



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Minnesota State Archives

## AUDITOR

# An Inventory of the Tree Bounty Payment Records

### OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Agency:</b>       | Minnesota. State Auditor.  |
| <b>Series Title:</b> | Tree bounty payment records,   |
| <b>Dates:</b>        | 1882-1915.   |
| <b>Abstract:</b>     | Registers of tree bounty payments (1883-1915) to persons who fulfilled the statutory requirements for planting and nurturing trees on prairie lands, supplemented by sample bounty application forms (1882). |
| <b>Quantity:</b>     | 1.5 cu. ft. (4 v. in 2 boxes; 1 folder in partial box).  |
| <b>Location:</b>     | See Volume/folder list for locations.  |

### ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF THE TREE BOUNTY PROGRAM

Beginning in 1873 (Laws 1873 c19), the State of Minnesota paid a bounty for tree planting. Every person (railroad companies were specifically excluded) who planted at least one acre of prairie land with forest trees of any kind other than black locust and kept the stand thriving, and who met other stipulated conditions, was eligible to receive a bounty of \$2.00 per acre, but not to exceed \$25.00 per year, for six successive years. Persons wishing to receive a bounty payment submitted an application and proofs of land ownership and tree eligibility to the county auditor, who submitted an annual return of bounty applicants to the State Auditor, who authorized payment of the bounties from the state treasury.

The bounty was raised to \$3.00 in 1881 (Laws 1881 c151), and eventually fixed at \$2.50 per acre (Laws 1903 c230). The 1881 law also specified bounty application procedures in detail, and provided for a general tax levy and establishment of a State Forestry Fund to pay the bounties. Laws 1895 c63 abolished this special fund and provided for an annual appropriation of \$20,000, later reduced to \$2500 (Laws 1941 c365). In 1913, eligibility was expanded to encompass trees planted on any land (Laws 1913 c76). A version of the tree bounty law remains (1998) in force as Minnesota Statutes 348.01-.05.

## SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

Registers of tree bounty payments, 1883-1915 (4 volumes), authorized by the State Auditor to persons who fulfilled the statutory requirements for planting and nurturing trees on prairie lands. Each entry gives name, legal description of land (range, township, section, subdivision), number of acres, annual record of payment received, and sometimes the number of years the payee had been receiving a bounty.

The registers are supplemented by a folder of tree bounty documents from 1882: an assessor's report and sample application forms for payment under the Tree Bounty Act of 1881, from Pipestone County, and a few sample auditor's reports from other counties (all noting that no claims had been filed).

## ORGANIZATION OF THE RECORDS

Entries in each of the tree bounty registers are by county, thereunder alphabetical by first letter of payee's surname.

## RELATED MATERIALS

A tree bounty application (1913) is in the Minnesota Historical Society Museum collections.

## INDEX TERMS

*This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.*

### Topics:

Tree bounties—Minnesota.  
Tree planting—Minnesota—Citizen participation.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### Preferred Citation:

*[Indicate the cited volume and page or item and folder title here].* Minnesota. State Auditor. Tree bounty payment records. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.  
*See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.*

### Accession Information:

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Provenance: Originally cataloged as part of the records of the Minnesota State Forestry Board.

## VOLUME/FOLDER LIST

*Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note the location numbers shown below.*

| <b>Location</b> | <b>Box</b> | <b>Contents</b>   |
|-----------------|------------|---|
|                 |            | Tree Bounty Payment Ledgers, 1883-1915. 4 volumes.<br>There is considerable overlap in time span, and some duplication of entries, from volume to volume. |
| 108.J.19.7B-1   | 1          | 1883-1893.<br>1891-1897.  |
| 108.J.19.7B-2   | 2          | 1891-1914.<br>1895-1915.  |
| 115.L.18.4F     | ---        | Tree Bounty Documents, 1882. 1 folder.  |