

ARCHIVES RECORD

RG001 Nebraska. Governor
SG002 Burt, Francis, 1807-1854

Papers: 1853-1854
Territorial Governor, 1854

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Francis Burt was born in Edgefield District, South Carolina, on February 13, 1807. The son of Francis Burt and Katherine, he was descended from family lines going back to the earliest settlers of Virginia. After moving to Pendleton, South Carolina, Francis and his brothers attended the Pendleton Academy. Frank did not finish school, but studied law in the office of Warren R. Davis of Pendleton. He married Georgiana Hall of Pickens, South Carolina, and practiced law there for five years. He also edited the Pickens Messenger, the local paper. Later he returned to Pendleton where they resided for twenty years. Burt served in different positions with the South Carolina Assembly. He also held office as South Carolina State Treasurer, 1844-1848 and was a member of the Constitutional Convention of that state in 1852. President Franklin Pierce appointed Burt to the office of Third Auditor of the Treasury. He was in office littler more than a year and a half when he was requested to take office of Governor of the newly created territory of Nebraska. He was assigned to administer the territories of Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado. This region was most heavily populated by Indian tribes. Burt was a strong states-right Democrat living in an area predominated by non-Democrats, almost exclusively abolitionist. He set out in mid-September, 1854, and arrived in St. Louise tired and worn down. He was briefly under a doctor's care, but left before being fully recovered to complete by boat the trip to Nebraska City. He traveled by open wagon to Bellevue, where at the Presbyterian Mission House, he immediately took to bed, never to recover. He died on October 18, 1854, two days after receiving the oath of office.

For more on the life and death of Burt, see Nebraska History, Publications Series, V.1, p.93, and V.3, pp. 102-103.

