

Governor Alvin Saunders records

Identifier: RG001, SG007
Creator: Nebraska Territory. Governor (1861-1867 : Saunders)
Saunders, Alvin, 1817-1899
Date: 1861-1867
Extent: 5 folders, approx. 50 items

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alvin Saunders was born near Flemingsburg, Fleming County, Kentucky, on July 12, 1817. The son of a farmer, Gunnell, and Mary (Mauzy) Saunders, he lived on homesteads in Fleming County and, after 1829, near Springfield, Illinois. He was educated in the common schools around Springfield where he lived until 1836. Saunders struck out on his own at the age of nineteen, and went to find land in the New Blackhawk Purchase, settling finally at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, which was at that time still a part of the Territory of Wisconsin.

At first, he worked on a farm, but shortly thereafter hired on as a clerk in the store of a pioneer merchant at Mt. Pleasant. A Whig supporter, he was appointed to be the first postmaster of Mt. Pleasant by Democratic President, Martin Van Buren. His removal from that office by President Polk aroused a swell of indignation that carried Saunders' name to the attention of the general public. As a delegate to the Iowa Constitutional Convention of 1846, his opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories helped him win a seat in the Iowa Senate in 1854, to which he was returned in 1858.

The year 1860 found Saunders in the Republican ranks, attending both the Iowa State Republican Convention and the Chicago Convention. In the Chicago convention he became acquainted with Abraham Lincoln, whom he supported vigorously both at the convention and back in Iowa. Saunders' support was acknowledged in March, 1861, only days after Lincoln's inauguration, when he received an appointment to serve as Governor of the Territory of Nebraska.

Within two months the Civil War had begun, and on May 18, 1861 Governor Saunders issued his first proclamation, calling for the Counties to organize companies for the purpose of mustering, the First Regiment of Nebraska Volunteers. In July of 1862 he organized a company of volunteers for a state militia to fight Native American tribes.

During the war years, Saunders continued to express his strong support of the trans-continental railroad, of which he had long been an advocate. He was instrumental in the adoption of the measure and was named one of the formal directors of the project. Alvin Saunders was also one of the important men in the group which finally won statehood for Nebraska. In his 1865 message to the legislature, he indicated that he did not intend to seek reappointment to the office, but the legislature disregarded party lines and unanimously petitioned President Lincoln to reappoint him. Saunders was

reappointed, and was in office to witness the winning of statehood, after which he retired from office and devoted himself to his private affairs.

Throughout his term of office, he had been active in business affairs in Omaha. He was the founder and President of the State Bank of Nebraska, later the Merchants National Bank, and was one of the original stockholders of the Omaha Smelting Works. He was executive head of the Omaha Real Estate and Trust Company, and one of the founders of the Omaha Real Estate Exchange. In 1868 Saunders was one of the Nebraska delegates to the Republican National Convention, and in 1877 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he was influential in winning the resumption of specie payments and in the correction of the northern boundary line of the state. Upon his death at Omaha in November, 1899, he left his wife, Marthena (Barlow) Saunders, and two children.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This Subgroup consists of four series:

- (1) Correspondence, 1861-1869
- (2) Petitions, 1863-1867
- (3) Muster Rolls, 1862-1864
- (4) Miscellany, 1861-1899

This Subgroup relates to the affairs of the territorial governor's office during the administration of Governor Alvin Saunders, 1861-1867. Included is material relating to the organization of County Militia Units., formations of new counties, political appointments, and military commissions.

The letters in Series One relate mainly to matters of the militia, to recommendations and appointments, and to the establishing of county boundaries. Correspondents include: M. Beshoar, 1866; John S. Bowen, 1862; J. E. Boyd, 1866; John A. Burbank, 1866; W. G. Glasgow, 1866; O. P. Hensford, 1864; W. N. Hinman, 1866; John S. Hollingshead, 1867; Hadley S. Johnson, 1867; John Livingston, 1866; Will Maddox, 1865; Watson Parrish, 1866; Isham Reavis, 1864; J. M. Siglin, 1866.

The petitions in Series Two are mostly undated, and relate to requests for troops and financial aid, to petitions for appointments of individuals to public offices, and for promotion or commission of officers of the militia.

Series Three consists of muster rolls of militia companies organized in response to the governor's calls for troops in 1862 and 1864.

Series Four includes: circular letters, reports of militia mustering, wanted notices.

Provenance Note: This material came by transfer from the Governor's vaults in July, 1945.

DESCRIPTION

SERIES ONE CORRESPONDENCE, 1861-1869

Folder 1

Letters, 1861-1869

SERIES TWO PETITIONS, 1863-1867

Folder 1

- Burt County (Decatur) Citizens in support of Watson Parrish's application for appointment as Notary public, 1866.
- Cass County (Rockbluff) citizens in support of William R. Davis's application for appointment as Notary Public, 1866.
- Cass County (Plattsmouth) citizens in support of William R. Davis's application for appointment as Notary Public, 1867.
- Dakota County residents in support of Thomas S. Griffey for the office of Notary Public, 1865.
- Dixon, Cedar, and L'Eau Qui Court County citizens requesting a force of militia to protect them against Indian tribes, n.d
- Dodge County (Fremont) citizens in support of William McGee for the office of Notary Public, 1866.
- Douglas County citizens in support of J. C. Ambrose for the office of Notary Public, 1867.
- Kearney County citizens in support of Samuel D. Fitchie for the office of Notary Public, 1866.
- Nemaha County citizens in support of Lorenzo Rice for re-appointment to the office of Notary Public, 1867.
- Nemaha County citizens in support of Edward D. Smith for appointment to the office of Recruiting Commissioner, 1865.
- Platte County citizens requesting a company of militia for defense against Indian tribes, ca. 1863.
- Petition of four members of Co. E, 1st Nebr., for the commissioning of Galen H. Baldy, n.d.

SERIES THREE MUSTER ROLLS, 1862-1864

Folder 1

- Burt County, Arizona precinct, 1864.
- Burt County, Decatur precinct, 1864.
- Cass County, Capt. Shadrack Cole's Co., Cass County, Militia, 1862.
- Cass County, Capt. John W. Marshall's Co., Cass Co. Cavalry, 2nd Nebraska Cavalry Regiment, 1862.
- Cass County, Liberty precinct, Capt. Slagle's Co., 1862.
- Cass County, Mt. Pleasant, Isaac Pollard's Co., 1862.
- Cass County, Rock Bluffs, N. H. Murphy's Co., Rock Bluff Home Guard, 1864.
- Cass County, Salt Creek precinct, Austin Smith Company, 1862.
- Cass County, Weeping Water Falls, R. G. Gordon's Company, 1862.
- Cass County, Weeping Water at Folden's Mill, Milton M. Smith's Company, 1862.
- Cass County, Weeping Water Falls, R. G. Gordon's Company, 1864

(note: most of the proceeding muster rolls for Cass County dates 1862 bear the notation that the companies were mustered i.e. the Plattsmouth Guards).

Clay County, Austin, J. E. Mills Company, Clay County Militia, 1862.

Dakota County, Dakota City, A. M. Clam's Company of Militia Cavalry, 1862.

Dakota Co., Omadi precinct, J. H. Hallack's Company, 1862.

Dakota County, Dakota and Covington precincts, Thomas L. Griffey's Company, 1864.

Douglas County, Omaha, George Armstrong's Co., Shot Gun Company, 1862.

Douglas County, Charles S. Goodrich's Co., Co. C, 1st Regt., 1st Brigade, Nebr. Militia, 1864.

Douglas County, John Taffe's Company, Co. B, 1st Regt., 1st Brigade, Nebr. Militia, 1864.

Douglas County, Jesse Lowe's Company, Co. D, 1st Regt., 1st Brigade, Nebr. Militia, 1864.

Douglas County, Omaha, A. T. Kiley's Co., Co. E, 1st Regt., 1st Brigade, Nebr. Militia, 1864.

Nemaha County, Brownville, Henry C. Lett's Company, Brownville Light Artillery, the Governor's Guard, 1862.

Nemaha County, Brownville, Henry M. Atkinson's Company, Brownville Guards, 1864.

Omaha Indian Reservation (Thurston Co.), E. R. Nash's Company, the Blackbird Cavalry, 1862.

Otoe County, Nebr. City, Charles W. Seymour's Company, the Union Guard, 1862.

Otoe County, Nebr. City, J. A. Gilman's Company, Platte Lancers, 1862.

Otoe County, Nebr. City, Frederick Renner's Company, Otoe Co. Reserve Company, 1864.

Otoe County, Nebr. City, Charles W. Seymour's Company, the Union Guards, 1864.

Otoe County, Nebr. City, J. H. Maxon's Company, Saunders Light Artillery, 1862.

Otoe County, Nebr. City, D. P. Rolfe's Company, Saunders Light Artillery (reorganized), 1864.

Platte County, Albert J. Arnold's Company, Platte County Rangers, 1862.

Platte County, Columbus, Charles Bremer's Company, 1864.

Platte County, Columbus, Fred Stephens' Co. Cavalry, 1864.

Richardson County, Falls City, Oliver P. Bayne's, Cavalry, 1862.

Richardson County, Falls City, Samuel R. Stumbo's Company, Cavalry, 1864.

Richardson County, Falls City, Samuel R. Stumbo's Company, Cavalry, 1864.

Sarpy County, Bellevue, H. L. Edwards' Company, 1862.

Sarpy County, Forest City, Samuel Walsh's Company, Co. I, First Regt., 1st Brigade, Nebraska Militia, 1864.

Nebraska Militia, Co. A, Capt. Tisdell, 1862.

Nebraska Militia, Co. A, 1st Regt., Capt. Jay Loyd, 1864.

Nebraska Militia, 1st Brigade, 1862.

Nebraska Militia, 2nd Brigade, 1862.

Aide-de-camp appointments, 1862.

SERIES FOUR MISCELLANY, 1861-1899

Folder 1

Certificate of Citizenship, 1864

Letter from the Department of the Interior, 1866

\$200 reward for the arrest and delivery of Josiah Stice, former resident of Cass County, indicted for the murder of Thomas Nickols, 1866

\$200 reward for the arrest and delivery of John Smith, former resident of Richardson County, indicted for the murder of John Rice, 1866

Territory of Nebraska Official Directory, 1861-1862

\$100 bond signed by Alvin Saunders, 1861

Circular to Colleges of the United States, on the Subject of Military Education, 1867
(2 copies)

Life and work of Alvin Saunders, address of John L. Webster before Commercial Club, Omaha, November 14, 1899

Folder 2

Reference materials compiled by NSHS staff.

Related Records:

RG1, SG1, S2, Volume 1: Messages and Proclamations, 1861-1867
(Previous call number: RG1 SG1 S77 Vol 1)

Finding aid updated 9/28/21 ABH