

## Governor Butler

**RG001**      **Nebraska. Governor**  
**SG008**      **Butler, David C., 1829-1891**

**Papers: 1866-1890**  
**Cubic ft.: 1**  
**Approx. # of Items: 650**

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

David C. Butler was born near Linton, Indiana, on December 16 1829. Little is known of his early years, although his education included some legal training. Forced to support his family by the premature death of his father, he engaged in stock raising and merchandising. Butler lost heavily in the panic of 1857, and in 1859 moved to Pawnee City, Nebraska, where he continued in the mercantile business. In 1860 he married Miss Lydia Story of Bloomington, Indiana, a union which was to produce eight children.

In 1861 Butler was admitted to the Bar of Nebraska Territory and began the practice of law. In the same year he was elected to the Territorial House of Representatives, and was elected to the Territorial Council in 1864. Two years later he ran for Governor on the Republican ticket, defeating his opponent J. Sterling Morton by a small margin. Butler took office as the first Governor of the new State of Nebraska in February 1867 and immediately became involved in the transition from territorial status to statehood. Appointed by the legislature to head a three man "Commission to locate the Seat of State Government", he was instrumental in the relocation of the capitol from Omaha to the newly organized village of Lancaster (now Lincoln). With Governor Butler's guidance and approval, sites were chosen, lots were sold, and public buildings were erected in the new capitol city.

David Butler was re-elected to the office of Governor in 1868 and again in 1870. In the spring of 1871, soon after taking office for his third term, Butler found himself in serious trouble with the Legislature. Eleven articles of impeachment were brought against him, the first charging misuse of some \$16,000 from the state school fund. Butler had allegedly made personal use of this money to purchase lots in the new city of Lincoln. He was suspended from office by the Supreme Court and subsequently tried by the State Senate. He was convicted on the first charge, although the remaining ten were dropped. The Supreme Court then removed him from office.

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**ADDED ENTRIES:**

UNITED STATES--LAND GRANTS--NEBRASKA  
COUNTY ORGANIZATION--NEBRASKA  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA--HISTORY  
NOTARIES PUBLIC--NEBRASKA  
SCHOOL FUNDS--NEBRASKA  
EXTRADITIONS--NEBRASKA  
INSANE--NEBRASKA--COMMITMENT  
MILITARY--NEBRASKA--ORDNANCE  
CENSUS--NEBRASKA--STATISTICS  
PARDONS AND PAROLES--NEBRASKA  
CRIME AND CRIMINALS--NEBRASKA  
LIQUOR CONTROL--NEBRASKA  
NEBRASKA--MILITIA--FORMATION

In 1877 the Legislature reviewed its action and adopted a resolution expunging the impeachment proceedings from the record. After ten years of retirement from public life, Butler was elected to the Nebraska State Senate on the Independent Ticket in 1882. Running on the Union Labor Ticket in 1888, he again sought the Governorship but was defeated. Following this defeat he retired to his home in Pawnee City, Nebraska, where he died on May 25, 1891.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection consists of two manuscript boxes of material arranged in six series: 1) General Correspondence, 1866-1872; 2) Applications for Commissioners of Deeds, 1866-1871; 3) Printed Matter; 4) Biographical Material; 5) Petitions and Miscellaneous, 1867-1871; and 6) Miscellany.

The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence, petitions and applications. Included are petitions for county organizations during this period, petitions for pardons and paroles, applications for Commissioner of Deeds, Notary Publics, and voting precinct registrars. There is a folder containing gathered statistics "Resources of Nebraska" on agriculture, etc. for the different counties, 1869. The printed matter series includes a copy of Articles of Impeachment, 1871, and a newspaper clippings concerning the death of his daughter, Violet Bradley.

### **DESCRIPTION**

#### **SERIES ONE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1866-1872**

##### Box 01

f.2-1	March 1866 - June 1867
f.2-2	July 1867 - December 1867
f.2-3	1868 (January-December)
f.2-4	January - June 1869
f.2-5	July 1869
f.2-6	August - December 1869
f.2-6a	Resources of Nebraska Survey by counties, 1869

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**SERIES ONE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1866-1872**

Box 01 (cont)

- f.3-1 April - June 1870
- f.3-2 July - August 1870
- f.3-3 September - October 1870
- f.3-4 November 1870
- f.3-5 December 1870
- f.3-5a Requisitions and Extraditions, 1870-1871
- f.3-6 Jan. 1871 - March 1872
  
- f.4-1 Appointments and Resignations, 1867-1870
- f.4-2 Insane Warrants, 1868-1871
- f.4-3 Military - Ordnance and Supplies, 1867-1871
- f.4-4 Notaries Public, 1867-1868
- f.4-5 Notaries Public, 1869-1871

**SERIES TWO APPLICATIONS FOR COMMISSIONER OF DEEDS**

Box 02

- f.1 1866-1871
- f.2 1866-1871

**SERIES THREE PRINTED MATTER, 1871 & n.d.**

Box 02

- f.3 Articles of Impeachment, 1871
- f.4 News clipping re Violet Butler Brady

**SERIES FOUR BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL**

Box 02

- f.5 Biographical material on Butler Family
- f.6 Family Record from Butler family bible.

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**SERIES FIVE PETITIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS, 1867-1871**

Box 02

Petitions for County Organization

- f.7 Adams County, 1870
- f.8 Buffalo County, 1869
- f.9 Butler County, 1868
- f.10 Cheyenne County 1869
- f.11 Dawson County, 1870-1871
- f.12 Fillmore County, 1871
- f.13 Franklin County, 1870
- f.14 Hamilton County, 1870
- f.15 Harlan County, 1867
- f.16 Nuckolls County, 1871
- f.17 Pierce County, 1869
- f.18 Polk County, 1870
- f.19 Unnamed County (west of Madison), 1867
- f.20 Wayne County, 1870
- f.21 Webster County, 1870
- f.22 Wheeler County, 1870
- f.23 York County, 1870
  
- f.24 Petitions for Relief and Pardon of Prisoners, 1868-1869
- f.25 Petitions for Relief and Pardon of Prisoners, 1870-1871
- f.26 Lincoln, Nebraska, 1867
- f.27 Liquor Petitions and Fines, 1869-1870
- f.28 Militia Petitions, 1870-1871  
(petitions by counties to form home guards or formation info)
- f.29 Texas Cattle petition, 1870
  
- f.30 Cancelled Checks, 1870-1890

END OF INVENTORY

JEP/ap 6/27/1968  
JEP/pmc 10/8/1971