

Governor David Butler records

Identifier: RG001, SG008
Creator: Nebraska. Governor (1867-1871 : Butler)
Butler, David, 1829-1891
Date: 1866-1890
Extent: 2 manuscript boxes, approx. 650 items

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.

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 five series:

- 1) General Correspondence, 1867-1872
- 2) Applications for Commissioners of Deeds, 1866-1871
- 3) Petitions, 1867-1871
- 4) Miscellaneous, 1867-1890
- 5) Reference materials

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.

DESCRIPTION

SERIES ONE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1867-1872

Box 1

- | | |
|------|--|
| f.1 | February 22, 1867 – July 16, 1867 |
| f.2 | August 14, 1867 – December 1867 |
| f.3 | March 2, 1868 – December 28, 1868 |
| f.4 | January 28, 1869 – December 1869 |
| f.5 | Resources of Nebraska Survey by counties, 1869 |
| f.6 | January 6, 1870 – March 31, 1870 |
| f.7 | April 8, 1870 – June 27, 1870 |
| f.8 | July 5, 1870 – August 30, 1870 |
| f.9 | September 2, 1870 – October, 28, 1870 |
| f.10 | November 1870 |
| f.11 | December 1870 |
| f.12 | Jan. 1871 - March 1872 |
| f.13 | Appointments and Resignations, 1867-1870 |
| f.14 | Insane Warrants, 1868-1871 |
| | Access Restriction: This file is closed per Nebraska Revised Statute 71-961. |
| f.15 | Military - Ordnance and Supplies, 1867-1871 |
| f.16 | Notaries Public, 1867-1868 |
| f.17 | Notaries Public, 1869-1871 |
| f.18 | Requisitions and Extraditions, 1870-1871 |

SERIES TWO APPLICATIONS FOR COMMISSIONER OF DEEDS, 1866-1871

Box 2

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

SERIES THREE PETITIONS, 1867-1871

Box 2

Petitions for County Organization:

- f.1 Adams County, 1870
- f.2 Buffalo County, 1869
- f.3 Butler County, 1868
- f.4 Cheyenne County 1869
- f.5 Dawson County, 1870-1871
- f.6 Fillmore County, 1871
- f.7 Franklin County, 1870
- f.8 Hamilton County, 1870
- f.9 Harlan County, 1867
- f.10 Nuckolls County, 1871
- f.11 Pierce County, 1869
- f.12 Polk County, 1870
- f.13 Unnamed County (west of Madison), 1867
- f.14 Wayne County, 1870
- f.15 Webster County, 1870
- f.16 Wheeler County, 1870
- f.17 York County, 1870
- f.18 Petitions, various, 1867-1870
- f.19 Militia Petitions, 1870-1871
- f.20 Petitions for Relief and Pardon of Prisoners, 1868-1869
- f.21 Petitions for Relief and Pardon of Prisoners, 1870-1871
- f.22 Liquor Petitions and Fines, 1869-1870
- f.23 Texas Cattle petition, 1870

SERIES FOUR MISCELLANEOUS, 1867-1890

Box 2

- f.1 Cancelled Checks, 1870-1890
- f.2 Articles of Impeachment, 1871
- f.3 Lincoln, Nebraska, 1867. Newspaper clipping and photocopy of record.

SERIES FIVE REFERENCE MATERIALS

Box 2

- f.1 Biographical material
- f.2 Biographical material, including newspaper clippings

END OF INVENTORY

JEP/ap 6/27/1968

JEP/pmc 10/8/1971

PMC/pmc Word 2000, 5/10/2005

ABH 10/1/21

Subject headings:

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