index [chronological list]: Duluth and Iron Range (swamp) Little Falls and Dakota (swamp) St. Paul and Duluth (swamp and congressional) Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pacific (swamp) Southern Minnesota Extension (congressional) Hastings and Dakota Railway and Russell Sage, trustee (congressional) Great Northern (swamp) Taylors Falls and Lake Superior (swamp) St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba (congressional) Minneapolis and St. Cloud (swamp) St. Paul and Chicago (swamp) Southern Minnesota (swamp and congressional)
SAM 45	63	Volume G, November 19, 1898 - May 20, 1915. The chronological list of land grant deeds recorded notes deeds for the following railroads: Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pacific (swamp) St. Paul and Duluth (swamp and congressional) Taylors Falls and Lake Superior (St. Paul and Duluth) (swamp) Minneapolis and St. Cloud (Great Northern) (swamp) Southern Minnesota (congressional and swamp) Duluth and Iron Range (swamp) St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba (congressional) Northern Pacific (swamp and congressional) St. Paul and Northern Pacific (Western Railroad Company) (congressional) Hastings and Dakota (congressional) Great Northern (congressional) Minnesota Central (swamp) H. T. Drake for St. Paul and Sioux City (congressional)

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	63	Volume H, July 10, 1916 - July 2, 1942. The chronological list of land grant deeds recorded notes deeds for the following railroads: St. Paul and Sioux City (congressional) Duluth and Iron Range (swamp) Great Northern (congressional) Northern Pacific (congressional) St. Paul and Duluth (congressional) Winona and St. Peter (congressional)

Miscellaneous Deeds, 1887-1943 (Microfilm SAM 45, Reel 64)

Primarily right of way, relinquishment, and quitclaim deeds affecting railroad lands.

The right of way deeds were issued by the state of Minnesota for strips of state land through which a railroad line passed; they give date executed, grantor, grantee, legislative authorization for the right of way grant, purchase price, legal description of the fractional section(s) involved, and total acreage.

The relinquishment deeds were issued by the state to the federal government for railroad grant lands that had been preempted by settlement; the settler then received title. They give citations to pertinent laws, claimant's name, legal description of the land, acreage, and date of deed.

Quitclaim relinquishment deeds conveyed a railroad corporation's interest in a parcel of its land grant back to the state of Minnesota. They give date of deed, grantee, grantor, price and/or other consideration paid, legal description, and sometimes the reason for reversion to the state.

The volumes also include several other miscellaneous instruments of conveyance, including state land patents, judgments in condemnation proceedings, escheated estates, and final decrees in probate, all relating to railroad lands. Some deeds are accompanied by plat drawings or other documentation.

Arrangement: Chronological.

Indexes: Each volume contains two indexes, one organized by range and township and citing page number(s), the other organized by date of deed and citing grantee, grantor, type of deed, legal description, and page number. There is also a comprehensive index/abstract, arranged by survey location, to the right of way deeds recorded in these volumes and in the Railroad Deed Record (above).

Location	Reel	
SAM 45	64	Volume A, 1887-1912. Volume B, 1912-1943. A note on page 257 reads: From and after this date no further long-hand entries will be entered in this volume – carbon copies are preserved of all deeds executed and are in the vault of the Division of Lands and Minerals.

CLOSED ORIGINALS

Access restricted. Closed to general use, researchers are directed to use the microfilm.

Location

- 304.G.12.4F Railroad Land Grant Patents: United States to Minnesota, 1875-1935.
Volume 1. St. Paul and Duluth Railroad.
Volume 2. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, Main Line.
- 304.G.12.5B Volume 3. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, Additional Patents (St. Vincent Extension):
Volume 4. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, Branch Lines.
Volume 5. St. Paul and Northern Pacific Railway (formerly Western Railroad Company).
- 304.G.2.8 Volume 6. Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad.
Volume 7. St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, St. Vincent Extension.
- 304.G.3.8F Railroad Deed Record, 1864-1942. 8 volumes.
Volume A. September 15, 1864 - November 10, 1870; May 6, 1872.
Volume B. November 23, 1870 - September 7, 1875.
- 304.G.12.1B Volume C. December 16, 1875 - April 3, 1884.
Volume D. August 17, 1882 - November 17, 1886.
Volume E. August 10, 1887 - February 21, 1891.
- 304.G.12.2F Volume F. January 5, 1891 - August 19, 1897.
Volume G. November 19, 1898 - May 20, 1915.
Volume H. July 10, 1916 - July 2, 1942.
- 304.G.12.5B Railroad Deed and Patent Records: Miscellaneous Deeds, 1887-1943.
2 volumes.
Volume A. 1887-1912.
- 304.G.12.6F Volume B. 1912-1943.

CLOSED MASTER MICROFICHE

Created from the microfilm to distribute to Department of Natural Resources [DNR] field offices. Positive copies were given to the DNR; the Minnesota Historical Society retained the negative copies.

Access restricted. Closed to general use, researchers are directed to use the microfilm.

Location

- SAFN 6 1864-1943. 109 microfiche.
A listing of each microfiche's contents is housed in the State Archives accession file for these records.