

WALTHAM EDUCATION

Rumford Institute

Scope and Content

This collection contains the records of the Rumford Institute (1826-1887). These records include the Institute's Constitution, Bylaws, Secretary's reports and Meeting minutes. Also housed here are membership dues lists (1835--1845) and book catalogs (1848, 1851). The book catalogs are particularly pertinent to this organization because the Institute's books were donated to help create Waltham's original public library in 1863. A sparse set of programs from the Rumford Institute and a biography of Benjamin Thompson (Count of Rumford) after whom the Institute was named are found in this collection. Also included is an incomplete run of the newspaper *Rumford Journal* (Vol. 2, no. 6, Aug. 17, 1850-Vol. 2, no. 28, Jan. 18, 1851.)

Historical Note

The Boston Manufacturing Company established the Rumford Institute for Mutual Instruction on December 23, 1826 at its Upper Factory school. The Institute was established "for the purpose of maintaining a Library, advancement of useful Arts and Sciences and providing public instruction through lectures." It was the earliest institute of its kind in the country, with one exception. Its instruction was carried on by means of lecture, a library, and occasionally by evening classes and a debating club. The founders of the Institute were Isaac Bemis, Reverend Bernard Whitman, Thomas Gorham, and Dr. Samuel L. Dana.

Rumford Hall was erected in 1827 on northeast corner of land later known as Waltham Common. The building was used as a city hall beginning in 1849 and was torn down in 1926 to make way for a new city hall. The building also housed a courtroom, post office and library between 1860 and 1880. Stores were located on the ground floor and a shop in the rear was occupied by Jewell's Weathervane Company. The Waltham Public Library began with the donation of the Institute's 3700 books to the town in 1863.

There were many distinguished lecturers who spoke at the Institute during its long career. These speakers included: Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Horace Mann, Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner, Louis Agassiz, Edward Everett, Horace Greeley, R. H. Dana, Bayard Taylor, Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, Henry W. Beecher, Carl Schurtz, George F. Train, Henry C. Barnabee and J. T. Fields. The Institute also presented light opera, concerts, and professional drama.

The Institute was incorporated in March, 1858. The incorporators were F. M. Stone, Eben Hobbs, Josiah Rutter, Horatio Adams, and Isaac Parker. The final program of the Institute was presented during the season of 1886-87, closing a distinguished record of 60 years.

Melissa Mannon

May 13, 1997

BOX AND FOLDER LIST
WALTHAM EDUCATION
Rumford Institute

Box

1

- Rumford Hall - History
 - Newsclippings
 - Hale, Richard Walden. *Some Account of Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford*. 1927
- Book Catalogs -
 - 1848
 - 1851
- Members' dues lists-
 - 1835
 - 1836
 - 1837
 - 1838
 - 1841-42
 - 1844-45
- Music Recital Programs-
 - Old Folks Concert, typed copy from June 5, 1856 *Waltham Sentinel*
 - 1880-81 program schedule
 - Second Annual Ball of the Young America RRC, January 11, 1871
 - Citizens Annual Ball, February 14, 1871
 - Minstrel Program, April 11, 1871
 - Grand closing concert, February 28th, 1884
- Book presented to the Rumford Institute by George Briggs - Letters of John Quincy Adams to His Son on The Bible and Its Teachings, Auburn: James M. Alden, 1850.
- Ledger, 1826 -
 - Constitution and Bylaws, 1826
 - Meeting Minutes, 1826-1846
- Ledger, 1851-1856
 - Board of Managers Records
- Ledger, 1857-1858
 - Board of Managers Records
- Ledger, 1858
 - Constitution (with members signatures), 1858
- Ledger, 1858-1886 -
 - Act of Incorporation, and Bylaws, 1858
 - Meeting Minutes, Board of Directors, 1858-1886

BOX AND FOLDER LIST
WALTHAM EDUCATION
Rumford Institute (cont.)

Flat Boxes

- 2 Ledgers -
 - Reports of the Secretary, 1847-1858

- 3 Meeting Minutes and Constitution, 1858-1887

- 4 Rumford Journal –
 - Vol. 2, no. 6, Aug. 17, 1850
 - Vol. 2, no. 7, Aug. 24, 1850
 - Vol. 2, no. 7, Aug. 31, 1850
 - Vol. 2, no. 11, Sep. 21, 1850
 - Vol. 2, no. 16, Oct. 25, 1850
 - Vol. 2, no. 18, Nov. 9, 1850
 - Vol. 2, no. 23, Dec. 14, 1850
 - Vol. 2, no. 27, Jan. 11, 1851
 - Vol. 2, no. 28, Jan. 18, 1851