

Central Superintendency of Indian Affairs

The two principal types of field jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs in the 19th century were superintendencies and agencies. Superintendents had general responsibility for Indian affairs in a designated geographical area. Their duties included the supervision of relations between the tribes and non-Indians, the supervision of the conduct and accounts of agents responsible to them, the communication of instructions from the Commissioner to agents, and the granting of leaves of absence to subordinates. It was also common practice for them to receive contract bids, enter into contracts, and issue annuities to the Indians. Under each superintendent were agents, subagents, or special agents immediately responsible for one or more tribes.

The Central Superintendency was established in 1851 as the successor to the St. Louis Superintendency. It was originally responsible for most of the Indians in what is now Kansas and Nebraska, and in the upper regions of the Missouri, Platte, and Arkansas Rivers in the Dakotas, Wyoming, and Colorado. The agencies assigned to the Central Superintendency include the Upper Platte, Upper Missouri, Ponca, and Yankton agencies. The creation of the Dakota Superintendency in 1861 ended the Central Superintendency's jurisdiction over the area covering the Dakotas. In 1878 the superintendency was discontinued.

Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1851-1867 (M234).

The records in this microfilm publication consist of communications received by the Office of Indian Affairs from the Central Superintendency concerning the general situation of the Indians, their population, education, health, and medical care, and their agriculture and subsistence. The letters cover such matters of administrative concern as emigration, land allotments, annuity payments, depredations, claims, complaints, traders, buildings, supplies, employees, and accounts. Correspondence is grouped by year and thereunder arranged alphabetically by initial letter of surname or official position of the writer. Within each alphabetical section, correspondence is arranged by file number, which was assigned to each letter as they were registered.

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Records of the Central Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1813-1878 (M856).

This microfilm publication was produced by the National Archives and contains records relating to almost all aspects of Indian administration within the Central Superintendency. There are documents relating to negotiation and enforcement of treaties; land surveys and allotments; Indian removal; annuity and other payments; Indian delegations; intrusions on Indian lands;

traders and licenses; enforcement of Federal laws and regulations; hostilities and military operations; depredation claims; location of agencies; school attendance and curricula; medical treatment; production at blacksmith, gunsmith, and wheelwright shops; construction and repair of buildings; and purchase and transport of goods and supplies. The following rolls were purchased by State Archives' staff for their pertinence to South Dakota. The entire publication may be obtained from the National Archives.

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