



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Minnesota State Archives

## TIMBER COMMISSIONERS BOARD

### An Inventory of Its Reports of Estimates and Appraisals

#### OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

- Agency:** Minnesota. Board of Timber Commissioners.
- Series Title:** Reports of estimates and appraisals,
- Dates:** 1895-1931.
- Abstract:** Data reported by state land examiners on timber located on state land, for use by the Timber Commissioners Board in determining whether the timber could be sold.
- Quantity:** 3.5 cu. ft. (17 v. in 3 boxes); 4 v. on 2 microfilm reels.
- Location:** See the Box and Roll List section for microfilm and box locations.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF THE BOARD OF TIMBER COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Timber Commissioners was created by the state legislature in 1895 (Laws 1895 cl63 sl8). Its formation was part of a general revision of policies and procedures for selling state lands and timber that resulted from the scathing report on timber sale fraud and associated public venality submitted in the previous year by the Pine Lands Investigating Committee.

The board was composed of the governor, who served as chairman; the state auditor (as land commissioner), who served as secretary; and the state treasurer. Its overall charge was the care, conservation, and sale of state timber, most of which at this time was situated on school, indemnity school, and swamp lands. It accomplished these functions by issuing permits to cut timber on state lands, receiving settlements for other types of authorized timber cutting, determining and penalizing instances of illegal cutting (timber trespass), and coordinating with the Surveyor General of Logs and Lumber to appraise the logs actually harvested.

The 1895 law prohibited the sale of pine timber, tamarack, and cedar on state land except when it was "liable to waste," and required a current (within three years) estimate and appraisal of such timber prior to the issuance of a cutting permit (section 11). It required the timber estimators personally to enter their reports of these examinations into a book kept by the land commissioner, to be known as the record of appraisals and to constitute "the original record of such examinations, estimates and appraisals," and specified the information that was to be recorded (sections 12-13).

Before any timber was sold, the land commissioner was to submit this record to the board, which would decide whether the timber was subject to sale. The land commissioner was to keep a full record of minutes and proceedings of the board's meetings, signed by each commissioner present (section 18). Timber was to be sold only at an annual public auction (section 21).

The law also tightened regulations and specified procedures for the general appraisal and sale of school lands, for penalizing timber trespass, and for managing the income from the sale of school lands and timber; stipulated the qualifications and performance requirements for land and timber appraisers; and required the district surveyors general of logs and lumber to scale and report on the value of all harvested logs.

The state attorney general was added to the Board of Timber Commissioners in 1905 (Laws 1905 c204 s13) and the state forester in 1913 (Laws 1913 c383). In 1925 the board was abolished and its rights and powers were transferred to the Executive Council (Laws 1925 c426).

## **SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE REPORTS**

The reports consist of data transcribed onto pre-printed, one-page forms. Each report includes a section grid, sketched in and/or annotated to show the location, type, quantity, and quality of timber; water; swamp land; roads; areas already cut; the character of the land; and other relevant features. It also includes a general description of the timber and specific statements regarding the quantity, types, quality, and appraised value of pine and tamarack, the distance the timber needs to be hauled and the character of the road, the presence and type of hardwood growth, and the liability of loss or damage incurred by fire; the examiner's signature; the examination date; and the date the report was filed (notarized).

At the bottom of many reports, following a pre-printed statement recommending the timber's sale to protect the state from loss, are the board members' signatures and the date. Beginning in September, 1925, the state Executive Council replaces the Board of Timber Commissioners as signatories. Some of the signed reports in volumes [A] and B-1 also include notations as to whether the timber was sold, not sold, or cut, sometimes accompanied by the year(s) in which the action took place.

In volumes [A], B-1, B-2, and C the report data are transcribed into pre-printed volumes. Volumes D and E consist of half-size report forms pasted into scrapbooks. Subsequent volumes consist of bound report forms, occasionally accompanied by letters or memoranda pertaining to specific reports. Although the titles of the volumes vary, the reports themselves are the same, with periodic modifications in format.

The board's record books were kept by the Minnesota state auditor as board secretary, and some are stamped "State Auditor's Office."

Reports for 1895-1905 (4 volumes) have been microfilmed, and the originals retired from general use. Microfilm of reports for 1895-1905 is available for sale or interlibrary loan from the Minnesota Historical Society.

## ARRANGEMENT OF THE REPORTS

The reports are arranged chronologically by the date they were filed (notarized), or by the date of the board's recommendation to sell.

## RELATED MATERIALS

Volumes [A] and B-1 (1895-1900) include volume and page citations to "Land Examiners Record," nos. 1-3, which are part of the separately cataloged series of Land Examiners Reports; and to "Land Examiners Field Books" nos. 1-7, which as of 1997 have not been located.

The permit numbers that are noted in the post-1916 volumes may be related to permit files and record books that are part of Conservation Department: Forestry Division: Timber Management and Sale Records.

Minnesota. State Land Office: Appraisals of State Land (cataloged separately) give appraisal reports on state land in general, including its timber, for an expanded time period.

Correspondence, administrative, and miscellaneous files pertaining to state timber matters, including the issuance of timber cutting permits, during the period of the board's existence are found among the records of the Auditor: Land Department.

## OTHER FINDING AIDS

Each volume includes an index by range, township, and section, noting the page number for each report and in some volumes also giving the examiner's name.

## 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:**

Forests and forestry--Minnesota--Valuation.

### **Types of Documents:**

Microforms.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### Restrictions:

The originals of the microfilmed reports for 1895-1905 (4 volumes) have been retired from general use.

### Preferred Citation:

*[Indicate the cited volume title, including volume letter if applicable, the volume dates, page number(s), and the microfilm roll number if applicable].* Minnesota Board of Timber Commissioners. Reports of Estimates and Appraisals. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.

*See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.*

### Accession Information:

Accession number(s): none; 998-54

### Processing Information:

Volumes [A], B-1, B-2, and C (1895-1905) were microfilmed in 1997. The remaining volumes have not been inspected in detail.

PALS ID No.: 0900321714 RLIN ID No.: MNHV86-A80

## BOX AND ROLL LIST FOR THE REPORTS

*Note to Researchers: To obtain materials, please note both the location and the box or roll numbers shown below.*

Location	Roll	
SAM 271	1	Land Examiners Reports: Estimates and Appraisals: Volume [A]. October 1895 - December 1898. Volume B-1. December 1898 - October 1900.
SAM 271	2	Volume B-2. October 1900 - December 1903. Volume C. December 1903 - November 1905.
Location	Box	
106.G.7.1B(ov)	2	[State Estimators'] Report of Estimate and Appraisal: Volume D. September 1906 - November 1907. Volume E. November 1907 - November 1912.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Box</b>	
111.C.11.10F	3	State and County Timber Sale Appraisals. 4 volumes. Some reports pre-date the years given on the volume spines. 1913. 1914. 1915. 1916.  Appraiser's Reports: State and County Timber Sales. 10 volumes. Letters and memoranda are affixed to some reports. September 1917 - August 1918, permits 3450-3742. September 1918 - August 1919, permits 3743-3950.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Box</b>	
111.C.12.1B	4	September 1919 - August 1921, permits 3951-4089, 4158-4198. September 1920 - August 1921, permits 4090-4157. [1921-1922: missing] September 1922 - August 1923, permits 4326-4506. September 1923 - August 1924, permits 4507-4618. September 1924 - [January] 1925, permits 4619-4693. September 1925 - August 1926, permits 4694-4771. September 1926 - August 1927, permits 4772-4887. The report forms themselves begin to be titled "Estimate and Appraisal of State Timber." [1927-1928: missing] September 1928 - October 1930, permits 5059-5102.  Appraiser's Reports: County and Cash Timber Sales: November 1930 - December 1931, permits 5103-5436.