

Guide to the Benjamin Chase and Benjamin Chase Jr. Papers, 1821-1895, 1929

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:

Benjamin Chase and Benjamin Chase Jr. Papers, 1821-1895, 1929

Repository:

New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6688
<https://www.nhhistory.org/>

Collection Number:

1989.002, 1989.003

Author of Finding Aid:

Unidentified; reformatted by Korrena Cowing

Creator:

Chase, Benjamin, 1799-1889
Chase, Benjamin, Jr., 1832-1912

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:

3 boxes ; 1.17 linear feet

Abstract:

This collection contains account books and diaries for Benjamin Chase Jr. and his father Benjamin Sr. The account books cover the work of father and son as they built mills in New Hampshire and elsewhere, operated a sawmill, performed carpentry work, and farmed. The diaries provide glimpses into the daily lives of the two men and their families.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

The Benjamin Chase and Benjamin Chase Jr. Papers were purchased on January 19, 1988 from Goodspeed's Bookshop Inc. in Boston. Though the materials were purchased at the same time, they were given two accession numbers: 1989.002 and 1989.003. All materials are filed under 1989.002.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by an unknown person at an unknown date. The finding aid was written by an unknown person at an unknown date and reformatted by Korrena Cowing in April 2020. This finding aid follows the standards set forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

Preferred Citation:

Item title, Benjamin Chase and Benjamin Chase Jr. Papers, 1989.002. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

Collection Overview

Biographical Information:

Benjamin Chase, Sr., son of Benjamin Pike Chase and Anna Blaisdell, was born July 7, 1799 in the part of Chester, NH, now known as Auburn. His early formal school was limited, but he taught himself trigonometry and astronomy with borrowed books and became proficient enough as a land surveyor to succeed Stephen Chase as surveyor in Chester. He also became a mechanic and millwright who constructed mills in twenty-eight towns in southeastern New Hampshire and northeastern Massachusetts, introducing improvements in the construction and building one of the earliest circular sawmills. In 1864 he was asked to write a history of Chester, which was published in 1869. He was very vocal on the subject of temperance and slavery, working hard for the former and against the latter. He married Hannah Hall on March 2, 1826 at Chester. She was the daughter of Moses K. and Lucretia (Currier) Hall, born at Chester on February 18, 1787.

Hannah had several children including Benjamin Jr. Hannah died February 25, 1876 at Auburn. Benjamin Sr. died there May 2, 1889.

Benjamin Chase Jr. was also born in Chester/Auburn on August 18, 1832. He had extensive formal schooling and concurrently learned mechanical skills from his father. In his early teens, he went to sea on a trip, which took him down the U.S. east coast and to England. On his return, he worked with his father and in 1855 became a master mechanic in a textile mill. In 1867 he settled in Derry, NH, and manufactured wood specialties for use in textile mills throughout the country. He incorporated the Benjamin Chase Company in 1907 and was its first President. He married Harriet Fuller, daughter of Jared and Thankful (Stors) Fuller, and they had one daughter. Harriet died at Derry on January 7, 1912. Benjamin died there on September 17, 1912.

Collection Scope and Content Note:

This collection is a series of daily account books kept by Benjamin Chase, millwright and his son Benjamin Chase Jr., manufacturer. The five books kept by the father record his activities from age 23 to 84 in the making of tools, chains, sleds, sleighs, and parts for various mills. There are details of lumber used and labor hired while constructing numerous mills in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, notably the Amoskeag Manufacturing Co. and the Exeter Water Power Co. There is some information relevant to the publishing of the history of Chester and one manuscript book of genealogical information compiled by Chase.

The account books kept by Benjamin Jr. follow his career as a mechanic and successful manufacturer of wooden parts for textile mills and plant stakes. It is an excellent source for names of mills across the country, and nurseries and private gardens from London to California including the Vanderbilt Biltmore estate in Asheville, NC.

Note: Loose items from the pockets of the diaries have been removed to folders in the back of the boxes and labeled in pencil with the number of the book in which they were found.

Arrangement:

The materials in this collection are organized into the following series:

Series 1. Benjamin Chase Sr., 1821-1884, 1929

Series 2. Benjamin Chase Jr., 1854-1895

Contents List

Box 1

Folder 0 Register

Series 1. Benjamin Chase Sr., 1821-1884

Extent: 8 folders

Scope and Content: This series contains the account books of Benjamin Chase Sr. from 1821 to 1884. These volumes detail his activities as surveyor, carpenter, farmer, mechanic, and sawmill in Chester, NH. Such information includes lumber used and labor hired for constructing mills such as the Amoskeag Manufacturing Co. and the Hooksett Manufacturing Co. Also included in

this series is some genealogical information on the Chase family compiled by Benjamin Chase Sr., including a 1929 photograph of a car at the Derry, NH, family house.

Box 1

- Folder 1 Genealogical notes including material from diaries, family papers, interviews, gravestones, undated
- Folder 1a Papers removed from volume 1, 1929, undated
- Folder 2 Daybook, surveyor, carpenter, farmer in Chester, 1821-1834
- Folder 3 Daybook, surveyor, carpenter, farmer in Chester, 1834-1843
- Folder 4 Journal, carpenter, farmer, sawmill in Chester, 1822-1842; fragment of a poem
- Folder 5 Daybook, mechanic, sawmill, farmer in Auburn, 1853-1868
- Folder 5a Papers removed from volume 5, 1869, 1884
- Folder 6 Daybook, mechanic, sawmill, farmer in Auburn, 1866-1884

Series 2. Benjamin Chase Jr., 1854-1895

Extent: 38 folders

Scope and Content: This series contains the account books and diaries of Benjamin Chase Jr. The account books primarily detail wood products in Derry, NH, and show the various parts manufactured for textile mills and gardens across the country. These volumes identify a number of businesses, including the Vanderbilt Biltmore estate. Chase's diaries provide details on his work, and include such information as accounts, orders, and price lists. They also detail some of his travels, such as to Washington, DC, in 1870, and notes events, such as the freedom for slaves in 1863.

Box 2

- Folder 1 Receipts, expenses, and accounts of work, 1854-1855
- Folder 2 Receipts and expenses, receipts for whitewash, paint, glue, work log; newspaper clipping re: promotion of B. Chase Jr., 1859-1860
- Folder 3 Diary, 1863
- Folder 4 Diary, 1868
- Folder 5 Diary, 1869 May-July
- Folder 6 Diary, 1870
- Folder 7 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1870-1871
- Folder 8 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1872
- Folder 9 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1873-1875
- Folder 10 Order book in Derry, 1874-1876
- Folder 11 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1875-1876
- Folder 12 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1877
- Folder 13 Order book, 1877-1882
- Folder 14 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1878
- Folder 15 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1879
- Folder 16 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1880
- Folder 17 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1881
- Folder 18 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1882-1887
- Folder 19 Papers removed from folders, 1863-1881, undated

Box 3

- Folder 1 Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1882

Folder 2	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1883
Folder 3	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1884
Folder 4	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1885
Folder 5	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1886
Folder 6	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1887
Folder 7	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1888
Folder 8	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1889
Folder 9	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1889
Folder 10	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1890
Folder 11	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1890
Folder 12	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1891
Folder 13	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1891
Folder 14	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1891
Folder 15	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1892
Folder 16	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1892
Folder 17	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1893
Folder 18	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1893
Folder 19	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1893
Folder 20	Daybook, wood products in Derry, 1895
Folder 21	Papers removed from folders, 1884-1893, undated

Subject Terms

People:

Chase, Benjamin, 1799-1889

Chase, Benjamin, Jr., 1832-1912

Organizations:

Amoskeag Manufacturing Co.

Exeter Water Power Co.

Hooksett Manufacturing Co.

Subjects:

Account books

Church

Diaries

Gardens

Genealogy

Manufacturing industries

Mills and millwork

Sawmills

Slavery

Temperance

Locations:

Auburn, NH

Chester, NH

Derry, NH

Exeter, NH

Hampstead, NH
Manchester, NH

Occupations:

Abolitionists
Carpenters
Farmers
Mechanics
Millwrights

Related Materials

Archives

A map of the original township of Chester as laid out into lots, with the names of the early settlers on their respective lots, roads, etc. drawn by Benjamin Chase for his History of Chester, 912.778b C525c [1869?]

A map of the original township of Chester as laid out into lots, with the names of the early settlers on their respective lots, roads, etc. drawn by Benjamin Chase for his History of Chester, 912.778b C525c reprint

A plan of the 4th Division in Chester, NH, being 60 acres more or less by Benjamin Chase, 1819 January 15, 912.778b C525p4

Land surveys, 1804-1926, 1988.050

Library

Chase, Benjamin. *A boy's journal : arranged by his daughter, Harriet Chase Newell*. [Littleton, NH]: [Courier Printing Co.], [circa 1955]. Call number: 920 C487b

Chase, Benjamin. *History of old Chester from 1719 to 1869*. Auburn, NH: Benjamin Chase, 1869. Call number: 977.8b C525c

Newell, Benjamin Chase. *Autobiography of Benjamin Chase, the author of a history of Chester, N.H. copied by his grandson, Benjamin Chase Newell, January 1968*. 1968. Call number: 920 C487bb

Museum

Stake, Garden, made by the Benjamin Chase Company, Inc., 1992.017.01-.09