

A Guide to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts - Inspectors of Oysters Records, 1866-1879

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1866-1879

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History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts - Inspectors of Oysters Records, 1866-1879

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Descriptive Summary

Accession Number

APA 292

Language

English

Creator

Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts (1776-1928)

Extent

2.2 cu. ft. (5 boxes)

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Transferred from the Auditor of Public Accounts in 1913.

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Biographical Information

Following the Civil War, the demand for Chesapeake Bay oysters - always high - grew into a national obsession, especially after the transcontinental railroad connected each coast. Oyster wars broke out between Virginia and Maryland watermen. As the public's taste for oysters grew, so did the need to regulate and protect the oyster industry.

A few steps already had been taken in this direction. The Virginia code of 1860 authorized county courts to appoint inspectors of oysters to enforce oyster laws and collect fines and fees. The General Assembly passed an act on 3 March 1866 amending the code's provisions and requiring the oyster inspectors to report their collections to the auditor of public accounts in February, June, and October of each year.

On 15 March 1871 the General Assembly reorganized the inspection system to centralize control. The auditor of public accounts divided the counties involved in the oyster industry into three districts and appointed a principal inspector for each district. The inspectors made monthly reports on their collections to the auditor.

In 1874 the General Assembly reverted to the earlier system of court-appointed inspectors, passing an act to that effect on 18 April. These inspectors reports quarterly to the auditor until the General Assembly passed an act on 25 February 1892, requiring the inspectors to report instead to the commissioner of fisheries. On 7 February 1898 the General Assembly abolished the office of fish commissioner and required the inspectors to report monthly to the new Board of Fisheries. An act passed on 4 March 1898 mandated annual assessments of planted oysters to be submitted to the auditor by the inspectors on 1 October of each year.

Scope and Content

Records, 1866-1879, including ledgers and reports detailing taxes collected on oyster farming submitted to the Auditor of Public Accounts. Includes license reports, lists of inspectors bills, accounts of renters, and lists of persons registered to catch oysters. The lists and reports include the name of captain/owner, name of vessel, where hailing from, class of vessels, rates, number of men, amount collected, water course, and amount of bushels collected. The lists of inspectors bills include costs for advertising, stamps, office building and supplies, and salaries for the inspectors. The records are divided into District I, II, and III.

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Reports, December [unknown year and district]

Box 4

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Ledgers

Inspectors for Oysters, Act of 1866, 1866-1871

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Inspectors for Oysters, Act of 1871, 1871-1874

Box 5

Inspectors for Oysters, Act of 1874, 1874-1879

