

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

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Finding Aid for the

Ashbel Green & William Bond vs.
The Chicago, Saginaw & Canada Railroad. Collection

Collection # 052

July 2007 version

Abstract

The Chicago, Saginaw and Canada Railroad was a short-line lumber road that served a small part of Michigan for a decade in the late 19th Century, then fell on hard times. In 1881, the C.S. & C. was sold in a foreclosure sale. The road was purchased by the Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railroad Company, and operated under the name of the Chicago and Western Railroad Company. The Chicago, Saginaw & Canada Railroad was sued by Ashbel Green and William Bond, trustees. The company was placed first into receivership, then bankruptcy. The collection consists primarily of the company records that were held as court evidence, testimony, and receivers vouchers, 1873-1883.

Collection #: 52

Accession #: 1986.391. and 1998.11

Donor: City of Grand Rapids

Span dates: 1873-1888

Processor: Wm. C. Black; November, 1987

Reorganized with additional material: June, 1998. Box Summary, Marcella Beck, August 31,2000.

Size: 2.8 cu.ft.

Access Restriction: Access to material in security file requires approval of department head.

Box Summary

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Description of Contents</u>	<u>Box Description</u>
1	court records/receiver's reports	standard legal
2	receiver's reports	standard legal
3	Bonds. Separated from the Collection. Transferred to the City Attorney's Office, pending litigation.	
4	Kleiman article	slim legal
5	published court records	standard legal

History

The Chicago, Saginaw and Canada Railroad was a short-line lumber road that served a small part of Michigan for a decade in the late 19th Century. Mortgage bonds were issued in 1873, and in 1875 twenty miles of track had been laid from Alma to Cedar Lake, Michigan. Four years later, although the road had by then been placed in the hands of a receiver, an additional 15.3 miles of track had been laid, extending the road to Lake View.

When the road was founded, \$4,200,000 of capital stock was authorized. However, only \$14,500 of that amount was ever sold. The company's bonded debt was \$185,000, which was funded by 7 percent first mortgage bonds. Total gross revenue for the struggling company's first year was only \$2,163. For the same period of time, operating expenses were \$1,130 and fixed retirement charges were \$12,950. The combined costs of operating and fixed charges nearly depleted income and funds raised by sale of stock, and before the end of 1876, the company was placed in the hands of a receiver.

D.D. Erwin took control of the company on November 20, 1876. Erwin leased the company to J.A. Elwell who was one of its officers. Under Elwell's guidance, the road took significant strides toward solvency. In addition to extending the road to Lake View, Elwell increased the road's business. The 1881 income was over \$100,000 with taxes and operating expenses of only \$60,000. But other costs continued to threaten the road's existence. Funded and unfunded debts totaled \$223,600, and there was an operating deficit of \$143,936.

In 1881, the C.S. & C. was sold in a foreclosure sale. The road was purchased by the Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railroad Company, and operated under the name of the Chicago and Western Railroad Company.

Scope and Content

The collection documents the company through its period of receivership, highlighting the financial operations of the company. The material also includes bonds (bound over for court evidence) and other court records that demonstrate the problems the railroad, especially through its management, faced in its brief existence, and culminates in the papers of the foreclosure hearing pleadings and proofs.

Series Descriptions

Series I. Court Records

No arrangement.

Consists of the records of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Western District of Michigan, Southern Division, for the Ashbel Green & William Bond vs. the Chicago, Saginaw & Canada Railroad case. Including auditor reports, testimony, evidence and affidavits, the series chronicles the economic position at the time of the court action. The Bonds in Box 3 have been separated from the Collection, and were removed to the Grand Rapids City Attorney's Office in the last 1990's.

Series II. Receiver's Reports

Arranged chronologically by subject.

Consists of the records and reports of the court appointed receiver, 1873 to 1883. The vouchers indicate the costs of the daily operation of the railroad, including salaries, right-of-way costs, travel expenses, etc.

Series III. Kleiman Article

No arrangement.

Consists of research of Jeffery Kleiman used to write the article, "A History of the Chicago, Saginaw & Canada Railroad." Also includes correspondence, articles, photos and the finished article, along with various drafts.

Series IV. PUBLISHED COURT RECORDS

No arrangement.

Consists of two published book, Appeal to the Supreme Court (1879) and Rulings of the Supreme Court (1888).

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
		Series I. Court Records.
1	1	Auditor's Report, 1882.
	2	Report of J. Champlin, examiner & referee.
	3	Foreclosure, Hearings on Pleadings & Proofs.
	4	Osborn Authorization.
	5	Abstracts of proofs, 1879.
	6	Affidavits, 1879.
	7-8	John A. Elwell testimony, 1881.
	9	Benjamin Richardson testimony, 1879.
	9b	Subpoena and other witness related documents.
	9c	Exhibits and related materials.
3		Evidence (bonds). (Separated from the collection, and transferred to the City Attorney's Office in the late 1990's.)
		Series II. Receiver's Reports.
1	10	#1-#39, 1877-1880.
	11	#40-#79, 1880-1883.
		Receiver's Vouchers
	12-13	Filed, 1883.
	14	#1-#50, 1876-1878.
2	15	#51-#79, 1878.
	15b	#80-#101, 1878-1879.
	16	#102-#150, 1879-1880.
	17	#151-#164k, 1880-1881.
	18	#165-#199, 1881.
	19	#200-#220, 1881-1882.
	20-1	Accounts Engineers Payroll.
	22	Accounts Expenses, 1872-1879.
	23	Accounts General, 1873-1875.

		Series. III. Kleiman Article.
4	25	Drafts and Article, "A History of the Chicago, Saginaw & Canada Railroad."
	26-7	Research notes.
	28	Correspondence.
	29-30	Articles on the C.S. & C. R.R.
	31	Annual Reports, 1876-1884, Commissioner of Railroads, State of Michigan
	32	Photos.
		Series IV. Published Court Records.
5	x	Appeal to Supreme Court (1879)
		Rulings of the Supreme Court (1888)