



Record Group: Morris Canal and Banking Company
Series: Minutes of the Board of Directors and Standing Committees, 1828-1973
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Content Note

This series consist of the minutes of the weekly, special, and (later) annual meetings of the canal company's board of directors and stockholders, as well as minutes from three standing committees of the board.

General Minutes of the Board: In the earliest years of the company (1828-1836), the board minutes deal chiefly with the acquisition of lands and flowage rights, purchase of building materials for the completion of the canal, and solicitation of subscriptions. After 1836, the focus of the minutes shifts away from the actual operation of the canal to the company's finances -- its assets, debts, stocks, and loans. From 1871, when the canal was leased to the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company, to 1923, when it was turned over to the State of New Jersey, the minutes consist mainly of general reports on company finances, Lehigh Valley's management of the canal and the general corporate affairs of the company. There are occasional references to the proposed abandonment of the canal from 1903 through 1922; however, for the most part the minutes for this time period record the routine business of the board, such as election of officers, reports of expenditures, etc.

After 1923, when the canal was turned over to the State of New Jersey, the minutes discuss the reorganization of the company and then, increasingly, the business of leasing and selling company lands, dismantling the canal, and maintaining and improving the remaining waterways and bridges. The volume of the minutes tapers off after the 1940s.

Two fairly comprehensive, name- and subject-indexes exist for portions of the board's minutes: a single volume indexes the period 1833-1842 (vols. 3 & 4 below), while a card file covers the period 1931-1954 (vols. 9 & 10).

Minutes of the Standing Committees: On 30 November 1844, the board of directors authorized the creation of two standing committees -- the Finance Committee and the Canal Committee. Two years later, on 6 April 1846, the number was increased to five standing committees, as follows: 1) the Finance Committee, to supervise the "monied operations" of the Company; 2) the Committee on Canal Improvements and Repairs, to recommend canal policies and to hire superintendents, lock tenders and plane tenders; 3) the Committee on Business over the Canal, to fix toll rates and to promote business on the canal; 4) the Committee on Unsettled Claims, to attend to the adjustment of all disputed accounts; and 5) the Committee on Accounts, to examine the monthly accounts of the cashier. This series consists of the minutes of the first three committees.

The finance committee's records are fairly routine, chiefly consisting of summary reports (most of which can also be found in the board's own minutes). The minutes of the canal committees, however, are much more informative. The records of the Committee on Improvements and Repairs document the hiring of canal personnel, as well as the adoption of regulations concerning boats and their passage on the waterway. The minutes of the Committee on Business over the Canal, on the other hand, reveal in considerable detail the company's policy in setting rates and promoting traffic on the canal.

Contents

Minutes of the Board of Directors (1824 Charter)

1. 28 August 1828 [1 folder];
7 April 1829 - 11 February 1833, Book No. 1
2. 18 February 1833 - 4 February 1836, Book No. 2
3. 11 February 1836 - [10 January 1842], Book No. 3
4. 11 February 1836 - [10 January 1842], Book No. 3 [transcript]

Minutes of the Board of Directors (1844 Charter)

5. 21 October 1844 - 5 April 1880, Book No. 1
6. 4 April 1881 - 6 April 1903, Book No. 2
7. 6 April 1903 - 27 December 1922, Book No. 3

Minutes of the Board of Directors (State of New Jersey)

8. 1 April 1923 - 10 June 1931
9. 7 July 1931 - 16 February 1944
10. 15 March 1944 - 21 July 1954;
19 September 1954 - 19 July 1973 [1 folder]

Minutes of the Board of Directors (Indices)

11. Index to Books No. 2 & 3 (1824 Charter) 18 February 1833 - 10 January 1842
12. Index to State Minutes. 7 July 1931 - 21 July 1954 [card file]

Minutes of the Finance Committee

13. 25 April 1846 - 5 April 1886

Minutes of the Canal Committee

14. 27 April 1846 - 21 July 1869

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