

Richmond County Board of Supervisors Minutes, 1851-1864

Overview of the Collection

Collection No.: SIM-19

Title: Richmond County Board of Supervisors Minutes, 1851-1864

Creator: The Board of Supervisors of Richmond County

Dates: November 12, 1851 – February 12, 1864

Extent: 1 folio, approximately 600 pages

Abstract: This manuscript log book presents a record of daily activities, financial issues, and juridical documents of the Board of Supervisors of Richmond County from November 12, 1851 through February 12, 1864. Along with the standard longhand minutes the record contains two printed pamphlets and one foldout chart documenting the Board endeavors in the in the matter of tax reduction for the year 1861.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Richmond County Board of Supervisors Minutes, Archives & Special Collections, Department of the Library, College of Staten Island, CUNY, Staten Island, New York.

Acquisition

Purchased.

Processing Information

Processed by Cela Peterson, Palmer School, Long Island University Intern, September through November, 2009.

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Restrictions

Access

Access to the electronic version of the record is unrestricted. Requests for consultation of the manuscript log should be directed to the Coordinator of Archives & Special Collections.

Copyright Notice

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Administrative History

The Board of Supervisors of Richmond County (Staten Island, New York) first appeared as a political entity in 1699. The supervisors were elected civil officers with local administrative, financial, and legal competences. Board functions were instrumental to asserting regional interests in the context of national and international issues.

Scope and Content Note

The log book contains minutes of the Richmond County Board of Supervisors meetings from November 12, 1851 thru February 12, 1864. The first part of the log, covering the years 1851-1858, mainly records administrative issues and matters of protocol. Later entries demonstrate the evolution of social life and the development of a regional economy that required complex responses by the Board. The issues recorded by the log can be categorized in three topics: civic functions and events, financial matters and legal documents, and juridical regulations.

The manuscript text of the minutes records the administrative and financial issues pertinent to the timely activities and regional interests such as: amendments to the law of Game, legislative measures regarding fishing and oyster harvesting; election and nomination of administrative officials and committees; building and repairing bridges, roads, the county jail and court etc.; conscripting of soldiers and enlisting of volunteers (during the Civil War); raising funds to benefit the hospitals, patients, and destitute; soliciting subscriptions and addressing requests for relief for the families of the conscripted and volunteer soldiers; petitions revision and authorization of bonds printing.

One significant lacuna is any mention of the burning of the Quarantine or the origin of the controversy with state authorities in Albany. Although the log book contains no account of the event, the Board appointed a Committee charged with gathering data to demonstrate the negative health impact of the Quarantine and the unfair financial burden to the community that it represented. The Committee report presents a detailed financial and medical recount of the repercussions of the presence of the Quarantine in Richmond County. The document produces a thorough comparative socio-economic analysis of the development of Richmond and its neighboring counties not afflicted by the medical and financial after-effects of the Quarantine.

The log also contains transcribed letters of petition, indicative constituent issues, charts of tax revenues and county expenses, and financial rosters. The most significant meeting minutes

discuss taxation and the local repercussions of the Quarantine in September 1858. Especially representative for the activities coordinated and the public functions performed by the Board of Supervisors are the two printed pamphlets attached to the log:

A Report of the Special Committee Appointed by the Board of Supervisors of Richmond County for the Purpose of Getting a Reduction of Taxes for the Year 1861 from the State Authorities (revised edition). New York: Francis & Loutrel, Steam Job Printers And Stationers, 45 Maiden Lane, 1861

Report of the Special Committee of Board of Supervisors of Richmond County [Appointed to Obtain Relief from the Tax Imposed Under an Act of the Legislature – Passed – April 17 1860] New York: Francis & Loutrel, Steam Printers And Stationers, 45 Maiden Lane, 1863

Index terms

Fishing – Richmond County (N.Y.)

Minutes – Richmond County (N.Y.). Board of Supervisors.

Oyster industry – Richmond County (N.Y.)

Public health – Staten Island (New York, N.Y.) – 19th century.

Quarantine – Staten Island (New York, N.Y.)

Richmond County (N.Y.). Board of Supervisors.

Richmond County (N.Y.)

Taxation – Staten Island (New York, N.Y.)

Staten Island (New York, N.Y.) – History – 19th century.