

A Guide to the Virginia Commandant of the Public Guard, Armory Iron Company Records, 1846-1848

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History

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Descriptive Summary

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Physical Characteristics

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Physical Location

State Records Collection, Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs (Record Group 46).

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Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

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No acquisition information available.

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Historical Information

On 22 January 1801, in the wake of Gabriel's Insurrection, the General Assembly passed an act to establish a guard in the City of Richmond. The act decreed that the governor and Council enlist a company of sixty-eight men, including three commissioned officers, to act as a guard for the protection of public property in Richmond. In addition, the act ordered all arms & military stores to be removed from the Point of Fork Arsenal in Fluvanna County to Richmond. The Public Guard was quartered at barracks on the southwest corner of Capitol Square until the construction of the Bell Tower in 1824. Part of the guard was also quartered at the Penitentiary and Manufactory of Arms.

Alexander Quarrier was appointed the first commandant of the Public Guard by Governor James Monroe on 10 February 1801. Peter Crutchfield, who served as lieutenant of the Public Guard, replaced Quarrier as commandant between 1811 and 1817. Blair Bolling also played an important role as commandant serving in that capacity from 1818 until his death in 1839. During Bolling's tenure, the duties of the Adjutant General as Superintendent of Public Edifices were transferred to the Commandant of the Public Guard by an act of the General Assembly on 6 March 1821. In addition, the positions of Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard merged as a result of the closure of the Virginia Manufactory of Arms in Richmond on 1 January 1822. On 23 February 1822, the General Assembly passed an act providing for the repairs of the Armory and the preservation of the public arms. The Commandant of the Public Guard received the additional duties of packing and arranging the arms in the Armory subject to the inspection of the Adjutant General. He was also charged with the preservation of the Armory and its appendages, and of the arms of every description in the armory, and to make returns of the arms as required by the executive. Bolling was replaced by John B. Richardson who was in turn replaced by Charles Dimmock upon his death in 1843. The Public Guard remained in the Armory until the building was destroyed by the Richmond evacuation fire of 1865. The Public Guard was abolished in 1869.

On 17 June 1846, the Armory Iron Company leased part of the Armory from the Board of Public Works which contained water power and housed the Public Guard. Charles Dimmock, Commandant of the Public Guard at the time, played an important role in establishing this partnership and acted as Superintendent/Secretary of the Armory Iron Company. The Armory Iron Company was officially incorporated on 13 March 1847. Problems arose, however, between the Armory Iron Company and the Public Guard and artificers employed in the Armory. Charges were filed by the officers of the Public Guard and it was determined by the General Assembly that the Armory Iron Company violated their lease which was revoked on 2 March 1848, after an investigation.

Scope and Content Information

These records of the Commandant of the Public Guard relate to the Armory Iron Company. They contain charges and specifications, correspondence, interrogations or testimonies, leases, proceedings, and

resolutions. Correspondence is the most abundant and include letters to Governor William Smith, the Board Public Works, and the Adjutant General. The correspondence originated from Charles Dimmock, Commandant of the Public Guard and Superintendent of the Armory; Joseph R. Anderson, President of the Armory Iron Company; Lt. E.S. Gay of the Public Guard; and Charles F. Osborne of the Armory Iron Company. Also included are minutes and agreements from the Board of Public Works regarding their lease with the Armory Iron Company. Documents related to the General Assembly's investigation include testimony from Charles Dimmock, Joseph R. Anderson, and others. There is also a list of charges against the Company and resolutions by the General Assembly. Noteworthy is a plan of the Armory showing the area leased by the Armory Iron Company.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by document type.

Contents List

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Folder 4

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Oversized

Plan of the Armory and Grounds, 1848

Box 2

Folder 1

Plat showing the western part of the Armory, 1848

Box 2

Folder 2

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