



Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company Records (R0058)

Collection Number: R0058

Collection Title: Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company Records

Dates: 1834-1900

Creator: Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company

Abstract: The Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company Records contain the records of the acquisition and disposition of lands in a speculative industrial development scheme in Jefferson, Ste. Genevieve, Perry, Cape Girardeau, and Madison Counties in Missouri. These records include correspondence, land records, financial papers, deeds, and property tax information.

Collection Size: 0.75 cubic foot
(9 folders, 2 oversize folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company Records* (R0058); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by Dr. and Mrs. Roger G. Gerry on August 5, 1981 (Accession No. RA0084).

Processed by: Processed by Mark C. Stauter, August 18, 1981. Revised by John Bradbury, September 11, 1992. Revised by Kathleen Seale, July 9, 2019.

Historical Note:

The Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company was a speculative venture apparently designed to develop a rational holding of coal, mineral, timber, water power, and river front properties on or near the Mississippi River in southeastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois. The ultimate goal seems to have been the establishment of a vertically integrated industrial enterprise.

In the 1830s and 1840s, the firm acquired parcels of land from individual owners. By 1850, this process had been essentially completed. Although early land transactions indicated that Giles Pease and Forrest Shepherd initiated the acquisitions, by the 1840s, John Tappan of Boston, Massachusetts, was actively involved. Eventually control of the company and its holdings fell to Tappan and Charles Stoddard, the surviving trustees.

In June 1868, the company named Walter Hilliard Bidwell as the special and authorize agent to dispose of the firm's land holdings. In November of the year, the remaining properties were sold to Bidwell's brother, Oliver B. Bidwell. Oliver took no active role in the resulting transactions, and gave his brother power of attorney shortly after the transfer. In 1871, as a part of the continuing effort to dispose of the lands, Walter Bidwell encouraged the development of a plate-glass manufactory at the mouth of Plattin Creek in Jefferson County, Missouri. This became the site of Crystal City. He was also interested in a play, apparently supported by the leading citizens of Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri, to build a railroad along Saline Creek and through the Old Lead Belt and other mineral areas to Phelps County, Missouri. During this period, Walter Bidwell was legally separated from his wife Susan.

In 1881, both Walter H. Bidwell and Oliver B. Bidwell died. Edward R. Pelton of New York, New York, their relative and executor assumed their affairs. After settling their estates, Pelton resumed the efforts to sell the land in Missouri. By the time of Pelton's death in 1899, some properties were still in his possession, worth as little as 50 cents per acre.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

The correspondence in folder 1 deals with the disposition of the company's property holdings by Walter H. Bidwell, the disposition of the Bidwell estates, and the efforts of Edward R. Pelton to dispose of the remaining property in Missouri after the deaths of Walter and Oliver Bidwell. The financial and legal papers, deeds, and property taxes deal mostly with the operation of the Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company. The volume in folder 9 contains lists of land parcels acquired by the Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company, with hand-drawn maps indicating their locations. In most cases the date and reason for the acquisition of a particular parcel are given. Folder 10 and 11 contain land records, several are land grants for military service. The rest of the land records deal with land acquisitions by the Missouri and Illinois Mineral and Land Company and its key investors.

Container List:

Box 001 f. 1 Correspondence, 1868-1900

f. 2	Financial papers, 1839-1881
f. 3	Legal papers, 1844-1882
f. 4	Walter and Oliver Bidwell estates documents, 1875-1883
f. 5	Catherine Safford internment papers, 1864
f. 6	Deeds, 1834-1892
f. 7	Property taxes, 1870-1888
f. 8	Miscellaneous, 1839-1888
f. 9	Land acquisitions ledger, 1898
Box 002 f. 10-11	Land patents, 1841-1851

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