

Conant Family Papers

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Abstract:

This collection contains the original papers of descendants of Roger Conant, founder of Naumkeg and one of the Old Planters of Beverly. There are some materials documenting the life of Roger Conant, but the bulk of the collection relates to later Conant family members who lived in Beverly in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. They were farmers and tradespeople. John Conant of the sixth generation was constable and tax collector and his records include names of many Beverly residents. The collection continues into the twentieth century with correspondence relating to other family members, and some documentation from the Conant Family Association.

Collection Creator:

Conant family members; Conant Family Association

Provenance:

The provenance of most materials in the collection is not known. Accession numbers when available are given in the notes column, but in most cases there is no record of the donor.

Conservation/Processor's Note:

All documents were in folders in no particular order. Some folders were marked with a specific name but some were more generally titled "Conant." In Series II, documents were collected in folders by the name most prominently associated with the document (many documents refer to more than one family member). The folders have been arranged within the series chronologically by birthdate of the Conant family member, and chronologically by the date of the document if known within each folder. Folder 12, which includes the papers of John Conant (1743-1809), is an exception. Those documents with accession numbers were kept together in one folder, and those that came from the Wenham Historical Association are also together, regardless of date.

The original documents in this collection are fragile, and in some cases torn and/or incomplete. Some receipts were in plastic sleeves. Staples were removed and replaced with plastic clips.

Copyright:

Request for permission to publish material from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Curator of Collections in the Cabot House of the Historic Beverly

Preferred Citation:

Title of Document, Conant Family Papers, Historic Beverly, 117 Cabot Street, Beverly, MA 01915.

Biographical/Historical Note

Roger Conant was born in East Budleigh, England 1593. In 1623 he emigrated to New England with his wife Sarah. After a few years in Plymouth and then Cape Ann, Roger founded Naumkeag, which was later named Salem, in 1626, and was the first governor of the settlers there. In 1635 Roger along with four other settlers, later called the Old Planters, received a land grant on the Bass River side of Salem. Roger built a house on his 200 acres at what was then the head of the Bass River, on an Indian Path that led to Wenham Lake. (From *Life of Roger Conant*, by Frederick Odell Conant, 1926) Roger and Sarah Conant had eight children. Roger gave his son Lot the homestead in 1666, but leased the house for his remaining years. Succeeding generations of Conants, many descended from Lot, lived and farmed in Beverly.

The following genealogical information was found in *History and Genealogy of the Conant Family in England and America*, by Frederick Odell Conant, 1887.

1st Generation

Roger (1593-1679)

Second generation

Lot (1624-1674) (Roger)

Joshua (c.1630-?) (Roger)

Third generation

John (1652-1724) (Lot, Roger)

Joshua (1657-) (Joshua, Roger)

Roger (1668-9-1745) (Lot, Roger)

Fourth generation

Joshua (1678-?) (Joshua, Joshua, Roger)

Elizabeth (1681-?) (John, Lot, Roger)

Bithiah (Herrick) (1684-?) (John, Lot, Roger)

John (1686-1755) (John, Lot, Roger)

m. Martha 1713-14

m. Mary 1722

Daniel (1694-1751) (John, Lot, Roger)

Benjamin (1698-1767) (John, Lot, Roger)

Fifth generation

John (1717-1780) (John, John, Lot, Roger)

m. Mary (Meacham)

Bithiah (Dodge) (1719-20-?) (John, John, Lot, Roger)

Elizabeth (1723-?) (John, John, Lot, Roger)

Samuel (1730-1811) (John, John, Lot, Roger)

Daniel (1720-1786) (Daniel, John, Lot, Roger)

Sixth generation

Mary (Perkins) (1740-?) (John, John, Lot, Roger)

John (1743-1809) (John, John, John, Lot, Roger)

m. Emma (Thorndike) 1764

Elizabeth (1745-?) (John, John, Lot, Roger); unmarried

Bithiah (1752-1816?) (John, John, Lot, Roger); insane

Samuel (1750-1-?) (Samuel, John, John, Lot, Roger)

Benjamin (1765-?) (Lot, John, John, Lot, Roger)

Seventh generation

Sally (1765-1850) (John, John, John, John, Lot, Roger); unmarried; insane

John (1771-1859) (John, John, John, John, Lot, Roger)

m. Sarah 1792

m. Rebecca 1831

Emma (Dodge) (1776-?) (John, John, John, John, Lot, Roger)

Mary (Foster) (1778-?) (John, John, John, John, Lot, Roger)

Ezra (1780-c.1850) (John, John, John, John, Lot, Roger)

Patty (1786?-1815?) (genealogy unknown) possibly Martha b. 1767

William (1802-?) (Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan, Lot, Lot, Roger)

Eighth generation

Charles (1826-?) (Ezra, John, John, John, John, Lot, Roger)

William Henry (1820-?) (William, Jonathan Jonathan, Jonathan, Lot, Lot, Roger)

Other Conant family members referenced in the collection:

Bernard D. Conant (1886-1946)

James Bryant Conant (1893-?)

Clarrissa Conant

Scope and Content Note

The Conant Family Papers collection includes original documents of descendants of Roger Conant dating from the early 1700's through the late 1800's. These documents consist of bills, receipts, deeds, tax assessments, and inventories relating to the second through the eighth generations of Conant family members, most of whom lived in Beverly. A large portion of the documents are financial in nature and many are concerned with the division of Conant family land. Materials relating to the life of Roger Conant can be found in Series I. Series II is separated into folders according to family member in order of birthdate. Folder 12 contains the documents of John Conant (1743-1809), who was the constable and tax collector. This folder is subdivided into three subseries including receipts and tax assessments referencing many Beverly residents. Series III includes materials relating to the Roger Conant Family Association.

Related Materials

Conant Family in Historic Beverly “People Files”

Series List

This collection is arranged into 3 series:

Series I: Roger Conant

Series II: Descendants of Roger Conant

Series III: Roger Conant Family Association

Content List

Series I: Roger Conant (1671-2001)

Series/Arrangement Note: Arranged in folders by type of document. Folder 1 contains photocopies of documents relating to the life of Roger Conant; Folder 2 contains books and pamphlets; Folder 3 contains correspondence.

Location	Folder	Content	Date	Notes
	1	Photocopy of Petition from Roger Conant and others to change the name of Beverly	1671	
		Photocopy of Roger Conant’s Last Will and Testament	1679	
		Photocopy of a history of Roger Conant’s relative, John Conant, b. 1608 in England		
		Photocopy of a history of Roger Conant’s house, granted to him by his son Lot		
		Comments on Roger Conant, Sr., Roger Conant, Jr., Elizabeth Weston, and Thomas Weston by Jerry King Weston	2001	
	2	Life of Roger Conant by Frederick Odell Conant and supplement	1926	#27,651 Trow
		Roger Conant and the Early Settlement of the North Shore of Massachusetts, by Frances Rose-Troup and Supplementary Notes by Grace Patten Conant	1944	#27,664 Trow
		Book: Roger Conant, <i>The Leader of the Old Planters</i> , Salem, 1626	1925	#29,658 Clarissa Conant
		Pamphlet: Roger Conant, <i>The Leader of the Old Planters</i> , Salem, 1626	undated	

	3	Correspondence between Frances Robotti and Alice G. Lapham of the BHS about Clifton K. Shipton's book, <i>Roger Conant: A Founder of Massachusetts</i>	1949-1989	Frances Robotti
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Series II: Descendants of Roger Conant

Series/Arrangement Note: This series includes financial records, wills, deeds, inventories, and letters arranged in folders by family member, in chronological order by birth date. Documents within folders are arranged chronologically when possible. Folder 12 is subdivided into three folders as found with some documents indicating provenance. Folder 17 is subdivided into two folders with folder (a) containing only bills and receipts and folder (b) containing other documents arranged chronologically.

Location	Folder	Content	Date	Notes
	4	John Conant (1652-1724)		
		Financial document between John and his brother Roger of Concord	1722	
		Will. Copy is printed in Conant Family genealogy, page 147.	1724	
	5	Joshua Conant (possibly fourth generation, 1678-?)		
		Journal of his trip to Port Royal. (Siege of Port Royal, August 20, lasted eleven days until British retreated.)	July-Sept. 1707	#698
	6	John Conant (1686-1755); farmer and weaver, church deacon		
		Document constituting William Pynchon his attorney	1754	
		Accounts book	1719-34	
	7	Daniel Conant (1694-1751), farmer and mason		
		bond to his brother John, signed by Paul Dodge and John Balch	1732	
	8	Benjamin Conant (1698-1767), tailor		
		deed to John Conant	1730	
		bond of Benjamin Conant, John Conant, and Peter Woodberry to Robert Haskell	1746	
	9	John Conant (1717-1780); farmer and church deacon		
		deed from Daniel Dodge	1755	
		receipt on behalf of Francis Wheeler paid to John	1739	

		Bradford		
		receipt for sum paid to Lindall	1746	
		bequest from will of John Lovett; also to Robert and Eliza Hale and Abigail Trask	1750	#25451
		receipt of sum paid to Solomon Gould	1752	
		receipt from sum paid by John Conant	1755	
		accounts of Benjamin Meacham	1774	
		inventory of Benjamin Meacham's estate	1773-74	
		3 receipts from Benjamin Meacham's estate	1774	
		partial receipt that mentions Benjamin Meacham	undated	
		notebook of accounts	1780	
		probate document	1781	
		notebook of inventory of estate	1781	
		copy of the inventory of estate		
		receipt from estate paid to Joseph Wood	1781	
	10	Mary Conant (widow of John 1717-1780)		
		deed to John Conant, signed by Mary, Johnathan Perkins, Mary Perkins, and Elizabeth Conant	1781	
		document relating to property from John's estate	1781	
		copy of document on division of property, signed by William Dodge, Richard Dodge, and Joseph Wood	1781	
		four receipts	1784-1793	
		accounts	1791-1793	
		inventory of things received from her husband's estate	undated	
		accounts related to the inventory of the estate of Mary Conant, deceased	1799	
	11	Mary Conant Perkins (1740-?)	1805	
		bill from Peter Shaw		
		accounts notebook possibly belonging to Jonathan Perkins	1776-1785	
	12	John Conant (1743-1809); constable		
	Subseries (a)	Documents with no known provenance		
		8 bills and receipts	1768-1780	
		25 bills and receipts	1781-1790	
		22 bills and receipts	1791-1808	
		Assessments of Beverly property owners	1783	
		Assessments of Beverly property owners	1786	

		Assessments of Beverly property owners	1793	
		Undated tax assessments	undated	
		Taxes for highway repairs	1795	
		Document relating to a sale from Aaron Sealis for a pew in the public meeting house	1781	
		Undated receipt from Benjamin Conant		
		Return of the widow Emma Conant	1809	
		Receipt of Emma Conant from sons John and Ezra	1809	
		Receipt of Emma Conant from sons John and Ezra	1811	
		Receipt of Emma Conant to Ezra Conant	1813	
		Papers relating to the estate of Abigail Thorndike. John Conant m. Emma Thorndike 1764	1764	
		1 misc. undated document		
	Subseries (b)	Documents with accession numbers found in the same folder		
		33 pieces of ephemera: tax receipts, notes, labor invoices etc. includes deed from Mary Perkins and Bethiah Conant	1780's-early 1800's	990-41
		letter	1784	2621
		bills and receipts	1753-1806	2837-2863
		receipt from estate	1809	10,968
		receipt	1788	10,971
	Subseries (c)	Documents found in folder with others from the Wenham Historical Association		
		Papers from the Wenham Historical Association		Wenham Historical Association
		settlement of Benjamin Meacham's estate	1776	
		account book	1778	
		assessments of Beverly property owners	1781	
		receipts from estate of John (1717-1780) from his widow Mary, Bethiah, and Elizabeth	1781-1783	
		accounts	1781-1789	
		Indenture from Elizabeth and Bethiah	1783	
		Beverly taxes	1786	001.37.1
		letter from Joseph Batchelder, Town Treasurer	1788	
		agreement with Anna Batchelder	1799	
		letter from J. Stuart	1805	
		inventory of estate	1809	
		receipts	1755-1831	
	13	Elizabeth Conant (1745-?)		

		Receipt for keeping school	1783-87	
		Receipt	1786	
		receipt for keeping school	1791	22,317
		receipt	1798	
14		Bethiah Conant (1752-1816?)		
		15 bills and receipts	1784-1815	
		accounts	1782	
		estate inventory	1810	
		receipt for digging grave	1816	
15		Patty Conant (?-about 1815)		
		5 receipts from estate	1815	
16		John Conant (1771-1859); farmer and shoemaker		
		document showing division of the estate land for John, Patty, Mary, Ezra, Sally, and Emma	undated	
		letter from David Lee to John Conant	1806	
		receipt	1807	
		3 tax receipts	1807-1809	
		receipt from Thomas Dodge	1809	
		receipt	1817	
		receipt	1843-44	
17		Ezra Conant (1780-about 1850)		
	Subseries (a)	87 bills and receipts, some undated	1806-1848	
	Subseries (b)	document granting guardianship of Bethiah	1810	
		accounts relating to Bethiah	1811	
		accounts of Mary, Sally, and Ezra Conant and Emma Dodge	undated	
		tax receipts	1806-1820	10,959-10,967
		tax receipts with no accession number	1821-1831	
		12 Town of Manchester tax receipts	1823-1844	Wenham Historical Association
		Notice of administrator's sale of personal estate	1850	
18		William Conant (1802-?)		
		Book: poem for the fiftieth anniversary of William Conant and his wife Hannah Fornis, September 5, 1828, by William H. Conant	1889	Augustus A. Galloupe 2227
19		Charles Conant (1826-?)	1848-	

			1892	
		36 tax bills		
	20	Bernard D. Conant (1886-1946)		
		birth certificate		
		timeline of his life		
		letter of recommendation from Captain Thomas Snowden, on board the U.S.S. Wyoming	1915	
		letter of recommendation from Power Equipment Co.	1922	
		membership card from American Legion sent to Alice Conant	1946	
		resolution from American Legion Post 12, Beverly to his widow	1946	
	21	James Bryant Conant (1893-?) ; president of Harvard University		
		genealogy		
	22	Other Conant Descendants		
		letter from Glenn H. Easton to BHS	1967	
		genealogy chart		
	23	Miscellaneous Documents		
		10 receipts	1743-1845	
		4 undated receipts	undated	
		5 inventories with no name and undated	undated	
		Letter to Robert Rantoul requesting information on the family of Roger Conant	1838	

Series III: Conant Family Association

Series/Arrangement Note: This series includes materials relating to the Conant Family Association arranged chronologically.

Location	Folder	Content	Date	
	24	Program for the unveiling of the statue	1913	
		2 booklets of list of members	1930	
		2 membership certificates for Bernard D. Conant		
		1 membership certificate for Clarissa Conant		

Bibliography

Conant, Frederick Odell. *History and Genealogy of the Conant Family in England and America*. Privately printed, Portland, ME 1887.

Conant, Frederick Odell. *Life of Roger Conant*. Reprinted from "*History and Genealogy of the Conant Family*." Roger Conant Family Association, 1926.