

# Records of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition

Identifier: RG0042  
Creator: Nebraska. Commission for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition  
Date: 1896-1902  
Extent: 8 archival boxes, 4 volumes (approx. 4 cubic feet)

## Historical Note

The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was held in Omaha, Nebraska from June-November 1898. It was originally conceived of by the Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress, an organization with the purpose of promoting the commercial interests of the states and territories west of the Mississippi river. It was intended to be an event not unlike the World's Fair except with a smaller scope, highlighting the products, resources, and industries of states west of the Mississippi. Omaha was selected as the site for the Expo and dates were set. As the Board of Directors began planning, the scope of the Expo quickly grew.

The United States government appropriated \$200,000 for the Expo and recognized the event as a National and International Exhibition, which came with special privileges such as duty-free importation of exhibits, a commemorative postage stamp design, and the federal government inviting foreign countries to participate, several of which accepted. Thirty-six states and territories also participated, appropriating funds and creating commissions to oversee their contributions to the Expo. As hosts to the event, Nebraska played a large role in the organization of the Expo. The State, Douglas County, and City of Omaha all appropriated funds for the event and a state commission with a board of directors was created to oversee its administration.

Overall, the Expo was considered a success, boasting beautiful (albeit temporary) buildings, lush grounds, top of the line exhibits displaying the progress of the nation (and world), and a midway full of amusements and attractions. For a more in-depth summary of the Expo and its exhibits, events, and architecture, see the programs found in Series 6 (Ephemera and Miscellaneous Records, 1898-1899) of this record group.

## Scope and Content

This collection relates to the Nebraska Commission, in particular the State Board of Directors, as they organized the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition and Nebraska's contribution to the Expo. Records include general correspondence among the organizers and outside contributors, personnel records, financial documents,

reports outlining the Expo's progress and success, contracts with vendors, plans for building the Expo spaces, and ephemera from the Expo itself, such as guest registers, catalogues, photo books, and more.

Records are arranged into 6 series by record type:

1. Correspondence, 1896-1898
2. Administrative Records, 1897-1898
3. Directors' Reports, 1897-1898
4. Guest Registers, 1898
5. Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, 1896, 1902
6. Ephemera and Miscellaneous Records, 1898-1899

A folder of reference material (one research report, dated 1960) can be found in box 8.

## Related Records

See also RG001, SG17, records of Governor Silas Holcomb.

## Inventory

### Series One Correspondence, 1896-1898

Scope and content: This series consists of the Commission's incoming and outgoing correspondence. It is arranged chronologically by year and alphabetically by surname of the correspondent. Job application correspondence has been separated out and is arranged chronologically.

#### Box 1

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| f.01   | Correspondence, A-B, 1897  |
| f.02   | Correspondence, C-D, 1897  |
| f.03   | Correspondence, E-F, 1897  |
| f.04   | Correspondence, G-H, 1897  |
| f.05   | Correspondence, J, 1897  |
| f.06   | Correspondence, K-L, 1897  |
| f.07   | Correspondence, M-N, 1897  |
| f.08   | Correspondence, O-P, 1897  |
| f.09   | Correspondence, R-S, 1897  |
| f.10   | Correspondence, T-W-Y, 1897  |
| Vol. 1 | Letterpress Book, J. N. Campbell, Assistant Secretary,<br>March 18, 1898 - November 14, 1898 |

#### Box 2

- |      |                           |
|------|---------------------------|
| f.11 | Correspondence, A-B, 1898 |
| f.12 | Correspondence, C-D, 1898 |
| f.13 | Correspondence, E-F, 1898 |
| f.14 | Correspondence, G-H, 1898 |
| f.15 | Correspondence, I-J, 1898 |

- f.16 Correspondence, K-L, 1898
- f.17 Correspondence, M-N, 1898
- f.18 Correspondence, O-P, 1898
- f.19 Correspondence, R-S, 1898
- f.20 Correspondence, T-W-Y, 1898

Box 3

- f.21 Job Applications, 1896
- f.22 Job Applications, 1897
- f.23 Job Applications, 1897
- f.24 Job Applications, 1898
- f.25 Job Applications, 1898

**Series Two Administrative Records, 1897-1898**

Scope and content: This series consists of financial and administrative records of the Commission, including registers of warrants and vouchers for services/supplies rendered, property books, diaries of work, receipts, contracts, and ledgers. Registers of warrants are loosely organized by voucher number.

Access note: Volumes 1 and 2 contain Commission records, but part of each volume appears to have been used by the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) for other purposes in the 1940s. Volume 1 contains a museum register and Volume 2 contains a NSHS-sponsored WPA project guest register. Volumes are shelved with RG42.

Related Records:

- RG014 Nebraska State Historical Society, Subgroup 12 Guest Registers
- RG515 WPA, Subgroup 1 Administration, Series 9 Miscellaneous

Box 4

- f.01 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898
- f.02 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898
- f.03 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898
- f.04 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898

Box 5

- f.05 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898
- f.06 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898
- f.07 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898
- f.08 Register of Warrants, 1897-1898

Box 6

- f.09 Payroll vouchers, 1898
- f.10 Volume, Property and supplies ledger, 1897-1898  
Volume, Property Book, Plans and Specifications, 1897-1898
- f.11 Volume, Drawings designed and received, 1897-1898
- f.12 Volume, Diary of work and events, Howard Stillson, June 22 –  
December 31, 1897

- Volume, Diary of work and events, Howard Stillson, January 1 – June 14, 1898
- f.13 Volume, Warrant Register, Aug. 1897 – Dec. 1898  
 Sale of Property Receipts, p.25  
 Invoice of State property, p.100  
 Volume, Book of Plans, 1897-1898
- Box 7
- f.14 Contracts and Specifications, 1897-1898
- f.15 General Application Forms for Space, 1897
- f.16 Insurance Policies, 1898
- f.17 Vouchers, 1897-1898
- f.18 Vouchers, 1897-1898
- f.19 Vouchers, 1897-1898
- Vol. 1 Journal, 1897-1898, 1940  
 Pgs. 1-153: Ledger tracking Trans-Mississippi Commission expenses by day, 1897-1898  
 Pgs. 154-503: Museum Register, May 10 – September 1, 1940
- Vol. 2 Ledger, 1897-1898, 1940  
 Pgs. 1-37: Ledger tracking Trans-Mississippi Commission expenses by exhibit, with index at front, 1897-1898  
 Pgs. 38-45: Guests, WPA National Display Week, May 20-25, 1940, "This Work Pays Your Community," State Wide Museum Project P.S. 5517  
 Pgs. 200-245: Ledger tracking Trans-Mississippi Commission payroll by person, 1897-1898

### **Series Three Directors' Reports, 1897-1898**

Scope and content: This series consists of reports to and by the Nebraska State Board of Directors of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. Included are reports to the Board about Expo preparations, monthly reports from the Board to the Governor's office about financial transactions for the Expo, and a final report from the Board to the Governor's office. The records are arranged by type of report.

- Box 8
- f.01 Reports to the Directors, 1897-1898
- f.02 Monthly Reports, 1897-1898
- f.03 Report of the State Board of Directors, Nov. 1, 1898

#### **Series Four Guest Registers, 1898**

Scope and content: This series consists of two oversize registers of guests at the Expo's Nebraska Building. Entries include date of visit, name, address, and occasionally a comment.

Access note: Part of Volume 2 has also been used as the guest register for an unknown purpose in the 1930s. Based on the use of the volumes in Series 2 as NSHS guest registers, it could be inferred that Volume 2 was used for similar purposes, although there is no exact explanation contained in the volume itself.

Related records: RG014 Nebraska State Historical Society, Subgroup 12 Guest Registers

- Vol. 1 Register of Visitors to the Nebraska Building, June 1, 1898 – October 31, 1898
- Vol. 2 First section: Register of Visitors to the Nebraska Building, Oct. 11, 1898 – Oct. 31, 1898  
Second section: Register of Visitors for unknown (NSHS?) purpose, Aug. 17, 1937 – Oct. 13, 1938

#### **Series Five Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, 1896, 1902**

Scope and content: This series consists of two small printed booklets, one containing the articles of incorporation for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition and the other the by-laws of the Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress.

Box 8

- f.01 Articles of Incorporation, 1896
- f.02 By-Laws of the Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress, 1902

#### **Series Six Ephemera and Miscellaneous Records, 1898-1899**

Scope and content: This series consists of miscellaneous records, printed materials, and other ephemera relating to the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition and the subsequent Greater America Exposition, which was held the following year on the same site.

Box 8

- f.01 Printed ephemera, 1898-1899
- Booklet, "Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition Official Catalogue of Fine Arts, 1898"
  - Booklet, "Woodmen of the World Day, Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1898"
  - Form, "Stock Subscription, Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition"

- Booklet, "Official Souvenir Program, Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition"
  - Booklet, "The Millard" (Bulletin for "Peace Jubilee" Week, October 10-15, 1898)
  - Booklet, "Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, Omaha, 1898, Issued by the Department of Publicity" (2 copies)
  - Booklet, "Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, Compliments of J. I. Fruehauf"
  - Booklet, "Greater America Exposition, Omaha, U.S.A., July 1<sup>st</sup> through November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1899"
- f.02 Printed ephemera, 1898
- Book, "Photogravures of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition," published by F. A. Rinehard
  - Booklet, "Official Catalogue of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition," published by Klopp and Bartlett Co.
- f.03 Miscellaneous records, 1890s  
Clippings, drafts, blank forms, miscellaneous correspondence, notebook, flyers, drawings
- f.04 Miscellaneous newspaper clippings, 1896, undated

### **End of Inventory**

Orig. Inv. Missing done 1967  
 PMC Word 7/31/2002  
 PMC/Word 7/9/2003  
 ABH 1/13/2022

### **Subject headings--**

Agricultural exhibitions  
 Bassett, Samuel Clay, 1844-1926  
 Barrett, Jay Amos (1865- )  
 Boyd, James E. (1834-1906)  
 Colonialism  
 Crouse, Lorenzo (1834-1909)  
 Edmiston, J. H.  
 Exhibitions  
 Fairs  
 Furnas, Robert W. (Wilkinson), 1824-1905  
 Holcomb, Silas A. (1858-1920)  
 Kimball, Thomas Rogers, 1862-1934  
 Loomis, George W.  
 MacLean, George E.  
 Neville, William

Poynter, William A.  
Rosewater, Victor (1871-1940)  
Sprague, C. B.  
Taylor, Frederick William (1860-1944)  
Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition (1898 : Omaha, Neb.)  
Walker and Kimball (Omaha, Neb.)  
Walker, Charles Howard, 1857-1936  
Wooster, Charles (1843-1922)