



Record Group [RG] 1

Town Clerk: Obsolete Records

1802 - 1887

Describes the following records:

Records of the Reverend J. French, 1802-1814

Highway Districts, 1884

Jury Meetings, 1828-1887

Personal Mortgages, 1832-1856

Finding Aid

October 2010

RG 1 Town Clerk: Obsolete Records

Series: Records of the Reverend J. French, 1802-1814

Highway Districts, 1884

Jury Meetings, 1828-1887 (2 bound volumes)

Personal Mortgages, 1832-1856

Location: Town Clerk's Office.

Provenance. These records were found in the safe that sat in the main room of the Old Town Hall until the Spring of 2010. The contents were moved to the Town Clerk / Tax Collector Office. Thanks to the New Hampshire Vital Records Improvement Fund, the Town Clerk / Tax Collector Susan Buchanan was able to obtain a second fire-resistant storage cabinet and archival supplies for assisting in the preservation of these materials.

Scope and Content.

Records of the Reverend Jonathan French, 1802-1814. This bound volume, conserved and microfilmed by Brown's River in the 1990s, is a manuscript record of the Reverend French's expenditures near the beginning of his ministry in North Hampton. It may have been his personal account book rather than one maintained by a Town Officer.

The Reverend Dr. Jonathan French served as minister in North Hampton from 1801 until 1852. The Reverend Dr. French also was one of the founding and long-term members of the Superintending School Committee. As a prominent citizen of the Town, his name, actions, and financial accounts appear in many town records from 1801 until his death in 1856.

The Way It Was in North Hampton by Stillman Moulton Hobbs and Helen Davis Hobbs provides a biography of French. Additional materials by or about French can be found in the United Church of Christ North Hampton Archives, the French Family Collection at the Lincoln, MA Public Library (finding aid is available online), and the New Hampshire Historical Society (bibliographic citations available online).

Highway Districts, 1884. This bound volume whose spine title is "Record" describes in manuscript fifteen highway districts, giving the outline of the district by the names of the property owners and locations, sometimes adjoining town lines. The districts have numbers, not descriptive names. There is then a list of residents and non-residents (but property owners) within the district. The creator has not been determined; the volume

may relate to taxing the property owners for the roads within their district. This volume does not include road layouts. It may prove useful in conjunction with **RG 3 Assessment and Collection: Tax and Financial Records** and **RG 5 Ancient Town Papers**.

Jury Meetings, 1828-1887. These two bound volumes do not have spine titles. Written on the cover or inside the cover on both volumes is "A record of proceedings of jury meetings". The first volume dates from 1828 to 1863; the second from 1863 to 1887. There are several inserts in the second volume, including the record for 1887. The volumes contain the meeting notification, meeting minutes, and the names of the individuals chosen as jurors.

Brief Explanation. By State law, the Selectmen had to create and maintain a list of potential jurors. The number of individuals required of a Town depended upon the Town's population. When jurors were needed for an impending session at one of the various courts, a meeting was called of the Town's inhabitants, and a name drawn out of the "box". That person would be expected to appear at the named court beginning its session at a certain date and location.

Personal Mortgages, 1832-1856. This bound volume entitled "Town Records" contains the recording of personal property (or chattel) mortgages. The mortgages, similar to land record books, are recorded in chronological order. There is no index included in or with the volume.

This volume would have been created in response to a State law passed in June 1832 that required the registration of mortgages of personal property by the Clerk of the Town in which the mortgagor resides.

A close reading of these collateralized loan descriptions may provide a sense of the financial times for the Town and region as well as for individual families. Looking at **RG 2 Assessment and Collection** records in conjunction with this volume may prove enlightening. Also note that some years in the **RG 5 Ancient Town Records** include writs ordering the sheriff to attach the estate and property of various individuals.