



National Archives and Records Administration

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Interior Department Employees: Records of the Appointments Division, 1849–1907

The Appointments Division handled business concerning the status of the Department's employees appointed by the President and the Secretary of the Interior. Although not formally established until 1861, the Division contains records dating as far back as 1849 when Congress established the Interior Department. The documentation is rich and might include information concerning requests for employment, letters of support, promotions, resignations, removals, charges against employees, claims of debt against employees, oaths of office, official bonds, and leaves of absence. There is little information about employees appointed at the bureau level, such as lesser field office positions. In most instances the files of incumbents still employed in 1907 were removed and are now held at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO. These records are not digitized.

Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior (RG 48)

Records of the Appointments Division are located in the National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

___ Central Office Appointment Papers, 1849–1907 (Entry 14--National Archives Identifier 617453).

The records in this entry consist primarily of letters of application and recommendation, petitions, briefs, reports, oaths of office, applications for leave, letters of resignation, and related records. Many of the files are for positions filled by Presidential appointment, such as the Secretary of the Interior, commissioners, directors, superintendents and other heads of offices and bureaus, as well as their deputies and principle assistants. There are also files for field officials not assigned to specific locations such as Indian inspectors, special Indian agents, and allotting agents. Other files relate to members of boards and commissions. Occasionally there are files for Departmental appointees such as clerks, auditors, watchmen, and examiners.

The records are arranged by bureau or office, then by position, and then primarily alphabetically by the applicant's name. Included are appointments to positions in the Land Office, the U.S. Geological Survey, Yellowstone National Park, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Patent Office, Education Office, and Miscellaneous Files—an assortment of posts from people requesting employment with the Federal Government that ended up filed with the Department of the Interior.

___ Field Office Appointment Papers, 1849–1907 (Entry 15--National Archives Identifier 617455).

The records in this entry consist primarily of letters received and copies of some letters sent, memoranda, petitions, reports, affidavits, briefs, oaths of office, applications for leave of absence, resignations, charges against employees, and related records. Most of the positions are those normally filled by Presidential appointment such as Territorial governors, secretaries, surveyors general, registers and receivers of land offices, Indian agents, pension agents, town-site trustees, and mineral land commissioners. There are also appointment papers for supervisors of the Federal Census, mostly for the Tenth (1880) and Eleventh (1890) Decennial Censuses, and for certain officials of institutions located within the District of Columbia, such as the Government Hospital for the Insane, the Freedmen's Hospital, the DC Penitentiary, and the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.

The records are arranged alphabetically by state or territory, then by position (and when appropriate alphabetically by name or location of land office, Indian agency or pension agency), and then alphabetically by the person's name. Records relating to North and South Dakota after statehood are filed together under the heading Dakota. Records relating to appointment in the Indian Territory are filed under Oklahoma. There are slim files for Hawaii and Puerto Rico. There is a database of names available in the online catalog.

Included are appointments to positions as Territorial officials (governors, secretaries, commissioners); Surveyors General; Registers and Receivers of Land Offices; Indian Agents; Superintendents of Indian Agencies and Indian Schools; Pension Agents; Town-site Trustees and Appraisers; Appraisers of Abandoned Military Reservations; Mineral Land Commissioners; Timber Agents; Supervisors of the Federal Census (mostly for the Tenth and Eleventh Decennial Censuses in 1880 and 1890); and Special Commissions for Utah.

Entry 15 is especially rich in information pertaining to positions in the District of Columbia, including the Board of Public Works; Commissioner of the District of Columbia; Register of Deeds; Register and Deputy Register of Wills; Fire and Police Commissioners; Supervisor of Public Grounds; Government Hospital for the Insane; Freedmen's Hospital (Board of Visitors, Superintendents, and Surgeons); DC Penitentiary (Trustees, Chaplains; and Wardens); and the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.

The appointment records of several states and territories are also reproduced as National Archives microfilm publications and are available at both the National Archives Building in Washington, DC and the National Archives at College Park.

___M1245, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Alaska, 1871–1907*. 8 rolls. DP.

___M576, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Territory of Arizona, 1857–1907*. 22 rolls. DP.

___M732, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: California, 1849–1907*. 29 rolls. DP.

___M808, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Territory of Colorado, 1857–1907*. 13 rolls. DP.

___M1119, *Department of the Interior Appointment Papers: Florida, 1849–1907*. 6 rolls. DP.

___M693, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Idaho, 1862–1907*. 17 rolls. DP.

___M849, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Mississippi, 1849–1907*. 4 rolls. DP.

___M1058, *The Department of the Interior Appointment Papers: Missouri, 1849–1907*. 9 rolls. DP.

___M1033, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Nevada, 1860–1907*. 3 rolls. DP.

___M750, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Territory of New Mexico, 1850–1907*. 18 rolls. DP.

___M1022, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: New York, 1849–1907*. 5 rolls. DP.

___M950, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: North Carolina, 1849–1907*. 1 roll. DP.

___M814, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Territory of Oregon, 1849–1907*. 10 rolls. DP.

___M831, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Wisconsin, 1849–1907*. 9 rolls. DP.

___M830, *Interior Department Appointment Papers: Wyoming, 1869–1907*. 6 rolls. DP.

___**Charges and Protests Files, 1849–1907** (Entry 17--National Archives Identifier 618540).

The records in this entry consist of correspondence, reports, petitions, testimony, and related records concerning charges against Interior Department employees in Washington, DC and in the field who were Presidential appointees. The files also include letters and other records refuting charges. The charges relate to political affiliations, incompetence, malfeasance, and immoral behavior. Most charges were lodged against prospective appointees. Please note that the two entries described above may also contain charges against Interior Department employees. The records are arranged alphabetically by the employee or prospective appointee's name. There is a database to these records in the online catalog.

___**Departmental Appointment Papers, 1879–1906** (Entry 27--National Archives Identifier 656184).

The records in this entry consist of letters received and copies of some letters sent, reports, memoranda, application forms, oaths of office, and other records concerning applications and appointments, resignations, dismissals, deaths, transfers, promotions, reductions, and charges against the employee.

Most of the positions documented in this series were located in Washington, DC; they included jobs such as Clerks, Copyists, Draftsmen, Examiners, Laborers, Messengers, and Watchmen. There are also records concerning field positions such as Special Agents, Forest Rangers, Timber Agents, Irrigation Engineers and Custodians of Abandoned Military Reservations. The records are arranged by year and then according to a file number; you can use the records described below to search for names and find necessary filing information.

___**Index to Departmental Appointment Papers, 1879–1906** (Entry 24--National Archives Identifier 656394). This series serves as the index to the records in Entry 27, above. The cards are arranged alphabetically by surname and contain the year and file number for the indexed person.

Official Personnel Files

The official personnel files of Interior Department employees whose service ended after 1904 are located in the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. To request access to archival files from 1904 to 1951, write to the National Archives at St. Louis, ATTN: Archival Programs, P.O. Box 38757, St. Louis, MO 63138. Files after 1951 are considered non-archival; written requests for more information should be sent to the National Personnel Records Center Annex, 1411 Boulder Boulevard, Valmeyer, IL 62295.

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