



LancasterHistory

Columbia Bridge Company Collection, 1809-1843

Object ID: MG0217

5 boxes 190 folders 3 cubic ft.

Repository: LancasterHistory (Organization)

Shelving Location: Archives South, Side 5

Scope and Content Note: The Columbia Bridge Company Collection is a valuable source of information concerning construction of bridges in the early 1800s. Documents concern the building of the first two bridges across the Susquehanna River in 1814 and 1832. Items in the collection include minutes, form for stock certificate, invoices, legal papers, proposals, receipts, stockholders, promissory notes, by-laws, settlement of stage tolls with Samuel Slaymaker 1813, salary receipts, circulars and announcements, bridge tolls, orders for payment, correspondence, and a stock certificate from 1842.

Creator: Goodell, Robert Hilliard, 1899-1992.

System of Arrangement: The papers of the First Columbia Bridge built in 1814 are filed in folders #1 to 157. The papers of the Second Columbia Bridge built in 1832 are filed in folders #158 to 181.

Conditions for Access: Please use digital images and transcriptions when available. The original items in Folder 69 may not be used due to their fragile condition. All other original documents may be used by researchers--contact Research@LancasterHistory.org prior to visit or request at Reference Desk.

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Language: English

Biographical and Historical Note:

First Bridge

Construction of the first Columbia–Wrightsville Bridge was begun in 1812 and completed December 5, 1814, by J. Wolcott, H. Slaymaker, S. Slaymaker at a total cost of \$231,771, which was underwritten by the newly formed Columbia Bank and Bridge Company. The bridge was 5,690 feet (1,730 m) long and 30 feet (9.1 m) wide and had 54 piers and twin carriageways. Constructed of wood and stone, the covered bridge also included a wooden roof, a whitewashed interior and openings in its wooden sides to view the river and surrounding areas. It was considered the longest covered bridge in the world at the time. The bridge accommodated east-west traffic across the Susquehanna River for 14 years before being destroyed by ice, high water and severe weather on February 5, 1832.

Second bridge

Construction of the second Columbia–Wrightsville Bridge, also covered, started mid-1832 and was completed in 1834 (opening on July 8, 1834) by James Moore and John Evans at a cost of \$157,300. It was 5,620 feet (1,710 m) long and 28 feet (8.5 m) wide and also enjoyed the distinction of being the world's longest covered bridge. The wood and stone structure had 27 piers, a carriageway, walkway, and two towpaths to guide canal traffic across the river. Much of the mostly oak timber used in its construction was salvaged from the previous bridge. Its roof was covered with shingles, its sides with weatherboard, and its interior was whitewashed. The structure was modified in 1840 by the Canal Company at a cost of \$40,000 concurrent with the construction of the Wrightsville Dam. Towpaths of different levels and with sidewalls were added to prevent horses from falling into river, as happened several times when the river flooded. The roof of the lower path formed the floor of upper path. In this way, canal boats were towed across the river from the Pennsylvania Canal on the Columbia side to the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal at Wrightsville. Sometime after 1846, a double-track railway was added, linking the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad to the Northern Central Railway. Due to fear of fire caused by locomotives, rail cars were pulled across the bridge by teams of mules or horses.

Information from "Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge,"

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia%E2%80%93Wrightsville_Bridge. Accessed 3 February 2020.



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Source of Acquisition: Gift of Mrs. Jane M. Goodell, 1992.

Custodial History (Provenance): These Columbia Bridge Company records were collected by Robert H. Goodell.

Accruals: No further accruals are expected.

Preferred Citation: Title or description of item, date (day, month, year), Collection Title (MG#), Folder #, (or Object ID), LancasterHistory, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. URL if applicable. Date accessed (day, month, year).

People:

Albright, William
Chew, Benjamin
Coleman, Robert
Dickson, William
Gilpin, Joshua
Gilpin, Thomas
Grimler, Benjamin
Haldeman, C.
Hamilton, William
Harbaugh, Leonard
Hoff, John
Hopkins, James
Hubley, John
Hubley, Joseph

Lloyd, Evan
Mifflin, Joseph
Poulson, Zachariah
Reynolds, John
Rittenhouse, Joseph
Shaffner, Casper
Slaymaker, Henry
Slaymaker, Samuel
Varle, Charles
Wilson, Edward
Wilson, Thomas A.
Witmer, A.
Wright, William
Wolcott, John

Subject Headings:

Bridges
Business records
Columbia (Pa.)
Letters
Minutes (Records)
Stockholders
Stocks
Susquehanna River



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Search Terms:

Advertising
Applications
Board of Directors
Bonds
Bridges
Broadsides
Business records
By-laws
Checks
Columbia
Columbia Bridge Company
Construction
Contracts
Correspondence
Farmers Bank of Lancaster
Financial records
Finding aids
Gatekeepers
Invoices
Letters
Loans
Manuscript groups
Minutes
Murray Draper and Company
Promissory notes
Receipts
Reports
Salaries
Stockholders
Stocks
Susquehanna River
Taxes
Tollhouses
Tolls

Related Materials:

Processing History: This collection has been documented, preserved and managed according to professional museum and archives standards. The finding aid was updated using DACS conventions.



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Box 1

Folder 1 Manuscript form for bridge stock certificate, 1809.

Folder 2 Invoice from the printer William Hamilton of Lancaster for costs of advertising from 1809 to 1813.

Folder 3 Minutes of Bridge Co., 28 December 1811. This was their first meeting to ascertain the exact width of the river, "To Draw up Rules And Regulations..." to advertise in newspapers, etc. 1811.

Folder 4 Authorized appointments of representatives to vote for the undersigned shareholders in elections and other matters related to the operation of the Company. Many important signatures. 1811-1812.

Folder 5 Items related to James Hopkins and the trial for illegal loan of Bridge Company money from 1811 to 1813.

Folder 6 Minutes of meetings, including many important signatures and resolutions (some duplicates). 1811, February-June 1812.

Folder 7 Minutes of meetings, including many important signatures and resolutions (some duplicates). July-December 1812.

Folder 8 Letter from Charles Varle dated 28 February 1812, offering his "new method of constructing bridges" to the directors with six-page detailed description of plan. 1812.

Folder 9 Proposal dated 7/7/1812 by the subscribers to build "a bridge across the Susquehanna River...for the sum of \$150,000". Annexed is a draft of the bridge superstructure. Signed by Henry Slaymaker, John Wolcott, and Samuel Slaymaker. 1812.

Folder 10 Proposal signed by Evan Lloyd describing his method of constructing the bridge including costs and materials and methods employed. Includes three sketches of pier elevations and arch supports. 1812.

Folder 11 Proposals and contracts pertaining to various aspects of the construction of the bridge, and proposals and misc. receipts pertaining to labor and materials in the building of the bridge, also two typescripts of the proposals. 1812-816.



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Folder 12 Receipts for payment to contractors involved in the building of the first bridge. Many are for payment to Henry Slaymaker. 1812-1814.

Folder 13 Two printed receipts signed by Thomas A. Wilson. 1812, 1813.

Folder 14 Partially printed and/or manuscript stock receipts and related ledger sheet entries. 1812 -1814.

Folder 15 Fifteen pages of records of shares of stock issued, accompanied by the signatures of those in receipt of the shares. Also a 2 page list of shares sold by A. Witmer. 1812, 1813.

Folder 16 Receipts from various printers and engravers including Thomas A. Wilson, Murray Draper and Co., William Albright, Quaker printers Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, Joseph Rittenhouse, Benjamin Grimler, William Hamilton, John Reynolds, etc. Most are signed by the printers. 1812-1814.

Folder 17 Promissory notes and some interesting signatures from 1812-1815.

Folder 18 Cashiers' checks and related demands for payment placed upon the head cashier of the Bridge Company from 1812-1813.

Folder 19 Manuscript receipts pertaining to the construction of the bridge, the gate house, the toll house, and their repairs. 1812-1813.

Folder 20 Letters pertaining to Bridge contractors and their credentials from 1812-1829.

Folder 21 Receipts for office expenses for 1812 through 1821.

Folder 22 Accounts and receipts, 1812-1814.

Folder 23 Minutes of meetings, including many important signatures and resolutions (some duplicates). March-June 1813.

Folder 24 Minutes of meetings, including many important signatures and resolutions. July -December 1813.

Folder 25 By-laws, 1813.



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Folder 26 Stampless cover to William Wright and signed by Leonard Harbaugh offering his services as bridge superintendent, dated 14 April 1813.

Folder 27 Manuscript pages pertaining to settlement of stage tolls with Samuel Slaymaker. 1813.

Folder 28 3 partially printed stock receipts, one printed by William Hamilton of Lancaster, 1 by Thomas Wilson of Columbia, and one dated 6 December 1813 for printing signed for Lancaster printer William Hamilton by Joseph Hubley. 1813.

Folder 29 2 Letters of Attorney to transfer shares of stock, one signed by Robert Coleman (the ironmaster), and one signed by Casper Shaffner, John Hubley, and John Hoff, all important Lancastrians. 1813.

Folder 30 1813 article of agreement by King Masons to carry out stonework, etc.

Folder 31 Bill from Zachariah Poulson for advertising expenses incurred 1813.

Folder 32 Printed circular, "BRIDGE-OFFICE, COLUMBIA, DEC 11TH, 1813" announcing the "calling the whole of the balance of stock at once..." (2 copies).

Folder 33 Receipts pertaining to the construction and repair of the bridge office and toll house and other misc. office expenses in 1813.

Folder 34 Proxies to vote, many signatures. Items 1-7. 1813-1816.
Proxy to vote. 1814. Photocopy of Item 8. *For original, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 34.*

Folder 35 Receipts pertaining to payment of salaries to Bridge Company employees from 1813 to 1815.

Folder 36 Bridge Company offers 1000 additional shares of stock, 1813.

Folder 37 Documents pertaining to the transfer of shares of stock in the Bridge Company. Many important signatures. 1813.

Folder 38 Papers pertaining to minutes of meetings, election returns, appointments of committees, etc from 1813 to 1819.

Folder 39 Letters and notes pertaining to bridge business including one from Benjamin Chew, from 1813 to 1825.



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Folder 40 Bridge circulars and announcements from 1813, 1815, and 1820.

Folder 41 Receipts from contractors. 1814, 1815.

Folder 42 Documents related to company stock, including one printed by Thomas A. Wilson of Columbia, from 1814 to 1817.

Folder 43 Receipts and accounts pertaining to conduct of business by Columbia Bridge Company, 1814-1846.

Folder 44 Election Returns, 1814

Folder 45 Board Minutes 1814.

Folder 46 Supplement to Act of Incorporation of the 1st Bridge Company

Folder 47 Bills and Receipts, 1814.

Folder 48 Bills, receipts of bridge office and toll house, 1814.

Folder 49 Order for payment, 1814.

Folder 50 Office expenses, 1814.

Folder 51 Proposals and contracts and memos relating to the building of the first bridge. 1814, 1823.

Folder 52 2 manuscript agreements, 1 pertaining to the sale of 60 acres of land along the York County shoreline for the purposes of building the first bridge. 1814, 1823.

Folder 53 Tallies of votes for 1814 and 1830.

Folder 54 Bridge tolls collected, 1814-1820, 1822.

Folder 55 3 bonds and 3 bond forms. 1814, 1820

Folder 56 Bridge stock accounts of Edward Wilson, William Dickson, and others with the first Bridge Company 1814-1818.

Folder 57 Financial papers related to the first bridge including an accounting of stage tolls due by Samuel Slaymaker. 1814-1821.



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Box 2

Folder 58 Letter of Attorney, dated 14 January 1815 and signed twice by John Hoff (Lancaster clockmaker).

Folder 59 Board Minutes. 1814.

Folder 60 1815 stampless cover to William Wright pertaining to the bank notes issued and their appearance. 1815.

Folder 61 Receipt dated 8/29/1815 for printing costs and signed by Thomas A. Wilson of Columbia.

Folder 62 Proposal to cover or roof the bridge, 2 October 1815. Signed.

Folder 63 Bills and receipts, 1815.

Folder 64 Office expenses, 1815.

Folder 65 Notice of dividends declared 3 August 1815.

Folder 66 Manuscript receipt for "turnpiking" Second Street in Wrightsville. 8 August 1815.

Folder 67 Requests for payment of dividends, 1815.

Folder 68 Bills and Receipts of Office and Tollhouse, 1815

Folder 69 Newspapers containing announcements related to the bridge.

"Ordinance," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, 7 July 1815. Photocopy. *For original, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 69.*

"Columbia Bridge Company," *Lancaster Journal*, 15 June 1821. Use photocopy of article. Do not use original. Issue is available on microfilm and digitally.

Lancaster Journal, 18 September 1816. No mention of bridge. Do not use original. Issue is available on microfilm and digitally.

Folder 70 Committee reports, 1815-1821.

Folder 71 PA State Treasurer's receipt for dividends, 1815-1828.

Folder 72 Tax assessments, 1815-1827.



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Folder 73 Bills and receipts, 1815-1817.

Folder 74 Order for payments, 1815-1816.

Folder 75 Letters of Attorney for transfer of stocks, 1815-1816. Photocopy of Item 16. *For original, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 75.*

Folder 76 Broadside "Passed 25th May, 1815" stating that there shall be no galloping etc. on the bridge and no cigar tossing, etc. under penalty of fine. Signed in print Joseph Mifflin, printed by Thomas A. Wilson, Columbia. *For original, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 76.*

Folder 77 Printed broadsides "Columbia (PA) Bridge Notice to Travellers" dated December 5, 1816, which was printed and posted as a result of the act passed in item #76 above.

Folder 78 Bills and receipts, 1816.

Folder 79 Office expenses, 1816.

Folder 80 Bills and receipts of Toll house and office, 1816.

Folder 81 Promissory notes, 1816.

Folder 82 Stock receipts and ledger sheets, 1816-1824.

Folder 83 Notes and bonds, 1816-1824.

Folder 84 Salary slips, 1816-1817.

Folder 85 Requests for payments of dividends. Seal of the Bank of North America. 1816-1821.

Folder 86 Banking correspondence, 1816.

Folder 87 Banking correspondence, mostly transfer of funds (checks), 1817.

Folder 88 Promissory notes, 1816-1830.

Folder 89 Receipts from contractors, 1817-1819.



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Folder 90 Bills and receipts, 1817-1821.

Folder 91 Letters, 1817-1820.

Folder 92 Orders for payments, 1817-1820.

Folder 93 Papers relating to legal matters including judgments, summons, drawing of deed, services rendered, etc. 1817-1820.

Folder 94 Bills and receipts, 1817.

Folder 95 Office expenses, 1817.

Folder 96 Letters of Attorney to transfer shares of stock, 1817-1818.

Folder 97 Proxies to vote, 1818-1823.

Folder 98 Banking correspondence, includes one stampless cover. 1818-1829.

Folder 99 Bills and receipts, 1818.

Folder 100 Bills and receipts for Tollhouse and office. 1818, 1819.

Folder 101 Office expenses, 1818.

Folder 102 Salary slips, 1818-1821.

Folder 103 Bills and receipts, 1819.

Folder 104 Office expenses, 1819.

Folder 105 Manuscript and/or printed Acts and Petitions to the State Legislature and U.S. Congress related to the building of the first bridge and the second bridge.

Folder 106 Letters of Attorney to transfer shares of stock, 1819-1821.

Folder 107 Board Minutes, 1820.

Folder 108 Board Resolutions, no dates.

Folder 109 Bills and receipts, 1820.



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Folder 110 Small partly printed broadside announcing "Sheriff's Sale" of 6 shares of stock in Columbia, PA Bridge Company and dated 27 October 1820.

Folder 111 Office Expenses, 1820-1822; 1824.

Folder 112 Stockholders' letters requesting refund of bridge shares, 1820-1821.



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Box 3

Folder 113 Stampless cover, dated February 5th, 1821, signed by Casper Shaffner.

Folder 114 Board Minutes, 1821 - 1825; 1830.

Folder 115 Transfer of shares of stock and Letter of Attorney to vote, 1821, 1824. *For originals, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 115.*

Folder 116 Orders for payment, 1821 - 1825.

Folder 117 Bills and receipts, 1821

Folder 118 Legal papers, 1821 - 1830.

Folder 119 Bills and receipts, 1822.

Folder 120 Bills and receipts, 1822, 1823.

Folder 121 Office expenses, 1822, 1823.

Folder 122 Salary slips, 1822, 1823.

Folder 123 Tax receipts, 1822 - 1824.

Folder 124 Bills and receipts, 1823.

Folder 125 Bills and receipts, 1824.

Folder 126 Advertising receipt, 7/27/1824, signed by Joseph Rittenhouse of Philadelphia.

Folder 127 Requests for payment of dividends on the stock. Numerous important signatures. 1824.

Folder 128 Proxies to vote, 1824.

Folder 129 Letters of Attorney to transfer shares of stocks, 1824 - 1825.

Folder 130 Salary slips, 1824 - 1827.



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Folder 131 Office expenses, 1824 - 1827.

Folder 132

Insert 1 Election returns, 1824, no date. Photocopies of Items 1, 2, 3, and 7. *For originals, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 132.*

Insert 2 Election returns, 1825. Items 4, 5, and 6.

Folder 133 Request for payments of dividends, including several signed by Benjamin Chew. Jan - May 1825

Folder 134 Requests for payments of dividends, June - December 1825.

Folder 135 Proxies to vote, 1825.

Folder 136 Manuscript account of Company expenses with Benjamin Chew and signed by him, 1826. *For original, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 136.*

Folder 137 Bills and receipts, 1826, 1827.

Folder 138 Requests for payments of dividends, January - May 1826.

Folder 139 Requests for payments of dividends, June - December 1826.

Folder 140 Election returns, 1826.

Folder 141 Letters of Attorney to transfer shares of stock, 1826 - 1829.

Folder 142 Election returns, 1827.

Folder 143 Requests for payment of dividends, 1827.

Folder 144 Election returns, 1828.

Folder 145 1828 stampless cover from Farmers Bank of Lancaster on transfer of funds.

Folder 146 Requests for payment of dividends, 1828.

Folder 147 Election returns, 1829.

Folder 148 Requests for payment of dividends, 1829.



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Folder 149 Proxies to vote, 1830.

Folder 150 Requests for payment of dividends, January-June 1830.

Vol. 1, no. 1 of the *Columbia Spy* for 6/17/1830 with notice of dividend declared by directors of the Bridge Company *For original, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 150.*

Folder 151 Requests for payment of dividends, November, December 1830.

Folder 152 Letters of Attorney to transfer stock, 1830 - 1832.

Folder 153 2 cashier's checks, 1831, 1838.

Folder 154 Election returns, 1831.

Folder 155 Requests for payment of dividends, January - May 1831.

Folder 156 Requests for payment of dividends, June - December 1831.

Folder 157 Requests for payment of dividends, 1832.



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Box 4

Folder 158 Typescript of proposals pertaining to the building of the second bridge over the Susquehanna River, 1832 -1834.

Folder 159 Manuscript proposals for building the bridge and for various aspects in the construction of the bridge, February, 1832.

Folder 160 Manuscript proposals for building the bridge and for various aspects in the construction of the bridge, April, 1832.

Folder 161 Manuscript proposals for building the bridge and for various aspects in the construction of the bridge, April, 1832. Photocopies of Items 12 and 13. *For originals, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 161.*

Folder 162 Manuscript proposals for building the bridge and for various aspects in the construction of the bridge, May - December, 1832.

Folder 163 Documents pertaining to the transfer of "public ground" into the hands of the Bridge Company from that of the inhabitants of "Old Columbia", 1832.

Folder 164 Applications and recommendations for Superintendent of the construction of the bridge, 1832.

Folder 165 Documents related to meetings of the Board of Directors and Building Committee, 1832.

Folder 166 Statements pertaining to dividend requests and payments, 1832 - 1843.

Folder 167 Items include bundle of lists of names of directors, a bill for work completed, a letter of the inability to provide some iron on time, etc. 1832, 1834.

Folder 168 Documents pertaining to transfer of stock, 1832 - 1836.

Folder 169 Pocket ledgers including an accounting of gatekeeper's salaries (1832-1838), post office account (1840), check endorsed goods (1836), expenses in lawsuits against C. Haldeman's administration (1839-1843), and 1834 list of stockholders.

Folder 170 Bridge proposals, 1833 - 1834.



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Folder 171 Proposals and related drawings for construction of Toll House and related matters (1833 -1834). Photocopies of Items 6, 7, 8, and 9. *For originals, see MG-217 Oversized Box, Folder 171.*

Folder 172 Applications for Gatekeeper, 1833 - 1834.

Folder 173 5 cashier receipts; 4 are printed, 1833 - 1841.

Folder 174 Arbitration notice from District Court, 1837.

Folder 175 Proxy statements, 1837.

Folder 176 Proxy statements, 1840.

Folder 177 Proxy statements, 1841 - 1842.

Folder 178 Manuscript and/or partially printed documents between the Bridge Company and the State of PA, 1840 - 1843.

Folder 179 Documents pertaining to elections of Directors of the Company, 1841.

Folder 180 List of stockholders, no date.

Folder 181 1 stock certificate for Columbia Bridge Company for 1842.



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Oversized Box

Folder 34 Proxy to vote. 1814. Item 8.

Folder 69 Newspapers containing announcements related to the bridge.
"Ordinance," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, 7 July 1815. Original may be used.

Folder 75 Letter of Attorney for transfer of stocks. Item 16.

Folder 76 Broadside "Passed 25th May, 1815" stating that there shall be no galloping etc. on the bridge and no cigar tossing, etc. under penalty of fine. Signed in print Joseph Mifflin, printed by Thomas A. Wilson, Columbia.

Folder 115 Transfer of shares of stock and Letter of Attorney to vote, 1821, 1824.

Folder 132 Election returns, 1824, no date. Items 1, 2, 3, and 7. (from Insert 1)

Folder 136 Manuscript account of Company expenses with Benjamin Chew and signed by him, 1826.

Folder 150 Vol. 1, no. 1 of the *Columbia Spy* for 6/17/1830 with notice of dividend declared by directors of the Bridge Company.

Folder 161 Manuscript proposals for building the bridge and for various aspects in the construction of the bridge, April 1832. Items 12 and 13.

Folder 171 Proposals and related drawings for construction of Toll House and related matters, 1834. Items 6, 7, 8, and 9.