

The Whitney Library
New Haven Colony Historical Society

Manuscript Register

MSS #279

Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail Association, Records

1986 to 2000

Arranged and Described

By

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Introduction

In 1987, when it was learned that 14 miles of the rail line owned by the Boston and Maine Railroad were to be abandoned, a small group of people formed the Citizens for the preservation of the Farmington Canal Corridor. The rail line ran through Cheshire, Hamden and New Haven along the bed of the old Farmington Canal

The purpose of the organization, which was in 1988 incorporated as the Farmington Canal Rails to Trails Association (FCRTA), was to develop the railroad property into a linear park and heritage trail for hiking, biking and jogging. The organization membership consisted of environmental, preservation and other related groups as well as individuals.

As part of the procedures Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) required for the abandonment for the railroad, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) had the Right of First Refusal for the property belonging to the Boston and Main Railroad. If the DOT waived their right, the land could be sold by the Railroad for any purpose. FCRTA worked to delay the abandonment in order to provide time for the planning of the linear park. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was helpful in persuading the DOT not to waive their right and eventually provided the funding, through bond issues, for the purchase of the railroad property.

The FCRTA was joined in their efforts by the national organization of Rails to Trails along with several other groups that promoted the use of open spaces and greenways.

In order to provide funds for the design of the linear park, a grant was obtained from the Carolyn Foundation. This grant was used to retain the services of the office of Cesar Pelli who created a plan for the New Haven section of the linear park.

The papers in this collection were the property of Nancy Alderman and were given by her to the New Haven Colony Historical Society in 2001.

Description of the Papers

This collection consists of the papers, legal documents and newspaper articles concerning the Farmington Canal Rails to Trails Association primarily during the period from 1987 to 1997 although there are some papers that are dated outside those times.

Series I - Administration: includes by-laws of the association and minutes of board meetings from 1987 through 1997. The minutes are not complete.

Series II - Correspondence: consists of both in-coming and out-going correspondence. Much of the earlier correspondence was written by the Association President, Mrs Alderman but in later years, it was primarily generated by the Executive Director of the organization.

Series III - Papers Related to the Abandonment of the Railroad: involves correspondence with attorneys and court documents concerning attempts to stay the abandonment proceedings of the Boston and Maine Railroad and to persuade the State of Connecticut to allow the municipalities of Cheshire, Hamden and New Haven to acquire the property of the former railroad.

Series IV - Newspaper Articles: includes articles from Connecticut newspapers, primarily New Haven and Hamden, relating to the conversion of the railroad to a linear park. The association subscribed to a clipping service for papers out of the New Haven Region.

Series V - Special Projects: contains correspondence and other papers pertaining to a application for funds; fund raising events; design consultants; information on the Lock Keeper's House; news letters from related organizations; and papers written about greenways.

Series VI - Memorabilia: includes miscellaneous items such as bumper stickers, Tee shirts and unidentified photographs and slides.

Series I - Administration

Box/Folder	Contents
1/A	By Laws
1/B	Minutes 1987 - 1997
1/H	

Series II - Correspondence

Box/Folder	Contents
1/C	Correspondence 1986 - 1987
1/D	Correspondence 1988
1/E	Correspondence 189 ⁹ & 1990 [^]
1/F	Correspondence 1991 - 1993
1/G	Correspondence 1994
2/A	Correspondence 1995
2/B	Correspondence 1996 - 2000 (includes copy of conservation restriction concerning the Science Park section of the Canal)

Series III - Papers Related to Abandonment of Railroad

Box/Folder	Contents
2/C	Correspondence
2/D	Legal Documents June 1986 to June 1987
2/E	Legal Documents June 1987 to September 1987
2/F	Legal Documents September 1987 to November 1987
3/A	Legal Documents December 1987 to January 1988
3/B	Legal Documents January 1988 to October 1989

Series IV - Newspaper Articles

Box/Folder	Contents
3/C	Articles 1964 - 1985
3/D	Articles 1987 & 1988
3/E	Articles 1989 - 1993
3/F	Articles 1994 - 1996
4/A	Articles 1997 - .

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<u>Special Projects</u>	
4/B	Carolyn Foundation
4/C	Design Consultants
4/D	Folk Concerts
4/E	Lock Keeper's House
4/F	Newsletters
4/G	Papers on Greenway
4/H	Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, brochure
<i>4/I</i>	<i>HAMDEN / LINEAR TRAIL TUNNEL</i>
<u>Memorabilia</u>	
5/A	T-Shirts and Bumper Stickers
5/B	Photographs
5/C	Slides
6	"Rails to Trails" Water Bottle 3 spikes from the New Haven & Northampton Railroad line 4 Videos regarding the Canal and Rails to Trails, 1980's