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Finding Aid

➤ Buchanan and MacGahan (Law Firm, Toledo, OH) ◀

Military pension applications, 1875-1889, Records

MSS-046

Size: 1 volume

Provenance: This volume was donated to The Ward M. Canaday of the University of Toledo Libraries in 1983 by Rev. John A. Thomas, Pastor of St. Patrick's Historic Church in Toledo. There is no indication how this volume came to rest among the records of the church.

Access: open

Related Collections:

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Completed by: Paul M. Gifford, April 1987

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Introduction

This collection consists of a single copybook apparently kept by the Toledo law firm of Buchanan and MacGahan from 1875 and maintained by successors as late as 1889. This volume is a record of affidavits of military service made by applicants for Federal military pensions and notarized by the lawyers. The information in this volume would be useful to researchers interested in Toledo-area disabled Civil War veterans, in pensions, or in Civil War casualties in general.

Historical Sketch

Until 1890, pensions for Civil War service were allowed to veterans only on the basis of physical or mental disability directly relating to their military service. Beginning in 1862, the various acts regulating pensions established rates, requirements for service-related disabilities, and arrears settlements. Widows and mothers of soldiers who died in service too were allowed pensions.

During the period covered by this volume, pensions based on service alone were allowed only to those few surviving War of 1812 veterans. The law established on February 14, 1871, gave pensions to veterans of this war with a minimum of two months' service. It was relaxed in 1878 to permit War of 1812 veterans with any length of service to receive pensions.

The partnership of Francis Buchanan and Patrick A. MacGahan (1851?-1904) existed, according to city directories, from 1876 to 1880. It likely began, however, in 1875, as indicated by the earliest date in this volume. Buchanan appears to have left Toledo about 1881. MacGahan continued his practice in Toledo, both alone and with other partners. He served as City Clerk in 1883 and 1885, City Auditor in 1884, and Police Court Judge in 1887 and 1888.

Scope and Content Note

This volume is a copybook containing duplicate affidavits of military service made by Civil War veterans applying for Federal military pensions. It clearly was begun and maintained in the Toledo law office of Francis Buchanan and Patrick A. MacGahan. An applicant would initiate the process of obtaining a pension by making an affidavit of his service record and disabilities resulting from that service. The lawyers notarized the affidavits and probably then sent the applications on to the War Department.

At least two clerks entered the affidavits into the volume. From 1875 to 1877, one clerk recorded the affidavits/applications verbatim or at least in a detailed style. The second (and other) clerk(s), beginning in 1876 and continuing on until 1889 (although most lack dates), recorded what appears to be abridged versions of those applications. Most of the volume, which originally contained 487 pages, of which pages 139 to 256 are missing, consists of records in the hand of the first clerk.

Entries by the first clerk contain dates of the soldier's enlistment and discharge; descriptions of injuries and diseases; supporting testimonies from officers or others who witnessed those injuries and diseases; and occasionally, medical evaluations. Entries by the second and later clerks omit the support testimonies from others. The applicants' own testimonies also tend to be shorter.

Applications from widows and mothers appear occasionally. These contain dates of marriage and death. At least one widow of a veteran of the War of 1812 made application for a pension which is contained in this volume.