

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Pamphlet Accompanying  
Microcopy No. 348

REPORT BOOKS OF THE  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
1838-1885



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REPORT BOOKS OF THE  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
1838-1885

On the 53 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced the 53 Report Books of the Office of Indian Affairs, November 25, 1838 - November 12, 1885. These Report Books contain manuscript copies of communications sent by the Office to the member of the President's Cabinet having supervisory responsibility for Indian affairs.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was established as a separate agency within the War Department in 1824, and in 1832 Congress established the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The Bureau, usually known as the Office of Indian Affairs until 1947, was transferred in 1849 to the newly created Department of the Interior, where it has remained. Until March 1849 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs reported to the Secretary of War; thereafter he reported to the Secretary of the Interior.

The Report Books contain, in addition to communications to the Secretary, some copies of letters to the President, to chairmen and other members of committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the President of the Senate (normally the Vice President of the United States), and to other Government officials. During the earlier years, the letters to the President and the members of congressional committees were often signed by the Secretary of War rather than the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The use of the Report Books to record letters to officials other than the supervising Secretary was gradually discontinued; and by 1870 they were being used only for copies of letters sent to the Secretary of the Interior.

All communications to the Secretary were considered to be "reports." They range from extensive narratives, such as annual reports, to brief letters transmitting documents or recommending an appointment. They relate to almost every aspect of the administration of Indian affairs, including the negotiation and enforcement of treaties, estimates and appropriations, legislation, investigations, claims (particularly for depredations), maintenance of order and military operations, liquor control, establishment of reservations, appraisements of land, sales of land, issuance of land scrip, allotments, leases, licenses, trust funds, annuity goods, schools, agriculture, the field organization of the Indian service, location of agencies, appointments and employees, buildings, purchase and transportation of supplies, and accounts.

Letters were transcribed in chronological order, with some exceptions. Frequently at the end of a volume there are some letters that were omitted from their proper date order in the book. Occasionally a letter was transcribed into a volume with a different date span. Report Book no. 33 (reproduced on Roll 33) contains many letters improperly omitted from other volumes.

The earlier volumes have indexes both of subjects and of names of addressees. There are also notations in the margin, opposite the copied document, that indicate the page number of the last preceding and the next succeeding letters to the same correspondent. Other notations in the margins or below transcripts in the later volumes are the surname or initials of the clerk who drafted each letter, file references to related incoming correspondence, and an indication of the division of the Office that handled the matter. The division is usually indicated only by the initial letter of its name. The divisions for which references have been noted are Land, Finance, Accounts, Civilization, Medical and Educational ("M" or "E"), Civilization and Education ("C & E"), and Education. Further explanations concerning indexes and marginal notations are given in the notes on the individual rolls.

The names of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs and the Secretaries of War or the Interior who served during the period covered by a Report Book are also given in the roll notes. The names have also been given of persons who served as Acting Commissioner for an extended period of time during which there was no regularly appointed Commissioner. No attempt has been made to give the names of persons who served as Acting Commissioner or Secretary during the temporary absence of the incumbent.

This microcopy is one of three microfilm publications that together reproduce the general correspondence of the Office of Indian Affairs for the period from 1824 until about 1880. The Bureau's incoming correspondence for the period 1824-80 has been reproduced as Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-80 (Microcopy 234). The series of letterbooks or "Record Books," which contains copies of outgoing correspondence other than that sent to higher authority as recorded in the "Report Books," has been reproduced as Letters Sent by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81 (Microcopy 21); later volumes in this latter series have not been microfilmed in order that the terminal date will coincide with the one given for the series of letters received.

The records reproduced in this microcopy are part of the records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The originals of letters sent to the Secretaries before 1849 can usually be found in Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, and after 1849 in Record Group 48, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior (usually among the records of the Indian Division of the Secretary's Office). Occasionally the originals were returned to the Office of Indian Affairs with comments or covering communications and filed with its incoming correspondence.

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|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1           | 1             | Nov. 25, 1838 - Mar. 21, 1840  | \$3          |
| 2           | 2             | Mar. 21, 1840 - Aug. 31, 1841  | \$3          |
| 3           | 3             | Sept. 1, 1841 - Aug. 17, 1843  | \$3          |
| 4           | 4             | Aug. 18, 1843 - Feb. 26, 1846  | \$3          |
| 5           | 5             | Feb. 27, 1846 - July 25, 1848  | \$3          |
| 6           | 6             | July 25, 1848 - June 23, 1851  | \$3          |
| 7           | 7             | June 28, 1851 - Apr. 29, 1854  | \$3          |
| 8           | 8             | May 1, 1854 - Aug. 9, 1855     | \$3          |
| 9           | 9             | Aug. 10, 1855 - Dec. 31, 1856  | \$3          |
| 10          | 10            | Jan. 2, 1857 - May 31, 1858    | \$3          |
| 11          | 11            | June 1, 1858 - Aug. 29, 1860   | \$3          |
| 12          | 12            | Sept. 3, 1860 - Dec. 11, 1862  | \$3          |
| 13          | 13            | Dec. 12, 1862 - Aug. 19, 1864  | \$3          |
| 14          | 14            | Aug. 19, 1864 - Dec. 11, 1865  | \$3          |
| 15          | 15            | Dec. 13, 1865 - Sept. 29, 1866 | \$3          |
| 16          | 16            | Oct. 1, 1866 - Oct. 25, 1867   | \$3          |
| 17          | 17            | Oct. 26, 1867 - Oct. 31, 1868  | \$3          |
| 18          | 18            | Nov. 2, 1868 - Aug. 23, 1869   | \$3          |
| 19          | 19            | Aug. 24, 1869 - Sept. 9, 1870  | \$3          |
| 20          | 20            | Sept. 10, 1870 - Sept. 6, 1871 | \$3          |
| 21          | 21            | Sept. 7, 1871 - June 21, 1872  | \$3          |
| 22          | 22            | June 24, 1872 - May 13, 1873   | \$3          |
| 23          | 23            | May 13, 1873 - Jan. 17, 1874   | \$3          |
| 24          | 24            | Jan. 19-Aug. 7, 1874           | \$3          |
| 25          | 25            | Aug. 8, 1874 - Mar. 13, 1875   | \$3          |
| 26          | 26            | Mar. 15-Sept. 28, 1875         | \$3          |
| 27          | 27            | Sept. 27, 1875 - Apr. 4, 1876  | \$3          |
| 28          | 28            | Apr. 4, 1876 - Mar. 13, 1877   | \$3          |
| 29          | 29            | Mar. 13-Dec. 29, 1877          | \$3          |
| 30          | 30            | Jan. 2-June 1, 1878            | \$3          |
| 31          | 31            | July 1-Dec. 19, 1878           | \$3          |
| 32          | 32            | Jan. 2-Apr. 12, 1879           | \$3          |
| 33          | 33            | Mar. 30, 1878 - Oct. 19, 1882  | \$2          |
| 34          | 34            | Apr. 14-July 26, 1879          | \$3          |
| 35          | 35            | July 26-Dec. 31, 1879          | \$4          |
| 36          | 36            | Jan. 2-May 20, 1880            | \$4          |
| 37          | 37            | July 1-Nov. 30, 1880           | \$4          |
| 38          | 38            | Dec. 1, 1880 - Mar. 31, 1881   | \$4          |
| 39          | 39            | Apr. 1-July 23, 1881           | \$4          |
| 40          | 40            | July 25-Dec. 31, 1881          | \$4          |
| 41          | 41            | Jan. 3-Apr. 12, 1882           | \$4          |
| 42          | 42            | Apr. 13-July 24, 1882          | \$4          |

| <u>Roll</u> | <u>Volume</u> | <u>Inclusive Dates</u>         | <u>Price</u> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 43          | 43            | July 24-Dec. 19, 1882          | \$4          |
| 44          | 44            | Dec. 19, 1882 - Apr. 30, 1883  | \$4          |
| 45          | 45            | May 1-Sept. 13, 1883           | \$4          |
| 46          | 46            | Sept. 14, 1883 - Jan. 10, 1884 | \$4          |
| 47          | 47            | Jan. 10-Mar. 28, 1884          | \$4          |
| 48          | 48            | Mar. 28-June 30, 1884          | \$4          |
| 49          | 49            | July 1-Oct. 8, 1884            | \$4          |
| 50          | 50            | Oct. 9, 1884 - Jan. 28, 1885   | \$4          |
| 51          | 51            | Jan. 28-Apr. 30, 1885          | \$4          |
| 52          | 52            | May 1-Aug. 17, 1885            | \$4          |
| 53          | 53            | Aug. 18-Nov. 12, 1885          | \$3          |
| Total       |               |                                | \$175        |