

**SECRETARY OF STATE
DIVISION OF BUSINESS SERVICES
FOREIGN CHARTERS
1874-1971**

RECORD GROUP 281

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MICROFILM ONLY

INTRODUCTION

Record Group 281, Secretary of State, Division of Business Services, Foreign Charters, 1874-1971, contains 180 cubic feet of documents filed by corporations from out of state doing business in Tennessee. These forms were filed with the Secretary of State and are arranged numerically, however, there is also an alphabetical index.

Under Tennessee statute it is the ministerial duty for The Secretary of State to file corporate documents and to maintain a record of the filings. Every foreign (non-Tennessee) corporation that intends to conduct business in Tennessee must first register their corporation with the Secretary of State. To register the foreign corporation in Tennessee, the corporation would file a copy of its charter. A charter is the legal document that establishes the corporation as a legal entity. The registration includes a principal address for the corporation and a registered agent address for service of process.

This record group was microfilmed and the originals disposed of according to the Tennessee State RDA for these records.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Record Group 281, Secretary of State, Division of Business Services, Foreign Charters, contains 180 cubic feet of documents spanning the years 1874 through 1971. The record group consists of reports filed by corporations headquartered outside of Tennessee.

The Division of Business Services originally maintained these records in numerical order but the numerical index evidently was abandoned at some point. The records are arranged in a new numerical system using the computer software called Microsoft® Access™. The container list consists of a numerical list and an alphabetical list printed from this computer software. Only the alphabetical list is available online.

In the early stages of processing this collection an attempt was made to use the original index numbers found on the documents. When a gap in the charter numbers appeared, an entry of "N/A" was entered in place of the name of the corporation. After several large gaps and some individual gaps appeared, it was decided to discard the attempt of using the old numbers and assign the remaining documents all new numbers. The charter numbers are arbitrary numbers assigned for the purpose of searching the Access™ database. Four data fields make up the database, and they include the name of the corporation, the charter number, the year of incorporation, and the state of incorporation. Charters were filed for various reasons and therefore the names of a number of companies appear more than once. Reasons for refileing could include mergers, changes in operating officers, and increased value of the company. The year indicates the year the charter was filed with the Tennessee Secretary of State, not necessarily the original year of incorporation of the company. The state indicates the state of incorporation of the company.

The most efficient way to locate a charter in this system is to first search the alphabetical list, find the document number, then locate the document by number on the microfilm. When using the computer searchable database it is possible to do a word search to find the name of the corporation, or to sort the data by the year or state of incorporation. During the creation of this database the use of "The" at the beginning of a name was not included in the name field. "Company" and "Incorporated" are always abbreviated throughout this database. Otherwise, the complete name of the company is included in the name field and will be found in its entirety in the searchable database. Long company names are limited to 37 characters in the paper print out.

ALPHABETICAL LISTS:

A-F

G-N

O-Z