

Compiled by Eric Fair
Champaign County Historical Archives
The Urbana Free Library

Provenance

Gift.

Access

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Physical Description: 1 boxes (.5 linear ft.)

Historical Note

Champaign County was established in 1833, having previously been part of western Vermilion County. State Senator John Vance, the senator representing the area, named the county for his home county in Ohio, and Urbana would be the name of the new county seat for the same reason. The area only maintained a population of approximately 800 white settlers at the time, and so almost everything needed to be established – townships, school lands, roads, and towns. The courthouse and jail were yet to be constructed, and county officials were to be appointed. Early community leaders such as Mathew and Isaac Busey and Thomson Webber soon stepped forward and filled many of these roles. As the county's population grew (by 1865, only thirty years later, it was nearly 15,000 persons), many of the normal everyday activities began occurring with much more frequency – business transactions, births and deaths, crimes, school administration. Additionally, community members began writing and record their experiences of life in the county in letters and diaries.

Scope and Content

The Champaign County Early History Collection consists of a sampling of documents produced during the administration of official county transactions from 1833-1879. Included are the 1833 land donation by Matthew Busey and Thomson Webber for the first courthouse, as well as the 1836 contract to build the first dedicated courthouse structure. Some of the first efforts to establish public schools are documented within records. Criminal court records, coroner inquest, tavern bonds, and postal receipts are also present. Finally, letters, letter fragments, and diary pages from the Hoff, Russell, Warren, and Brownfield families round out the collection.

Arrangement

The Champaign County Early History Collection is divided into two series: Champaign County Documents and Manuscripts.

Folder List

Series One: Champaign County Documents

Champaign County Documents – Land Donation for a Courthouse by Matthew Busey and Thomson Webber, 1833

Champaign County Documents – Contract for the First Courthouse Building, 1836

Champaign County Documents – Naming Isaac Busey, Matthew Busey, and John Busey Trustees of School Lands, 1836

Champaign County Documents – Petition to Sell School Lands by John Mead, 1836

Champaign County Documents – Record of Land Sales, 1836

Champaign County Documents – Valuation of School Lands by Isaac Busey, John Busey, and Matthey Busey as Trustees, 1836

Champaign County Documents – Records of Sales of School Lands by John Mead, 1837, 1839

Champaign County Documents – List of School Age Children in Township 19 North, Range 10 East, 1842

Champaign County Documents – Tavern Bonds, 1836-1838

Champaign County Documents – Postal Receipts, 1842-1855

Champaign County Documents – Arrest Warrant for Andrew Ashton and Joseph Accosta, 1839

Champaign County Documents – Criminal Court Case against Otho Swearingen, 1842

Champaign County Documents – Letter from Kentucky to Thomson Webber inquiring about Champaign County, n.d.

Champaign County Documents – Correspondence received by Thomson Webber, 1842-1855

Champaign County Documents – Sale of Land from William Park to William Hooper, 1855

Champaign County Documents – Coroner's Inquests, 1847, 1863

Champaign County Documents – Annexation of Southwest Quarter of Section 12, Township 19 North, Range 8 East, to the City of Urbana, 1856

Champaign County Documents – Sheriff's Certificate of Land Sold to Thomas Isom, 1860

Champaign County Documents – Election Results for a \$75,000 Appropriation to aid in the Construction of the Danville, Urbana, Bloomington, and Pekin Railroad for West Virginia, 1869

Champaign County Documents – Police Magistrate Records of Joshua Dickerson, 1878

Champaign County Documents – Arrears in Pay for Original Bounty for Frank O'Brien, 1879

Series Two: Manuscripts

Manuscripts – Hoff Family – List of Births of the Blackford Family, 1802-1831

Manuscripts – Hoff Family – Letter Fragment with Hoff Family Genealogy, March 1, 1854

Manuscripts – Hoff Family – Hoff Family Writing Book, n.d.

Manuscripts – Russell Family – Letter from Hannah Russell to Amanda Higgins, August 19, 1835

Manuscripts – Warren Family – Letter Fragments, B.W. Warren, November 20, 1859

Manuscripts – Brownfield Family – Letter from M.J. Bryson to Joseph and Susan Brownfield, December 22, 1861

Manuscripts – Brownfield Family – Letter to Mary E. Brownfield from Martin V. Davis, April 28, 1862

Manuscripts – Brownfield Family – Letter from David Emberling to Joseph Brownfield, 1864

Manuscripts – Brownfield Family – Cemetery Marker Receipt for Allis, Daughter of Joseph Brownfield, May 23, 1866

Manuscripts – Brownfield Family – Letter from Nancy Dunn to John Brownfield, September 8, 1866

Manuscripts – Long Family – Letters from Irwin Baker to Joe A. Long, 1877-1881 [one of two]

Manuscripts – Long Family – Letters from Irwin Baker to Joe A. Long, 1877-1881 [two of two]