

# **Finding aid for the Ashbel Green & William Bond vs. the Chicago Saginaw and Canada Railroad collection Collection 052**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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November 1987  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Title</b>	Ashbel Green & William Bond vs. The Chicago, Saginaw and Canada Railroad collection
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1873-1888
<b>Extent</b>	1.5 Linear feet 5 boxes
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>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. &amp; 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 &amp; 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.</p>

## **Biographical/Historical note**

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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.

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## **Scope and Contents note**

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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.

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## **Administrative Information**

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## **Publication Information**

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department November 1987

## **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

City of Grand Rapids, accession numbers 1986.391 and 1998.11

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Corporate Name(s)**

- Chicago and Western Railroad Company.
- Chicago, Saginaw and Canada Railroad Co.

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

### **Subject(s)**

- Railroads -- Michigan

## Series I. Court Records

## Collection Inventory

## Series I. Court Records

## Scope and Contents note

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 1990s. No arrangement.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Auditor's Report, 1882	1	1
Report of J Champlin, examiner and referee	1	2
Foreclosure, Hearings on Pleadings and Proofs	1	3
Osborn Authorization	1	4
Abstracts of proofs, 1879	1	5
Affidavits, 1879	1	6
John A Elwell testimony, 1881	1	7-8

**Series II. Receiver's Reports**

Benjamin Richardson testimony, 1879	1	9
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Subpoena and other witness related documents	1	9b
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Exhibits and related materials	1	9c
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Evidence (bonds). (Separated from the collection, and transferred to the City Attorney's Office in the late 1990s)

**Series II. Receiver's Reports****Scope and Contents note**

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. Arranged chronologically by subject.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
#1-#39, 1877-1880	1	10
#40-#79, 1880-1883. Receiver's Vouchers	1	11
Filed, 1883	1	12-13
#1-#50, 1876-1878	1	14
#51-#79, 1878	2	15

**Series. III. Kleiman Article**

#80-#101, 1878-1879	2	15b
#102-#150, 1879-1880	2	16
#151-#164k, 1880-1881	2	17
#165-#199, 1881	2	18
#200-#220, 1881-1882	2	19
Accounts Engineers Payroll	2	20-1
Accounts Expenses, 1872-1879	2	22
Accounts General, 1873-1875	2	23

**Series. III. Kleiman Article****Scope and Contents note**

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. No arrangement.

**Box Folder**

Drafts and Article, "A History of the Chicago, Saginaw & Canada Railroad"	4	25
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**Series IV. Published Court Records**

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Research notes	4	26-7
Correspondence	4	28
Articles on the C.S. & C. R.R.	4	29-30
Annual Reports, 1876-1884, Commissioner of Railroads, State of Michigan	4	31
Photos	4	32

**Series IV. Published Court Records****Scope and Contents note**

Consists of two published books, Appeal to the Supreme Court (1879) and Rulings of the Supreme Court (1888). No arrangement.

**Box**

Appeal to Supreme Court (1879)	5
Rulings of the Supreme Court (1888)	5