

CORNISH BRIDGE PAPERS 1936-2
1795 TO 1935
345 items, 6 boxes

BACKGROUND:

The Cornish Bridge connects Windsor, Vermont and Cornish, New Hampshire. It is a toll bridge built and maintained for 139 years by a private company, "The Proprietor's of the Cornish Bridge". Concurrent, or nearly so, acts of the legislatures of New Hampshire and Vermont granted the charter to Jonathan Chase on behalf of the Proprietors. The original stockholders included professional men and merchants from Windsor, Cornish and nearby towns. Two business firms from Hartford, Connecticut were also among the first stockholders. Shares remained valuable and closely held through the years.

The first bridge was built in 1796 and the cost far exceeded expectations. This original bridge was probably uncovered. Spring run off in 1824 carried it away and a similar bridge was built. In 1849 the second bridge was lost by flood. The third bridge built was lattice covered. It lasted until 1866 when it too was carried away. Repairs were considerable and the bridge was closed briefly in 1925 and again in 1929. All these replacements and repairs were paid for by the company without reliance on tax resources of the local communities.

Before the arrival of the railroads, the toll bridge was the route for commerce. Sheep and cattle in great numbers passed over the bridge from the North and West on their way to market. Stage coach lines made regular use of the bridge. Cows from Windsor were pastured daily in Cornish. This local to-and-fro traffic must have produced substantial income.

On December 9, 1935 the bridge company closed its books and turned the bridge over to the State of New Hampshire. It continued as a toll bridge until 1943 and remained in use as a free bridge. In late 1989 the bridge was reopened after being closed for a couple of years for complete rebuilding.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The building and early history of the Cornish Bridge is well documented in the papers. The charter and bylaws and granting legislation from both New Hampshire and Vermont is in Box 1. In the account section is a book of expenses in building the bridge in 1796. There are also stock accounts tracing the sale of the shares from 1796 to 1824. In a Dec. 31, 1919 letter Henry Wardner, Treasurer and later Director, recounts some of the history of the bridge.

From 1800 to 1850 the best representation is in the account books with some minutes and annual reports. 1850 to 1900 there are treasurer's reports and quinquennial reports to the Supreme Court of NH. Account books have a fairly thorough run for this period. 1900 to its closing in 1935

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represented by strong financial reports, inspection reports, and reports to the Public Service Commission. There are no accounts for this period.

There is very little correspondence in the collection. One interesting piece however is the 1866 threat to burn down the bridge.

SERIES A: ADMINISTRATIVE PAPERS

| | | | |
|-----|----|-----------|---|
| Box | 1, | fld 1-2 | Charter & Bylaws 1795-96, 1824, 1850 |
| | 1, | fld 3-4 | Correspondence 1866, 1919, 1924 |
| | 1, | fld 5-7 | Minutes of Annual Meetings, 1824-1932 |
| | 1, | fld 8 | Annual Reports, 1927-29, 1933 |
| | 1, | fld 9-10 | Director's Reports, 1851-1864 |
| | 1, | fld 11 | Resignations of Directors, 1824, 1850 |
| | 1, | fld 12-13 | Minutes of Proprietor's Meetings, 1824-1860, 1906, 1931 |
| | 1, | fld 14 | Proprietor's Lists, 1850 |
| | 1, | fld 15-16 | Reports to Public Service Commission, 1915-1933 |
| | 1, | fld 17 | Stockholders list, 1848, 1850-51 |
| | 1, | fld 18 | Misc. Administrative Papers, 1824-1826, 1850, 1926 |

SERIES B: LEGAL PAPERS

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|-----|----|--------|---|
| BOX | 1, | fld 19 | Acts of the New Hampshire Legislature, 1795-1796 |
| | 1, | fld 20 | Acts of the Vermont Legislature, 1797 |
| | 1, | fld 21 | Agreements between Cornish Bridge and New England Telephone, 1822 |
| | 1, | fld 22 | Sale of Stock Shares, 1824-1851 |
| | 1, | fld 23 | Leins, 1832-1851 |
| | 1, | fld 24 | Proprietors of the Cornish Bridge vs. F.A. Fitts, Court Case, 1918-1919 |
| | 1, | fld 25 | Sale of Property, 1919 |

SERIES C: FINANCIAL PAPERS

| | | | |
|-----|----|----------|---|
| Box | 2, | fld 1 | Settlement Transferring Funds from one Treasurer to another, 1825, 1850 |
| | 2, | fld 2-10 | Treasurer's Reports, 1851-1933 |
| Box | 3, | fld 1 | Income Tax Returns, 1927-1931 |
| | 3, | fld 2-3 | Quinquennial Reports to NH Supreme Court, 1851-1926 |

SERIES D: ACCOUNTS

| | | | |
|-----|----|-------|----------------------------|
| Box | 3, | fld 4 | Expenses in building, 1796 |
|-----|----|-------|----------------------------|

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3, fld 5 Stock accounts May 7, 1796-Dec 29, 1824
 3, fld 6 Toll book, 1802-1819
 3, fld 7 Accounts, 1811-1813
 3, fld 8 Pass book, 1811-1819
 Oversize 6 Accounts, 1819-1822
 3, fld 9 Accounts, Mar 17, 1823-Jan 25, 1826
 Oversize 8 Daybook, Dec 1824-April 1876
 3, fld 10 Accounts, Jan 14, 1826-Mar 26, 1827
 3, fld 11 Accounts, Mar 27, 1827-Feb 3, 1830
 Oversize 11 Daybook, 1827-1831
 Oversize 12 Accounts, 1827-1850
 Oversize 13 Accounts, 1835-1850
 3, fld 12 Accounts, Mar 1, 1837-Jan 31, 1840
 Oversize 15 Blotter, 1845-Sept 1846
 Oversize 16 Blotter, Dec 1847-June 1848
 Oversize 17 Accounts, June-Oct, 1848
 Oversize 18 Accounts, Dec 1848-Jan 1850
 Oversize 19 Accounts, 1850-1852
 Oversize 20 Accounts, 1850-1868
 Oversize 21 Ledger, 1850, 1866
 Oversize 22 Accounts of the Treasurer, 1850-

Box 4, fld 1 Accounts, Jan 1850-July 1910
 4, fld 2 Accounts, July 1853-Jan 1866
 Oversize 25 Accounts, 1864-1877
 4, fld 3 Accounts, 1868-1870
 Oversize 27 Accounts, 1878-1887
 Oversize 28 Accounts, 1878-1895
 Oversize 29 Cashbook, 1888-1891
 4, fld 4 Papers from Cashbook, 1888-1891
 4, fld 5 Papers from Account books

SERIES E: OPERATIONS

Box 4, fld 6 Inspection Reports, 1912, 1914, 1919
 4, fld 7 Inspection correspondence, weight limits, etc, 1920-1922
 4, fld 8 Toll Rates, 1920

SERIES F: MISCELLANEOUS

Box 4, fld 9 Threat to burn bridge, 1866
 4, fld 10 Misc. 1935
 4, fld 11 Misc. copies from microfilm