Administrative Note:
The Robinson Manufacturing Company of Oxford, Maine was one of the oldest continuously run family businesses in Maine and also one of the last woolen mills in the state before the factory closed its doors in 2003. Joseph Robinson came to New England from Yorkshire, England with considerable knowledge and experience in the woolen industry. He put that knowledge to good use when he first joined the Oxford Woolen Manufacturing Company in the 1850s as a woolen dye expert. With such expertise and drive, Robinson soon took over operations of the woolen manufacturing company. In 1863, with H.J. and F.O. Libby as partners, he brought out the woolen company and incorporated it into The Robinson Manufacturing Company.

Joseph Robinson was an astute businessman and soon expanded the woolen mill business by buying up the land around Thompson Lake, building a bigger dam, and flooding the lake, which increased its size by a mile and half in length. This provided a year round power source for the mill that had previously had to shut down in the summer when water in the stream dried up and levels in the lake became too low to provide a power source. The business continued to grow and expand with the company building a massive five story red brick in 1863 that housed the woolen mill. The Robinson Manufacturing Company is said to have produced “beautiful oxford blue woolen twill that did not fade” for the Union Troops during the Civil War. Although no actual and specific business correspondence was found supporting this claim, a few letters were located in the files which suggest this claim to be true. One letter dated December 15, 1863 [?] has a dark blue woolen twill swatch attached and appears to be ordering “12 m.yds” (See Series 1, Box 1, Folder 3).

When Joseph died in 1895 his two sons, Albert and John, continued the family business. Other major expansions to the mill occurred in 1895 with the addition of an L-shaped wing. In 1930 the mill received electricity and no longer had to rely on waterpower from the dam. In the 1972, the Robinsons purchased the Kezar Woolen Manufacturing Company where the wool was carded, spun and woven. The wool was then sent back to
the Oxford Mill for cleaning, dying, and finishing. The business continued to prosper and modernize through the 1990s until the textile industry began to decline with competition from foreign countries in the late 1990’s. After over 150 years and five generations of Joseph Robinson heirs, the Robinson Manufacturing Business closed its doors in 2004.

Taken from information in the source files.

Scope and Content Note:

Manuscript and print collection:
This collection includes business correspondence and documents, company incorporation papers & annual meeting minutes including stock information, property deeds and variances, disputes and law suits, personal & corporation income and property tax records, architectural drawings and site surveys, and a number of record books specific to the woolen industry and mill that date back to the mid 1800s. The collection also contains number volumes of woolen samples and some business correspondence has woolen samples attached. These will be denoted by an asterisk (*) on the folder or volume.

Photographs and Newspaper Articles:
There are photographs and newspaper articles included that date mostly to the 1950 through the 1980s. There is one newspaper from Leeds, England dated 1824.

Personal Information:
There are letters from Joseph’s two sons dated 1879-1885, Last Will and Testaments for Joseph (1895) and John & Cora Robinson (1916 & 1924), and family genealogy documents. There is also an 8th grade report card for John B. Robinson.

Related to the town of Oxford Maine:
There are documents related to town meetings in the 1860s, a Fire Engine purchase in 1863, and renovation of the Oxford Post Office in 1963. (see source file for photograph of possibly the same fire engine, located in the Robinson family garage in Otisfield, as of 2010).

Series:
Series I: Manuscript and print collection, including letters, receipts, deeds and contracts
Series II: Bound volumes including daybooks, ledgers, and woolen sample books
Series III: Insurance surveys, site drawings, and machinery drawing
Series IV: Personal items including letters and wills
Series V: Historical articles, newspaper stories and pictures
Series VI: Information related to the town of Oxford

Processing note:
Many of the documents came to us tightly folded and tied together – we unfolded them and placed them in folders (see photographs in source file of how the items originally looked). Also, some of the volumes and documents were found towards the end of the project, so they were interfiled (thus the numbering system which has a., b., c., etc.).
Finally, some of the numbering is sequential (Folder 1-95) because of how it was organized, although beginning with Box 15, the numbering starts over again with each box. The architectural drawings are roughly organized, but at some point more detailed processing of these drawings can be done (perhaps chronological?)

**Provenance**: Gift of George and Harriet Robinson
Inventory

Series 1: Manuscript and print collection

Box 1:
Folder 1: Correspondence/Receipts from John Hall, 1857-58
Folder 2: Correspondence, 1863
Folder 3: Correspondence, Dec 1863-1864 including probable sample and order for large volume of blue wool twill that may be the Oxford blue for uniforms of Union Troops in War Between the States (*).
Folder 4: Correspondence, 1864
Folder 5: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad, 1863
Folder 6: Receipts for 1863 # 1-35
Folder 7: Receipts for 1863 # 36-70
Box 1a. Folder 7a. Letters, Bills & Receipts 1863 Sept - Oct
Folder 7b. Letters, Bills & Receipts 1863 Nov - Dec

Box 2:
Folder 8: Receipts for 1863 # 71-114
Folder 9: Receipts for 1863 # 115-140
Folder 10: Receipts for 1863 #141-197
Folder 11: Correspondence/Bills of Goods Jan-March 1864
Folder 12: Correspondence/Bills of Goods Apr-May 1864
Folder 13: Correspondence/Bills of Goods July-Sept 1864
Folder 14: Correspondence/Bills of Goods Oct-Dec 1864

Box 3:
Folder 15: Receipts for 1864 April–June
Folder 16: Receipts for 1864 July–August
Folder 17: Receipts for 1864 Sept–Nov
Folder 18: Receipts for 1864 Dec–Feb 1865
Folder 19: Correspondence/Bills of Goods Jan–June 1865
Folder 20: Correspondence/Bills of Goods July–Sept 1865
Folder 20a: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad 1864

Box 4:
Folder 21: Correspondence/Bills of Goods Oct–Dec 1865
Folder 22: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad 1865
Folder 23: Correspondence & Receipts Dec 1864–Jan 1865
Folder 24: Correspondence & Receipts Feb–Mar 1865
Folder 25: Correspondence & Receipts Apr–May 1865
Folder 26: Correspondence & Receipts June–August 1865
Folder 26a: Correspondence & Receipts Sept–Dec 1865

Box 5:
Folder 27: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad Dec 1865–Feb 1866
Folder 28: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad Mar–Oct 1866
Folder 29: Correspondence 1866-1868
Folder 30: Bills of Sales 1860-1870s
Folder 31: Correspondence, Bills & Receipts Jan – June 1866
Box 5a:
Folder 31a: Business Correspondence Jan – Mar 1866
31b: Business Correspondence April – June 1866
31c: Business Correspondence July – Aug 1866
31d: Business Correspondence Sept – Oct 1866
31e: Business Correspondence Nov – Dec 1866

Box 6:
Folder 32: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad Nov 1866- Oct 1867
Folder 33: Receipts 1867
Folder 34: Receipts 1867 # 1-30
Folder 35: Receipts 1867 # 31 – 65
Folder 36: Receipts 1867 # 66 – 115
Folder 37: Receipts 1867 # 116 – 150
Folder 38: Receipts 1867 # 151 – 200
Folder 39: Receipts 1867 # 201 – 249
Folder 40: Receipts 1867 # 250 – 268

Box 6a.
Folder 40a: Business Correspondence Jan – Feb 1867
Folder 40b: Business Correspondence Sept – Dec 1867

Box 7:
Folder 41: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad Nov 1867 – June 1868
Folder 42: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad July 1868 – Dec 1868
Folder 43: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad Jan – June 1869
Folder 44: Freight Bills Grand Trunk Railroad
Folder 44 a. Business Correspondence Jan – June 1868
Folder 44 b. Business Correspondence July – Aug 1868
Folder 45: Correspondence/Inquiry Jan – Feb 1869
Folder 46: Correspondence/Inquiry Mar – Apr 1869 (*)
Folder 47: Correspondence/Inquiry May – June 1869

Box 7a:
Folder 48: Correspondence/Inquiry July – August 1869
Folder 49: Correspondence/Inquiry Sept – Oct 1869
Folder 50: Correspondence/Inquiry Nov – Dec 1869
Folder 50a: Receipts Jan – March 1869
Folder 50b: Receipts April – June 1869
Folder 50c: Receipts July – Sept 1869
Folder 50d: Receipts Oct – Dec 1869

Box 8:
Folder 51: Receipts & Letters 1870 Jan – Feb
Folder 52: Receipts & Letters 1870 Mar – Apr
Folder 53: Receipts & Letters 1870 May
Folder 54: Receipts & Letters 1870 June – July
Folder 55: Receipts & Letters 1870 Aug – Sept (*)
Folder 56: Receipts & Letters 1870 Oct – Nov (*)
Folder 57: Receipts & Letters 1870 Dec (*)
Box 9:
- Folder 58: Receipts 1870 Jan – Feb
- Folder 59: Receipts 1870 March – April
- Folder 60: Receipts 1870 May – June
- Folder 61: Receipts 1870 July – Aug
- Folder 62: Receipts 1870 Sept – Oct
- Folder 63: Receipts 1870 Nov – Dec
- Folder 64: Business Correspondence 1870
- Folder 65: Business Correspondence Jan 1871
- Folder 66: Business Correspondence Feb 1871
- Folder 67: Business Correspondence March 1871
- Folder 68: Business Correspondence April 1871

Box 10:
- Folder 69: Business Correspondence May 1871
- Folder 70: Business Correspondence June 1871
- Folder 71: Business Correspondence June – July 1871
- Folder 72: Business Correspondence Aug – Sept 1871
- Folder 73: Business Correspondence Oct – Nov 1871

Box 10a:
- Folder 74: Business Correspondence Dec 1871 – Jan 1872
- Folder 75: Bills Received for Purchases Jan – June 1871
- Folder 76: Receipts/Letters 1871 (Undated)

Box 11:
- Folder 77: Receipts 1871 Jan – Feb
- Folder 78: Receipts 1871 Mar – April
- Folder 79: Receipts 1871 May – June
- Folder 80: Receipts 1871 July – Aug
- Folder 81: Receipts 1871 Aug – Oct (# 50 – 99)
- Folder 82: Receipts 1871 # 100 – 149
- Folder 83: Receipts 1871 # 150 – 201
- Folder 84: Business Correspondence 1877
- Folder 85: Business Correspondence 1883 Jan - June
- Folder 86: Business Correspondence 1883 July - Dec

Box 12:
- Folder 87: Bills and Receipts 1884 Jan – June
- Folder 88: Bills and Receipts 1884 July - Dec
- Folder 89: Business Correspondence 1880s
- Folder 90: Business Correspondence 1890s
- Folder 91: Bills Received for Purchases Nov 1891 – May 1892
- Folder 92: Bills Received for Purchases June 1892 – Dec 1892
- Folder 92A: Receipts from Robinson Manufacturing Company, July 1896 and January 1897
- Folder 93: Business Correspondence 1900s
- Folder 94: Business Correspondence 1910s
- Folder 94 A: Business Correspondence /Papers from 1920s
Folder 95: Business Correspondence 1960s – 1990s

Box 13: Deeds
Folder 1: Pre- Robinson Manufacturing Company (RMC) - Early deeds of land purchased by Cyrus Shaw circa 1823 and Dennis Hayes 1842-1850
Folder 2: Pre-RMC - Property deeds related to Orrin Stevens Homestead on King Street in Oxford Hills circa 1846 and 1962
Folder 3: Pre RMC - Deeds & correspondence from John Hall Re: Woolen Mill circa 1850s
Folder 4: Deed to Grist Mill Purchase 1861 by Robinson
Folder 5: Conveyance/Contract from Robinson to Robinson Manufacturing Company 1863
Folder 6: Deeds for properties purchased re: water rights circa 1860-1869
Folder 7: Deed for land purchased from R. Whyte 1886
Folder 8: Deeds for land purchased 1876-1930
Folder 9: Elite Theater Property purchased 1921
Folder 10: Deed and Lease Agreement between RMC and Robinson Grain Company 1924-1928

Box 14: Deeds Continued
Folder 11: Deed to Flowage Rights on Thompson Pond 1925
Folder 12: Deeds from land sales to RMC 1940s-1980s
Folder 13: Deeds between RMC and other 1970s – 2000s
Folder 14: Quit Claim Deed to Oxford water District 1976
Folder 15: Property deed/ research re: land and building purchased from John Twitchall 1984
Folder 16: Property variance issued by town of Oxford to RMC 1992
Folder 17: Abstract Property deeds associated with land purchases of RMC

Box 14 A: Tax Documents including Corporation, Income and Maine Property Tax Documents
Folder 1: Tax Returns of Capital Stock for 1916-19, 1921-26, 1934-45
Folder 2: Employee Records for those earning > $1,000 a year for 1918-20 and 1922-25
Folder 3: Income tax returns for John B. Robinson, 1913-18
Folder 4: Registration of Boats,” Thistle” and “Maude”, with IRS, 1913-18
Folder 5: Maine property taxes paid by John B. Robinson, 1920
Folder 6: Franchise Tax papers for Robinson Manufacturing Co, 1921-39
Folder 7: Income Tax Returns for John B. Robinson, 1919-23
Folder 8: Income tax Returns for Cora E. Robinson, 1917-18 and 1920-23
Folder 9: Treasury Department Letters for Income tax filings for 1917-18, 1920-24 and 1927

Box 15: Law Suites, Disputes and Water Flow Issues
Folder 1: Early law suite re: water flow 1881 including a small leather book with Joseph Robinson’s testimony (questions and answers)
Folder 2: Town of Otisfield vs Robinson Manufacturing Company
   testimony 1893-1894
Folder 3: Testimony of Inhabitants in Otisfield vs RMC
Folder 4: More testimony in Otisfield vs RMC
Folder 5: Bills for attorney fees for Otisfield vs RMC 1893-1895
Also see Volume 52: Bound volume of Oral Testimony in Otisfield vs RMC
Folder 6: Sarah Wardell vs Robinson Manufacturing Company Maine
   Supreme Judicial Court 1896
Folder 7: Land Dispute re: Josiah Brackett land 1959
Folder 8: Peru land dispute 1928
Folder 9: Documents re: water level issues 1835-1896
Folder 10: Memorandum of Agreement between Lake Thompson Fish and
   Game re: water flow at Saturday Pond 1953

Box 16: Folder 1: Insurance Policies House and Barn 1925
   Folder 1a: State issued incorporation papers for Oxford Woolen
   Manufacturing Company (1849)
   Folder 2: Stocks
      2: Distribution of RMC Stock 1863-1994
      2a: Correspondence re: Transfer of Stock 1912-1924
   Folder 3: Selling Agents for RMC 1935 – 1939
      3a: Selling agents for RMC 1944
   Folder 4: Personnel
      4: Salaries of Officers and Pay Increases 1940s
      4a: Job Classification and Wage Rates 1944
   Folder 5: Tax Issues Including IRS and Exemptions circa 1867
   Folder 6: Kezar Falls Woolen Mill Certificate of Corporation 1961
      6a: Agreements, leases, and other legal documents (including stock
          options for Kezar Falls Woolen Company in Cornish, Maine, and RMC)
      6b: Bankruptcy documents, Bill of Sale documents, and other legal
          documents re: real estate and personal properties in Kezar Falls as
          acquired by RMC, ca. 1961-1973
   Folder 7: By Laws and Minutes from RMC circa 1924 (also see Series 2:
          Bound Volumes 12-14)
   Folder 8: Valuation Papers for RMC 1879-1894
   Folder 9: Corporate financial statements for RMC, 1915-1924

Box 17: Folder 1a: Property Loans & Payment Schedules
   1b. Property Loans and Payment Schedules
   1c: Property Loans and Payment Schedules, 1900s-1940s
   1d: Property Loans and Payment Schedules, ca. late 1800s-1920’s
   1e: Property Loans & Payment Schedules
Folder 2: Land for Auxiliary State Forests circa 1929 – 1930
Folder 3: Assignment of Patent Rights
Folder 4: Formula re: Woolen Manufacturing Machinery
Series 2: Ledgers, record books and bound volumes

Box 18: Series 3 Ledgers, Time Records and Bound Volumes
  Folder 1: Wool Products Labeling Act of 1939
  Folder 2: Insurance Memos, 1925-26
  Folder 3: Stock Holdings of Cora E. Robinson, c. early 1900s
  Folder 4: Wood books of John Robinson, 1918-1921 and 1922-1931
  Folder 5: Index (Employee vs Vendor, undated)
  Folder 6: Vendor Book 1878 – 1884
  Folder 7: Mill order Book, R. Stiles 1938 and 1942-44

Box 19: Bank Books
  Folder 1: Large Bank Book, 1894
  Folder 2: Small Bank Books, 1880-1899
  Folder 3: Small Bank Books, 1900’s

Employees Time Records –Two - three volumes per decade were retained in this collection. No records were available for 1950- 2004.
  Volume 1: Payroll records from April 1864- July 1866
    Volume 1 a. Payroll 1860 – 1868
    Volume 1 b. Payroll 1868 - 1877
  Volume 2: Time book from August 1875 – June 1881
    Volume 2 a. Payroll 1881 – 1887
    Volume 2 b. Payroll Feb 1884 – Dec 1888
    Volume 2 c. Payroll March 1895 – March 1898
    Volume 2 d. Payroll March 1905 – December 1908
  Volume 3: Payroll 1914
    Volume 3 a. Payroll 1915
  Volume 4: Payroll 1917
  Volume 5: Payroll 1920
    Volume 5 a. Payroll 1924
  Volume 6: Payroll 1925
  Volume 7: Payroll 1930
    Volume 7 a. Payroll 1933
  Volume 8: Payroll 1935
    Volume 8 a. Payroll 1940
  Volume 9: Payroll 1941
  Volume 10: Payroll 1944
  Volume 11: Federal Wage and Hour Act, 1941

Robinson Manufacturing Company, Incorporated
  Volume 12: Incorporation papers, stock divisions, bylaws, and minutes from annual meetings 1868-1923
  Volume 13: Same for 1923-1962
Volume 14: Same for 1963-1983
Day Books containing daily entries of receipts and expenditures with some overlapping dates.
Volume 15: June 1858- June 1864 (Loose papers See Box ___ Folder___)
Volume 16: May 1863-Dec 1866
Volume 17: May 1867 – May 1870
Volume 18: Dec 1870 – May 1871
Volume 19: June 1870- Sept 1876
Volume 20: 1876
Volume 21: Nov 1920- Dec 1923
  Volume 21 a. Expense Ledger 1932 – 1936
Cash transaction ledgers accounting for debts, credits, and other financial transactions, some with indexes
Volume 22: Ledger and index, 1857 – 1862
Volume 23: ledger and index, 1878 – 1879
Volume 24: Ledger and index, 1879- 1884
Volume 25: Ledger and index, 1882
Volume 26 Ledger, 1878- 1882
Volume 27: Ledger, ca. 1880
Volume 28: Ledger for Chadbourne House, 1891-1896
Volume 29: Accounts Billable and Received; June 1918- October 1920
Volume 30: Ledger for January 1920- June 1922
Bill Books
Volume 31: June 1857- October 1865 (Loose pages See Box __ Folder __)
Volume 32: May 1882- September 1890
Volume 33: November 1907- December 1916
Volume 34: June 1929- April 1934
Raw Wool Purchased
Volume 35: Raw Wool Purchases, 1940-1946
Volume 36: Raw Wool Purchases, 1946-1951
Volume 37: Raw Wool Purchases, 1952- 1956
Balance and Recapitulation Ledger,
  Volume 38: 1906- 1921
  Volume 38 a. Trial Balance Book for 1921 - 1980
Fabric Order Books including Lot Numbers
Volume 39: Lot #’s 7914 - 10025, Nov 20, 1920 – Nov 1928
Volume 40: Lot #’s 2500a- 4505a, December 1933 – June 1937
  Volume 40 a. Lot # 4506a – 6235 a June 1937 – March 1940
Volume 41: Lot #’s 7329- 8273, April 1942 – August 1944
  Volume 41 a. Lot # 8274a – 9731a August 1944- March 1949
  Volume 41 b. Lot #6240a – 73281/2a March 1940 – April 1942
  Volume 41 c. Lot # 9734 - # 864 March 1949 – April 1951
Volume 42: Lot #’s 2859- 4101, November 1953- October 1955
Fabric Loom design and harness draws
Volume 44: Harness draws 1-16 and W3-10
Wool sample books (*)
Volume 45: 2” x 31/2” in various blue/gray colors, 1876-1890
Volume 46: 2”x 3” samples with looms and color formulas, 1882-1886
Volume 47: 5” x 5” samples, 1973-1978
Volume 48: 5” x 5” samples, 1978 – 1980
Volume 49: 1” x 3” samples, Lot #’s 2 – 2000, no dates
Volume 50: Loose envelopes containing 8” x 4 ½ “woolen samples from Warshaw Woolen Associates, New York, NY, August 1999 – September 2000 (Document Box #___)
Miscellaneous
Volume 51: State of Maine 64th Legislative Session, No 63 1889
Volume 52: Oral testimony in Otisfield vs Robinson Manufacturing Company, 1893 (See Box 7 Folders 2-5)
Volume 53: Journal of Expenses Dec 1866 – June 1875
Volume 54: Journal (#3) of Expenses July 1875 – July 1901

Series 3: Architectural drawings, Insurance Surveys, Site Drawings, and Machinery
Drawing, Newspaper (These items are located in 2nd flooring storage within the numbered collections)
Folder 1: drawings, ca. 1861-2002
Folder 2: drawings, ca. 1982-1990 (and maps)
Folder 3: drawings, ca. 1985-1991
Folder 4: drawings, ca. 1982-1989
Folder 5: drawings, ca. 1973-1989
Folder 6: drawings, ca. 1973-1999
Folder 7: drawings, ca. 1965-1989
Folder 8: drawings, ca. 1966-1991
Folder 9: drawings, ca. 1973-1986
Folder 10: drawings, ca. 1982-2002
Folder 11: drawings, ca. 1924-1997
Folder 12: drawings, ca. 1907-1977 (includes proposed tank farm materials, created by Stevens Tank & Tower Co., Auburn, Maine, ca. 1907)
Folder 13: drawings, ca. 1976
Folder 14: drawings, ca. 1973-1994
Folder 15: drawings, ca. 1985-1989
Folder 16: drawings, ca. 1961-2002
Folder 17: drawings, 1896-1990, including:
-Robinson Manufacturing Company Site Survey, 1896
-Site Survey, 1905
-Site Survey, 1914
-Factory Insurance Association, 1962
-Industrial Risk Insurers, 1977
-Industrial Risk Insurers, 1990
-Davis and Faber 60” by 60” Woolen Card Machine Drawing
- *Leeds Mercury*, newspaper, 1824 (includes mention of a William Robinson on p. 4 top, under “Absconded”)

**Series 4: Personal items**

Box: 20
- Folder 1: Legal Documents (handwritten) Re: Property in Leeds, England, ca 1823-1841
- Folder 2: Letters from sons to John Robinson 1879-1885
- Folder 3: Last Will and Testament of Joseph Robinson, 1895 and a number of previous Wills/ Codicils
- Folder 4: Registry of Deeds and Transfer of Properties from Heirs of Albert Robinson to John B. Robinson, Aug/Sept 1898
- Folder 5: Receipts/Correspondence with Heirs and their Legal Counsel Concerning the Will of Joseph Robinson, 1895
- Folder 6: Last Will and Testament of John and Cora Robinson 1916 and 1924
- Folder 7: Property Deed from Joseph Robinson, et al to John B. Robinson, 16 Feb 1898
- Folder 8: @ Copies of Section of Joseph Robinson’s Will Bequeathing Money to Daughter Frances A. Andrews
- Folder 9: Genealogy
- Folder 10: Miscellaneous personal papers
- Folder 12: Photocopies of Robinson Manufacturing Company Buildings and Employees (with names)
- Folder 13: Transcribed typed letter from Joseph Robinson to his nephew in England, 16 August 1880

**Series 5: Historical articles, newspaper clippings, and photographs**

Box 21:
- Folder 1: *History of Robinson Manufacturing Company* Talk given to Maine D.A.R. by Harriet Robinson May 6, 1994
- Folder 2: Photographs of RMC
- Folder 4: Newspaper clippings 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s
- Folder 5: Newspaper clippings 1980s
- Folder 6: Newspaper clippings, Undated

**Series 6: The Town of Oxford materials**

Box 22
- Folder 1: Fire Engine Purchase for town 1863
- Folder 2: Town of Oxford Meetings circa 1860s
- Folder 3: Renovation of Oxford Post Office circa 1964