New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Rail Road Collection
1852 Feb. 16 - 1862 Jan. 30
Extent: 23 Items

Scope and content: This collection consists of correspondence, receipts, stock certificates, estimates, proposals, and reports dealing with the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Rail Road Company. Most of the items are concerned with the expansion of the line west and the creation of a Houma Branch.

Historical note: The New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Rail Road Company was organized in 1852, under provisions of "An Act for the Organization of Corporations for Works of Public Improvement and Utility", (Act No. 176), approved 1852 March 12, in an effort to connect New Orleans with Texas by rail. The Company's terminus was in Algiers and it was authorized to establish and maintain a ferry across the Mississippi River from Algiers to New Orleans. William G. Hewes was President of the Company until his death in 1862. George Willard Reed Bayley, a native New Yorker, was most likely "loaned" by the State Engineer to the railroad company to assist in the location of the line and with its construction. During several years when Bayley is listed in the city directories as "Assistant State Engineer" he was also employed as "Chief Engineer" for the railroad. During the years 1852-1853 Bayley was in charge of surveying the route for the railroad from Algiers to the Atchafalaya River at Brashear City (today, Morgan City), and from 1855 to 1857 he served as "Chief Engineer" for the railroad in charge of the actual construction of the line from the Mississippi to the Atchafalaya, in his capacity as Engineer, Bayley was engaged in surveying the route for the extension of the line to New Iberia and toward the Texas boundary, and in supervising the construction of this new section of the line until the Civil War brought about the suspension of the work.

Cite as: New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Rail Road Collection, MSS 418, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection.
Arrangement: Chronological.
Language: English.
Restrictions: Researchers may be limited to consulting one or two items at a time, per the discretion of the Reading Room staff. Reproduction of original documents, when permitted, must be performed by the Williams Research Center staff.
How to Order: Please provide the reference staff with the manuscript call number and folder number.
Accession number: 57-82-L, 59-148-L, 71-41-L
Subjects: Hewes, William G.
Bayley, George William Reed.
New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad Company.

Related material: There are several pamphlets on the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad Company as well as a book which contains the by-laws and charter of the company. Also see “A Forgotten Louisiana Engineer: G.W.R. Bayley and his ‘History of the Railroads of Louisiana’” in *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* Vol. 30, No. 4, October 1947.

Folder List

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<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>1852 Feb. 16-1856 Aug. 20</td>
<td>Extracts of Acts to incorporate the Texas Western Rail Road Company. English. AD, 3 pp., 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>1853 May 1</td>
<td>Two receipts issued by Mr. Garland, Treasurer of the City of New Orleans, to Wm. Bogart and Patrick Foley for payment of a tax levied on the property to meet the first instalment of the City's Subscription to the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Rail Road and the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad, in conformity with an Ordinance of the Common Council. English. DS (stamp signature), 4 pp., 2 items.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>1854-1857</td>
<td>Figures arranged by years, place, and method of shipment. Places include Bayou Terrebonne, Little Cailbou, Grand Cailbou, Bayou Dularge, and Bayou Black. Notes figures on passengers, sundries, and freight. English. AMs, 2 pp., 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>1855 May 18</td>
<td>Stock certificate for four shares in the Capital stock of the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Rail Road in the name of Chauviny and signed by the Secretary and President of the Company. English. DS, 1 p., 1 item.</td>
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Folder 5 1856 July 17  William G. Hewes, New Orleans to the Honorable John Moore, New Iberia, concerning the prospects of expanding the rail road line in order to take advantage of the law authorizing the donation of lands to the State for the benefit of rail roads. Mentions various ideas for the expansion and encloses a copy of a report from the G. W. R. Bayley, Chief Engineer, stating Bayley's views on the expansion of the line to Shreveport. Bayley gives a brief description of the geography of the area and facts involving the Red River. Bayley's report is dated 15 July 1856. English. ALS, 6 pp., 2 items.

Folder 6 1856 Nov. 24  Appointment by Chas. M. Waterman, Mayor of New Orleans, of Glendy Burke, Esq., as a New Orleans delegate to the "Southern Convention" meeting in Savannah, Georgia on December eighth. On the bottom is a signed statement by Glendy Burke making Judge John Moore his proxy. English. DS, 2 pp., 1 item.

Folder 7 1857 May  Proposal submitted to the President and directors of the Opelousas and Great Western Rail Road by the Committee for the Citizens of the Parish of Terrebonne for the building of a branch road to connect the town of Houma with the Opelousas Road by way of upper Bayou Black. Includes estimates of income. English. AMsS, 4 pp., 1 item.

Folder 8 1857 May  Statement by the planters in Terrebone Parish who at present ship by the Opelousas Rail Road and would use the proposed Branch along with a list of persons who presently ship by way of Lockport or the sea but would be likely to use the Opelousas Road by a branch. This statement contains two lists of planters and the number of slaves they have and mentions the size of the town and the number of bakeries, dry good stores, drug stores, boarding houses and other establishments. English. AMs, 4 pp., 1 item.
Folder 9 1857 July 16
Copy of the estimates made by G. W. R. Bayley, Engineer, for Berwick Bay bridge, 45 miles Bay to New Iberia, 40 miles New Iberia to Opelousas, and 92 1/2 miles Opelousas to Sabine listed on the page are estimates dated the ninth and sixteenth of July. On the reverse side is an extract from Gibby Report dated June 24, 1853. English. AMs, 2 pp., 1 item.

Folder 10 1857 July 23
Labeled, "rough draft for copy" this letter addressed to W. G. Hewes, President of the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Rail Road Company, concerning the estimated cost of the bridge at Berwick Bay. Suggests that the same result can be achieved for about one seventh of the cost with a steam powered ferry. Mention is also made of the time it would take to travel certain distances and the possibility of securing new trade. English. L, 4 pp., 1 item.

Folder 11 1857 July 31
A. Mouton, the Capitol, to the Honorable John Moore, concerning the extension of the line between New Iberia and the Bay. Mentions his appointment to the Committee of Construction and how he wishes they could have met in person. English. ALS, 2 pp., 1 item.

Folder 12 1859 Dec. 21
Receipt from the New Orleans, Opelousas, & Great Western Rail Road for goods, for transportation. It bears the names of Wm. Rochell and R. Le Blanc, and Core I. D. Swaim and the goods they have handed over for transport with dollar values. English. DS, 2 pp., 1 item.

Folder 13 1861 Mar. 25-1862 Jan. 30
Receipts made out to Magill Estate for goods bought of Darby and Tremoulet, commission merchants, Bienville Street, New Orleans. Two of the receipts are labeled "Duplicate" and at the bottom of each is a notice that it is for Railway and Darby. English. AD, 1 p. each, 6 items.
Folder 14  n.d.  Memo of figures dealing with the length of rail required to meet distances. Places mentioned include Opelousas to the Sabine, New Iberia to Opelousas, Lafourche to Berwick Bay to New Iberia, Lafayette to Opelousas to Washington. English. AMs, 2 pp., 1 item.

Folder 15  n.d.  Estimates of the cash cost of the Houma Branch Rail Road made by G. W. Bayley, Chief Engineer. Gives estimate for the cost of construction, as well as an estimate for the cost of equipment. Under construction items listed include iron rails, cross ties, and cattle guards. Under equipment are listed depot and platform, locomotion engines, hand cars, box cars and more. English. AMsS, 2 pp., 1 item.

Folder 16  n.d.  Memo noting the committee on construction's recommendation for the depot in Opelousas. English. AN, 1 p., 1 item.