Potomac Navigation Company records RM.1196

Potomac Navigation Company records

1785-1786

Title Statement

Potomac Navigation Company records RM.1196

Author: Kaitlyn Tanis, Library Intern

Publication Statement

Publisher: Special Collections at The George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon

PO Box 3600
Mount Vernon, VA 22121
Telephone: 703-799-3600
URL: http://archives.mountvernon.org

July 2015

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2023-12-15 07:00:17 -0500.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID
RM.1196

Unit ID
/repositories/3/resources/14

Unit Date
1785-1786

Text
122.H.5 (Shelf)

Language
English .

Extent
.5 Linear Feet

Repository
Special Collections at The George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research during scheduled appointments. Researchers must complete the Washington Library's Special Collections and Archives Registration Form before access is provided. The library reserves the right to restrict access to certain items for preservation purposes.

Preferred Citation
[Name and date of item], Potomac Navigation Company records, [Folder], Special Collections, The George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon [hereafter Washington Library], Mount Vernon, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

The Potomac Navigation Company was a cooperative project between Maryland and Virginia to expand the Potomac River and establish navigable waterways that would further develop commercial trade. Established in 1785, George Washington was the first major investor as well as the first president of the company. And along with Thomas Johnson, Thomas Sim Lee, George Gilpin, and John Fitzgerald, he was appointed director of the company. The Potomac Navigation Company employed James Rumsey, inventor of the steamboat, to manage the mechanics of building the canals, Richardson Stewart as his assistant, and William Hartshorne as the treasurer. They supervised hundreds of laborers, indentured servants, and slaves to build five canals surrounding major waterfalls in the area: House's, Shenandoah, Seneca, Little Falls and Great Falls.

Although supported by both the Virginia and Maryland Assemblies, the company was constantly plagued with difficulties and struggled to sell shares to interested buyers. Water levels prevented boats from reaching their destinations, the company had difficulty securing loans, and the locks were in a constant state of repair; despite these hardships, by 1802 they had created 220 miles of navigable waterways between the Savage River and Washington, D.C. By the 1820s, a proposal was passed to build a canal that would travel from Washington, D.C. and to the Ohio River; thus transforming the Potomac Navigation Company to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company.

Scope and Contents

This collection is comprised of three different types of documents: various accounts from individuals who have worked for the Potomac Navigation Company; lists of all the men employed by the company which details the amount of work that was done; and receipts and invoices.

Related Materials

The following manuscripts, reproduction files, and books relate to the formation or business of the Potomac Navigation Company.

Manuscripts:

- Bill, Washer Blunt to Potomac Comp[any], 1786 March 20
- Letter, Mount Vernon to Judge Michael Jenifer Stone, Charles County, Maryland, 1785 June 15
- Letter, Blenhiem to George Washington, 1785 July 10
- List of Workmen employed at the Shanandoah Falls from the 4th of August to the 26th of September 1787
- List of Workmen at Great Falls 1787 April 11- May 12
- Letter, Philadelphia, to Tobias Lear, 1794 December 12
- Letter, Philadelphia to Tobias Lear, 1794 December 22
- Drawing of an invention for raising and lowering boats over the Great Falls of the Potomac to avoid the construction of locks
- Letter, Germantown to William Pearce, 1794 August 17
- Letter, Philadelphia to Tobias Lear, 1795 December 26
- Letter, Philadelphia to [Tobias Lear], 1795 February 18
- Newspaper Article, George Washington's arrival in Georgetown for a meeting with fellow business associates of the "Potowmack Co."
- Newspaper Article, George Washington's arrival in Georgetown for a meeting with fellow business associates of the "Potowmack Co."
- Book of Sales and Mount Vernon Property, 1800-1803
- Letter, George Town to George Corbin Washington, 1828 May 7
- Certificate to Fielding Lewis, 1828 June 3
- Bond, George C. Washington and [] to John A. Washington and Bushrod C. Washington (executors of Bushrod Washington, deceased) 1832
- Bond, George C. Washington (trustee of Bush. Washington Jr.'s children) and [] to John A. Washington and Bushrod C. Washington (executors of Bushrod Washington deceased), 1832

Reproduction Files:

- Broadside, Potomac Company, 4 February 1762
- Letter, Mount Vernon to Colonel John Fitzgerald, 26 November 1785
- Account, James Rumsey to Archibald Reynolds, 16 July 1785
- Letter, Mount Vernon to Colonel Jno. Auge. Washington, 1 October 1786
- Letter, Philadelphia to [George Augustine Washington], 12 August 1787
- Receipt, Jesse [Lun] Jun. and Jacob Snither to William Hartshorne and Co., 25 June 1787
- Letter, Tobias Lear, 14 December 1794
- Letter, Mount Vernon to Mr. Archd. McLean, 6 August 1798
- Draft, Bushrod Washington to Lawrence Lewis, 6 August 1825
- An act to enable Lawrence Lewis to move stock to the Potomac Co., 21 March 1832

Books:

- Achenbach, Joel, The Grand Idea: George Washington's Potomac and the Race to the West, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004. Call No. F187 .P8 A23 2004
- Bacon-Foster, Corra, Early Chapters in the Development of the Patomac Route to the West, Washington: Columbia Historical Society, 1912 Call No: F187. P8 B13
- Bicentennial Notes on George Washington by the Michigan State Commission for the George Washington Bicentennial, 193, No. 5- Washington and the Critical Period, 1783-1789 by Evertt Somerville Brown Call No: E312.15 .M54 1931
- Durham, C.J.S., Washington's Potowmack Canal Project at Great Falls: A Great Falls Park and Nature Reserve: A Proposal for the Preservation of a Natural Area and the Restoration of a Historic Site as a lasting Monument to George Washington at the Great Falls of the Potomac in Virginia, Nature Conservancy, 1957 Call No: P187. M7 D8 1957
- Hahn, Thomas F. and Joseph R. Prentice, George Washington's Canal at Great Falls Virginia, Shepardstown, WV: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1976 Call No: F232. P8 H2 1976
- Howlett, Lynn Doney, The Potowmack Canal: From Canal to Consitution, McLean, VA: The Virginia Canals and Navigation Society. Call No: F187. P8
- Hyde, Arnout and Ken Sullivan, The Potomac: A Nation's River, Charleston, WV: Cannon Graphics, 1994 Call No: F187 .P8 H92 1992
- Kapsch, Robert J., The Potomac Canal: George Washington and the Waterway West, Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2007. Call No: F187. P8 K23 2007
- Martin, Oliver, The Chesapeake and Potomac Country, The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company, 1928 Call No: F187 .C5 M4
- Metcalf, Paul, Waters of the Potowmack, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1982.
- Pickell, John, A New Chapter in the early life of George Washington, in connection with the narrative history of the Potomac Company, New York: D. Appleton, 1856 Call No: E312.29 .P59
- Potomac American Reflections [audiovisual], Robert Cole Films, 1992 Call No: F187 .P8 P68 1992
- Stanford, Homer Reed, The Historic Potomac— Beginning with 1740, Newcomen Society of England, American Branch, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940 Call No: F187. P8 S7 1940
- Tilp, Frederick, This was Potomac River, Alexandria, VA: Frederick Tilp, 1978 Call No. F187 .P8 T54

Keywords

Potomac Company

Arrangement

This collection is organized into three series: Accounts, Lists of Workmen, and Receipts. Within each of these series, the collection is in date order. The Lists of Workmen is further defined by region: Seneca Falls, Shanandoah Falls, and Great Falls, all of which are in date order.

Description of Subordinate Components

Accounts

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/586
Unit Date 1785 October-December
Language English.

William Bready, Work Done

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/587
Unit Date 1785 October 26
Text 1 (box)
Container 1 (folder)
Language English.

William Hartshorne and Co.

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/588
Unit Date 1785 November 23
Text 1 (box)
Container 2 (folder)
Links
Account, William Hartshorne and Co., 1785 November 23: 2023-12-11
http://catalog.mountvernon.org/digital/collection/p16829coll16/id/2/rec/1http://cdm16829.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api/singleitem/collection/p16829coll16/id/2/thumbnail
Language English.
Creator Washington, George, 1732-1799
Creator Fitzgerald, John, -1799
Creator Gilpin, George, 1740-1813
Keywords
Financial records
Potomac Company

William Deakins

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/589
Unit Date 1785 December
Text 1 (box)
Container 3 (folder)
Links
Account, William Deakins, 1785 December: 2023-12-11
http://catalog.mountvernon.org/digital/collection/p16829coll16/id/5/rec/1http://cdm16829.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api/singleitem/collection/p16829coll16/id/5/thumbnail
Language English.
Creator Washington, George, 1732-1799
Creator Fitzgerald, John, -1799
Creator Gilpin, George, 1740-1813
Keywords
Financial records
Potomac Company

Lists of Employment

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/591
Unit Date 1785 October-1786 July
Language English.

Seneca Falls

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/598
Unit Date 1785 October-November
Language English.

Men employed at Seneca Falls under Richardson Stuart

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/592
Unit Date 1785 October 15-29
Text 1 (box)
Container 4 (folder)
Links
Account, Men employed at Seneca Falls under Richardson Stuart, 1785 October 15-29: 2023-12-11
http://catalog.mountvernon.org/digital/collection/p16829coll16/id/8/rec/1http://cdm16829.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api/singleitem/collection/p16829coll16/id/8/thumbnail
Language English.
Creator Washington, George, 1732-1799
Creator Fitzgerald, John, -1799
Creator Gilpin, George, 1740-1813
Scope and Contents
Keywords
Financial records
Lists (document genres)
Potomac Company

Men employed at Seneca Falls under Richardson Stuart

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/593
Unit Date 1785 October 29-November 12
Text 1 (box)
Container 5 (folder)
Language English.

Men Employed at Seneca Falls under Richardson Stuart

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/594
Unit Date 1785 November 12-23
Text 1 (box)
Container 6 (folder)
Language English.

Shanandoah Falls

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4717
Unit Date 1785 October-1786 July
Language English.

Return Workers under Jacob Hackney, Charles Rumsey, and Alexander Pollock

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4718
Unit Date 1785 September 24-October 15
Text 1 (box)
Container 7 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed at Shanandoah Falls under Alexander Pollock

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4719
Unit Date 1785 October 15-November 5
Text 1 (box)
Container 8 (folder)
Language English.

Men Employed under Alexander Pollock, Shanandoah Falls

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4720
Unit Date 1785 November 5-19
Text 1 (box)
Container 9 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed under Alexander Pollock

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4721
Unit Date 1785 November 20-December 10
Text 1 (box)
Container 10 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed under Richardson Stuart working for John Ryan, Shanandoah Falls

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4722
Unit Date 1785 November 24-December 24
Text 1 (box)
Container 11 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed under Edward Rumsey and Alexander Pollock, Shanandoah Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4723
Unit Date 1785 December 10-24
Text 1 (box)
Container 12 (folder)
Language English.

Work completed under Leo. Jamison, Ed. Rumsey, and Alex. Pollock
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4724
Unit Date 1785 December 29-1786 January 12
Text 1 (box)
Container 13 (folder)
Language English.

Work Done and Inches Bored under Leonard Jamison, Edward Rumsey, and Alexander Pollock
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4725
Unit Date 1786 January 22-February 18
Text 1 (box)
Container 14 (folder)
Language English.

Work done and Inches Bound under Alex. Pollock, Robert Duke, Charles Rumsey, and James Hamilton, Shenandoah Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4726
Unit Date 1786 July 3-29
Text 1 (box)
Container 15 (folder)
Language English.

Great Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4727
Unit Date 1785 November 12-1786 July 13
Language English.

Men Employed at the Great Falls under Richardson Stuart
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4728
Unit Date 1785 November 12-26
Text 1 (box)
Container 16 (folder)
Links
List of Workmen Employed at the Great Falls from the 12th through the 26th of November inclusive 1785 under Richardson Stuart: 2015-12-03
http://catalog.mountvernon.org/digital/collection/p16829coll16/id/11/rec/2http://cdm16829.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api/singleitem/collection/p16829coll16/id/11/thumbna
Language English.
Creator Washington, George, 1732-1799
Creator Fitzgerald, John, -1799
Creator Gilpin, George, 1740-1813
Keywords
Financial records
Lists (document genres)
Potomac Company

James Rumsey, Work Done
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4729
Unit Date 1785 November 21
Text 1 (box)
Container 17 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed at the Great Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4730
Unit Date 1785 November 26-December 24
Text 1 (box)
Container 18 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed under Richardson Stuart, Great Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4731
Unit Date 1785 December 25-1786 January 7
Text 1 (box)
Container 19 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed under Richardson Stuart, Great Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4732
Unit Date 1786 January 28-February 10
Text 1 (box)
Container 20 (folder)
Language English.

Work done under Leonard Jamifer, Edio. Rumfry, Alexander Pollock, and Thomas Boylon, Great Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4733
Unit Date 1786 February 19-March 18
Text 1 (box)
Container 21 (folder)
Language English.

Men employed under Richardson Stuart, Great Falls
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4734
Unit Date 1786 June 19-July 13
Text 1 (box)
Container 22 (folder)
Language English.

Receipts

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4735
Unit Date 1785 September-1786 August
Language English.

James Rumsey, Pay Roll, 1785 September 24-October 15; Shipment Receipt, Harper's Ferry, James Rumsey, 1785 October 7; Receipt, John Mark, Received shipment of rum, 1785 October 12; Receipt, John Marrow to James Rumsey, Shipment of gunpowder, 1785 October 15
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4736
Unit Date 1785 September-October
Text 2 (box)
Container 1 (folder)
Language English.

Letter and Receipt, Thomas Turner, Shipment of leather and rum, 1785 November 7; Receipt, James Rumsey, Shipment of whiskey and flour, 1785 November 12; Receipt, William Hartshorn to Joel Cooper, 1785 November 21; Receipt, Payment to John Janney Company, 1785 November 21
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4737
Unit Date 1785 November
Text 2 (box)
Container 2 (folder)
Language English.

Receipt, James Kinney, Payment for mutton and beef, Seneca Falls, 1785 December 1; Receipt, Charles Morrow to James Rumsey, Shipment of supplies, 1785 December 1; Receipt, Edward Rumsey to James Rumsey, Shipment of beef, 1785 December 4; Receipt, John Marrow to James Rumsey, Shipment of supplies, 1785 December 8; Receipt, William Hartshorne to Richardson Stewart, Shipment of flour, 1785 December 16
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4738
Unit Date 1785 December
Text 2 (box)
Container 3 (folder)
Language English.

Receipt, Leonard Jamison, Salary for Overseer, 1785 December 19-1786 March 19; Receipt, Charles Morrow to James Rumsey, Shipment of supplies, 1785 December 23; Receipt, Payment to Richardson Stuart, 1785 December 29; Receipt, Richardson Stewart, Salary, 1785 July 15-1786 January 1; Receipt, James Rumsey, Shipment of timber, 1785 December 29
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4739
Unit Date 1785 December
Text 2 (box)
Container 4 (folder)
Language English.

Receipt, John Fitzgerald, Shipment of supplies, 1785 December 29; Receipt, Sampson Trammell, Payment for supplies, Great Falls, 1785 December 31
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4740
Unit Date 1785 December
Text 2 (box)
Container 5 (folder)
Language English.

Receipt, 1786 January 6, Shipment of supplies; Receipt, Perrin and Brothers, Shipment of 24 Iron Bars, 1786 January 7; Receipt, John Morrow, Shipment of supplies, 1786 January 12; Receipt, John Mark, Payment for supplies, 1786 January 13; Receipt, William Hartshorn, Shipment of supplies, 1786 January 14; Receipt, William Hartshorne in payment to John Marrow, Shipment of supplies, 1786 January 17
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4741
Unit Date 1785 January
Text 2 (box)
Container 6 (folder)
Language English.

Receipt, T. Hamilton, Shipment of supplies, 1786 January 18; Receipt, Thomas Connell, 1786 January 12; Payment to Indentured Servant, 1786 January 19; Letter and Receipt, James Rumsey to William Hartshorne, the Great Falls, 1786 January 19; Receipt, Elisha C. Dick, 1786 January 26
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4742
Unit Date 1786 January
Text 2 (box)
Container 7 (folder)
Language English.

Receipt, John Fitzgerald, Books and Advertisement, 1785 February 3; Receipt, John Richie, Shipment of supplies, 1786 February 4; Letter and Receipt, Henry Warring, 1785 February 9; Receipt, James Johnson and Company, Shipment of Supplies, 1786 February 19
Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4743
Unit Date 1786 February
Text 2 (box)
Container 8 (folder)
Language English.

Receipt, Robert Birrely, Shipment of Irish beef, 1786 March 13; Receipt, Elisha Cullen Dick, Shipment of flour, 1786 March 14; Receipt, Charles Morrow to James Rumsey, Shipment of flour, 1786 March 25; Receipt, Edmond Cann to James Rumsey, Shipment of beef, 1786 March 28

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4744

Unit Date 1786 March

Text 2 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Language English.

Receipt, James Kenney to James Rumsey, Shipment of Veal, 1786 March 29; Receipt, Adam Bence, Shipment of supplies, 1786 March 29; Receipt, William Keith to James Rumsey, "Sinnica" Falls, 1786 March 31

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4745

Unit Date 1786 March

Text 2 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Language English.

Receipt, Hugh Corres to James Rumsey, Shipment of Iron, Great Falls, 1786 April 2; Receipt, List of amounts paid by James Rumsey for the Potomac Company, 1786 April 6; Receipt, Vincent Boggels to James Rumsey, Shipment of pork, 1786 April 6; Receipt, James Rumsey to Richardson Stuart, Shipment of beef, 1786 April 7; Receipt, James Rumsey to Richardson Stuart, Shipment of flour, 1786 April 15

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4746

Unit Date 1786 April

Text 2 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Language English.

Receipt, John Kearsley from James Rumsey, Paid cash, 1786 May 1; Receipt, Payment to William Abil Westfall, 1786 July 3; Receipt, Paid Sundry People, James Rumsey, 1786 August 5

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/4747

Unit Date 1786 May-August

Text 2 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Language English.