



Southern Claims Commission: Approved Case Files, 1871–1880

Congress established the Commissioners of Claims, or Southern Claims Commission, on March 3, 1871, to review and make recommendations to the House of Representatives for the claims of Southern Loyalists who had often involuntarily “furnished stores and supplies for the use of the U.S. Army” during the Civil War. A subsequent law, enacted on May 11, 1872, extended this to include property appropriated by the U.S. Navy. Enabling legislation deliberately excluded real property used or damaged by occupation troops.

The Commission consisted of a three-member board supported by special commissioners who reviewed small claims in local areas and special agents who traveled from state to state gathering evidence in all claims. The Commission received 22,298 claims for damages totaling \$60,258,150.44, but only approved 7,902 claims totaling \$4,636,920.69. It completed its work on March 10, 1880. **This report only discusses the approved files.**

Information in the Files

A case file might include the claimant’s petition detailing losses and their value; depositions of relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances (both black and white); notes of the special agent investigating the case; reports from the Treasury Department relative to its search of captured Confederate records for any indication of disloyalty; and the final summary and recommendation of the commissioners.

Automated Finding Aid

NARA has a database arranged by surname that includes names or portions of names. The database also provides the last name, first name, middle initial, county or parish, state, number of pages in the file, the box number, the location at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, and occasional notes such as administrator, guardian, or race. The database is available in the Finding Aids Room in the National Archives Building’s Research Center or in the Research Complex at the National Archives at College Park.

Approved Claims on Microfilm

Case files of approved claims for several states are available. Approved files for Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas have not been microfilmed. Both the original and microfilmed records are available at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, and are also digitized on Ancestry (www.ancestry.com) and Fold3 (www.Fold3.com).

___M2062, *Southern Claims Commission Approved Cases, 1871–1880: Alabama*. 36 rolls. DP. The records are arranged alphabetically by county and then by the name of the claimant. In some instances, individuals filed more than one claim.

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___M1658, *Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871–1880: Georgia*. 761 microfiche. DP. These case files from Georgia are arranged alphabetically by county and then by the name of the claimant. Appendix A lists the approved claimants' case files and also provides the case file number and the number of fiche containing the case file. Appendix B lists the approved claimants alphabetically by surname, then by claim number, and then by county.

___M2094, *Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871–1880: Virginia*. 45 rolls. DP. The Virginia files, arranged by county and then alphabetically by the surname of the claimant. In a few instances, cases are filed by the name of the administrator/executor or trustee followed by the name of the deceased or minor in parentheses.

___M1762, *Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871–1880: West Virginia*. 3 rolls. DP. The West Virginia files are arranged by county and then alphabetically by the surname of the claimant, or by estate representative (administrator, executor, or trustee) if the claimant was deceased or a minor.

For more information, see the following reference report: *Southern Claims Commission: Barred and Disallowed Case Files, 1871–1880*.

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