Guide to the Northern Railroad Business Records, 1823-1926
64.10

Special Collections
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Subject Headings:
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Andrus, Albert, 1817-1889
Fenian Movement
Ogdensburg Railroad (N.Y.)
Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad (N.Y.)
Railroads—New York (State)—North Country
Biographical Note

The Northern Railroad was the North Country’s first railroad. It connected Lake Champlain at Rouses Point to the St. Lawrence River at Ogdensburg and it was the fourth largest line under a single management in New York State.

Prior to the charter establishing the Northern New York Railroad Company on May 14, 1845, other attempts were made by citizens of the North Country to gain a railroad in the area. One was the organization of the Lake Champlain and Ogdensburg Railroad Company in 1836. They had a capital of $800,000. Unfortunately this was insufficient and the venture fell through.

The completed Northern Railroad line was 118 miles long and was connected to New England by a Lake Champlain bridge, built in 1849. The bridge was 3880 feet long, spanning the lake from Rouses Point, NY to Alburgh, VT. This connection greatly increased business between northern New York and Boston, MA. The railroad had an office in Boston, with the general office located in Malone, NY until 1870.

The first train from Rouses Point to Ogdensburg arrived on September 20, 1850, carrying officials of the company.

The first stations in Clinton County were Ellenburgh, Chazy (Woods Falls), Centerville (Mooers Forks), Mooers (Mooers Junction), Champlain, and Rouses Point. In the early years, the Northern Railroad was very successful, both from an operating and financial standpoint. It greatly enhanced the rapid development of the livestock and homemade butter industries in the North Country. However, the success of the Northern Railroad faltered and in December of 1857 it was reorganized at Ogdensburg, becoming the Ogdensburg Railroad. This company managed the railroad until 1864 and then became the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad Company.

The Northern Railroad played an integral part of the ‘Lakes to Boston’ route. For several years the Central Vermont Railroad Company had traffic agreements with the Northern Railroad and in 1870 they leased the New York line. Eventually they could no longer pay the installments and in 1896 the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad Company again became an independent company until in 1902 was purchased by the Rutland Railroad Company.

Scope of the Collection

The bulk of the Northern Railroad Collection spans the years 1823-1926, with the bulk of the materials covering 1850-1880.

The collection comprises 1855 items, arranged chronologically in three boxes.

Box One contains the early history of the railroad, including initial construction and labor receipts, information on the railroad’s operation and freight, and correspondence dealing with securities.

Box Two contains business material concerning taxes, management, lands and buildings, and the railroad’s legal and claims transactions.
Box three also contains business and legal papers, including documents pertaining to wood estimates and sales, financial statements, waybills, freight bills, train orders, and train passes. Also included are documents dealing with the railroad’s 1864 reorganization, Fenian correspondence, cases against Albert Andrus and A. T. Richey, Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad Script, and the Chateaugay Extension. Two folders contain miscellaneous papers of correspondence, receipts and items from other railroad lines.

Several people are mentioned quite frequently throughout the collection: Albert Andrus, wood agent in Malone; Henry Church, treasurer in Boston; and John C. Pratt, President in Boston.

**Container List**

**Box 1: History of the Railroad**

1/1 History of the railroad and railroad land, 1823-1867
1/2 Railroad construction, 1849-1850, 1868-1873
1/3 Fence building, September 1850
1/4 Estimates and reports on construction, 1847-1849
1/5 Estimates and reports on construction, 1849-1850
1/6 Time lists of labor, January 1850-September 1850
1/7 Receipts for labor, July 1850-December 1850
1/8 Receipts for labor, undated
1/9 Labor receipts-Board bills, undated
1/10 Pamphlet, Report of Directors of the Northern Railroad, June 1851
1/11 Railroad equipment, correspondence and receipts, September 1862-May 1866
1/12 Railroad equipment, correspondence, June 1866-July 1866
1/13 Railroad equipment, correspondence, August 1866-December 1866
1/14 Railroad equipment, correspondence, January 1867-July 1877, undated
1/15 Railroad operation and freight, correspondence and receipts, May 1851-January 1864
1/16 Railroad operation and freight, correspondence, January 1866-July 1866
1/17 Railroad operation and freight, correspondence, August 1866-December 1866
1/18 Railroad operation and freight, correspondence, January 1867-June 1867
1/19 Railroad operation and freight, correspondence, 1869-December 1879, undated
1/20 Railroad securities correspondence, October 1861-November 1873
1/21 Railroad securities correspondence, January 1874-October 1877
1/22 Railroad securities correspondence, January 1878-January 1881
Box 2: Business and Legal Papers

2/23  Railroad taxes, correspondence and receipts, May 1866-November 1876
2/24  Railroad taxes, correspondence and receipts, December 1876
2/25  Railroad taxes, correspondence and receipts, 1877
2/26  Railroad taxes, correspondence and receipts, January 1878-June 1878
2/27  Railroad taxes, correspondence and receipts, July 1878-July 1880, undated
2/28  Lands and buildings, correspondence and accounts, July 1856-December 1870
2/29  Lands and buildings, correspondence and accounts, July 1871-July 1877
2/30  Lands and buildings, correspondence and accounts, August 1877-August 1878
2/31  Lands and buildings, correspondence and accounts, Sept. 1878-January 1881, undated
2/32  Railroad claims, correspondence and legal documents, August 1864-July 1866
2/33  Railroad claims, correspondence and legal documents, August 1866-September 1869
2/34  Railroad claims, correspondence and legal documents, July 1870-July 1877
2/35  Railroad claims, correspondence and legal documents, August 1877-Sept. 1878, undated
2/36  Railroad management, correspondence, April 1860-May 1866
2/37  Railroad management, correspondence, June 1866-July 1866
2/38  Railroad management, correspondence, August 1866-November 1868
2/39  Railroad management, correspondence, June 1870-May 1877
2/40  Railroad management, correspondence, June 1877-July 1878
2/41  Railroad management, correspondence, August 1878-April 1886, undated

Box 3: Business and Legal Papers

3/42  Wood estimates and sales, correspondence, contracts and receipts, 1866-September 1871
3/43  Wood estimates and sales, correspondence, contracts and receipts, October 1871-May 1877
3/44  Wood estimates and sales, correspondence, contracts and receipts, June 1877-December 1877
3/45  Wood estimates and sales, correspondence, contracts and receipts, May 1878-August 1878
3/46  Wood estimates and sales, correspondence, contracts and receipts, September 1878-October 1878
3/47 Wood estimates and sales, correspondence, contracts and receipts, November 1878-January 1881, undated

3/48 Financial Statements, 1851-1878, undated

3/49 Account book of claims and assessments and taxes, 1867-1876

3/50 Way bills (money packages), 1849-1879

3/51 Way bills, 1851-1879

3/52 Freight bills, 1851-1870

3/53 Train instructions, 1867

3/54 Train instructions, undated

3/55 Ticket passes, correspondence, 1866-1879, undated

3/56 Railroad reorganization, correspondence March 1864-April 1864

3/57 Champlain & St. Lawrence Railroad Script (money), 1837

3/58 A. T. Richey, Moira, Complaint and proceedings, correspondence and statements, April 1865

3/59 Fenian correspondence, 1866, and a letter regarding Malone politics, 1861

3/59/1 October 18, 1861 letter from J. A. Sabin to Albert (Andrus?) regarding the Malone, NY political situation

3/59/2 June 7, 1866: A brief note written by General Meade prohibiting the transportation of Fenians on the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad

3/59/3 June 8, 1866: Four photocopies of a Proclamation against aid to Fenians for the purpose of invading Canada, signed by George G. Meade

3/59/4 June 11, 1866: A letter written by D. W. G. Brown of the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad to H. Rice concerning a man requesting the use of a train

3/59/5 June 20, 1866: Note from A Gates of the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad to H. Rice informing him that the sender had been called as a witness in the case of the U.S. vs the Fenian Leaders

3/59/6 June 28, 1866: Note from A. Gates to H. Rice letting him know that witnesses in the Fenian case, including himself, were still being "detained by the Court here."

3/59/7 Undated: Notes from a Chateaugay town meeting written by James Gordon outlining resolutions taken at the meeting to ensure the payment of "every volunteer from the town of Chateaugay." (includes additional details concerning dates of service and the method of transferring the payments).

3/60 Case against Albert Andrus, correspondence and statements, 1878

3/61 Chateaugay Railroad extension, correspondence, July 23, 1879-October 7, 1879
3/62  Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts and items from other railroad lines, 1853-1877

3/63  Miscellaneous correspondence, receipts and items from other railroad lines, undated and 1878-1926