

Work on Waste Anti-incineration Records

MSS Coll. No. 164

12.5 linear feet

History

Early in the 1980s, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ordered St. Lawrence County to close dozens of town-operated landfills (unlined dumps) in favor of a more centralized and efficient waste disposal system. County officials early on settled on incineration as its preferred method of disposal. In 1983, New York State approved the formation of the **St. Lawrence County Solid Waste Disposal Authority** to take on the task of developing an incinerator/ash bypass landfill project for the county to be located in Odgensburg. The Authority, known as **SWDA**, hired a consultant to take the lead in finding a company to build such a project.

Soon, vocal opposition to the planned incinerator popped up and became ever more forceful with the help of Dr. Paul Connett, a chemistry professor at St. Lawrence University and his wife Ellen, who together formed **Work on Waste** with the help of other citizen environmentalists. Though the mid 80s and into 1990, **WOW** questioned SWDA, its consultants, the State and county lawmakers about every aspect of the incinerator project; its safety, economic viability and its effect on other ways of dealing with the waste stream, principally recycling. **WOW** attempted to be named an official “party” to the siting hearings and when it was not, attempted legal action.

While not particularly successful on the legal end, **Work on Waste** managed to sow public discontentment over the planned incinerator and the ever-widening opposition is what eventually killed the project. In order to build the incinerator and ash-bypass landfill, SWDA has to finance the construction with some \$40 million in bonds, which required the county legislature to approve the bonding. Following a contentious election season in the fall of 1989, the 22-member legislature voted in July of 1990 to not approve the bonding for the incinerator. The vote was 11-11, but with a weighted voting system in place, the anti-incineration forces were victorious.

With the proposed garbage incinerator dead and the county facing a deadline to close its remaining landfills, county leaders had to find another way to deal with its waste. More contentious debate ensued over where to site a new county landfill and when that was unsuccessful, St. Lawrence County finally entered an agreement to ship its garbage to the Development Authority of the North Country regional landfill in Rodman, New York.

Scope and Content

This collection contains material primarily focusing on the contentious solid waste disposal debate in St. Lawrence County during the 1980s and early 1990's and the vehement opposition to an incineration option proposed by county leaders, organized by **WOW**. The public debate over how to dispose of the county's garbage is covered by the many hundreds of newspaper clippings in the collection. The collection also contains documents, reports, meeting minutes, correspondence and other material from SWDA and its consultants; press statements, correspondence, meeting minutes and related material of **Work on Waste**; copies of legal documents, decisions, reports, depositions, correspondence and other material to and from those involved in lengthy legal proceedings. Also contained in the collection are numerous State-generated solid waste disposal-related documents and a limited amount of material on other environmental issues not directly related to the St. Lawrence County municipal waste debate.

Provenance

This collection was donated to St. Lawrence University Special Collections by Paul & Ellen Connett

Series

The collection is broken into six series, as follows:

- Series 1—SWDA Documentation: This consists of bylaws, agreements, official documents, meeting minutes, budget information, consultant reports and other material of the Solid Waste Disposal Authority
- Series 2—WOW opposition & legal challenges: Consists of press releases, position papers, correspondence, legal documents and newspaper clippings concerning Work on Waste
- Series 3—News Clippings: Contains articles, editorials, letters to the editor on the solid waste issue between 1983 and early 2000
- Series 4—News Clippings; General Environmental issues: Contains articles, editorials, etc. on issues not necessarily related to solid waste disposal
- Series 5—Rodman Landfill material: contains a binder of information on the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), which operates the Rodman landfill, as well as news clippings on the development of the regional landfill between 1985-1994
- Series 6—Other material: State-generated documents on waste disposal, recycling and other waste issues and information on three unrelated environmental issues in St. Lawrence County

Description of Collection

Series 1—SWDA Documentation

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Presentation on SLC Resource Recovery Project; Solid waste management option report, 1983 Prepared by consultants Gershman, Brickner & Bratton (GBB)
	2	SWDA Bylaws 1983 & enabling legislation
	3	December 1984 SWDA progress report
	4	1985 DEC letter to SWDA Exec. Director; 1985 Report to County Legislature
	5	Solid waste disposal agreement between SWDA & St. Lawrence County, 1987
	6	SWDA Comprehensive Recycling Plan, 1987
	7	SWDA Consultant expense voucher, Sept. 1987
	8	List of companies requesting RFPs for project, 1987
	9	State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) statement for project, 1988
	10	SWDA Newsletter, 1989
	11	DEC permit to construct Resource Recovery Facility, 1990
	12	Amended Waste Disposal Services Agreement between SWDA and County 1992 (post incinerator)
	13	1988 bond issue paper work
	14	Bond Revenue Anticipation Note official documents 1987 & 1988
	15	Notice of Public Hearing & 1990 bond resolution (which was defeated, killing the project)
2	16	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mondern Landfill, Inc. 1986
	17	Architectural drawing of proposed incinerator, 1987

Series 1 (cont.)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
2	18	Operations agreement with Harbert-Triga, 1988
	19	operations agreement schedules 1-15
3	20	Final Environmental Impact Statement, SLC Resource Recovery Facility 1986
	21	Final Supplemental EIS, SLC Resource Recovery Facility, 1988
	22	Draft St. Lawrence County Solid Waste Master Plan, 1991
	23	SLC Solid Waste Management Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement, 1992, v.1
	24	Same as above, v. 2.
4	25	SWDA Meeting Minutes, 1985
	26	SWDA Meeting Minutes, 1986
	27	SWDA minutes, 1987
	28	SWDA minutes, Dec. 1987-June 1988
	29	SWDA minutes, July-Dec. 1988
	30	SWDA minutes, 1989
	31	SWDA Minutes, 1990 (incomplete)
	32	SWDA budget info 1988-89
	33	SWDA Financial reports, 1988-90 (incomplete)
	34	SWDA annual reports 1984-1988
	35	EIS, 1989; correspondence regarding WOW debate, 1989; Handouts, 1990 work session; RFP for financial analysis from County Legislature; Special SWDA meeting, 1990; St. Lawrence County EMC Position on Solid Waste Project; EMC Questions on the DEIS
	35a	Correspondence on air emissions issues, 1990
5	36	SWDA Consultant Reports from GBB—Regional Landfill Costs Survey, 1988; Household Hazardous Waste preliminary draft, 1989; Food Waste Composting preliminary draft, 1989
	37	Waste Disposal Options Analysis, 1989
	38	Questions and answers on Options Analysis, 1989
	39	Waste Disposal Options Analysis (option 4) 1990
6	40	Recycling issue correspondence, Richard Grover
	41	Recycling Implementation Plan, 1986; Incorporating Recycling Into the Solid Waste Disposal System, 1986
	42	Recycling Program Study, Letter from Waste Stream Management concerning recycling, 1988
	42a	Proposal for an Interim Materials Recovery Facility, 1989
	43	Recycling work plan, Recycling Options Report, Recycling of Compost report, 1989
	44	Various recycling related documents & correspondence
	45	Final Report—St. Lawrence County Comprehensive Recycling Plan, 1990
	46	WOW Recycling Plan—Aggressive Recycling vs. Incineration 1989
	46a	Draft Technical Memorandum to Work on Waste, 1989
	46b	Sutkus recommendations concerning WOW report
	47	Draft comprehensive Recycling Plan, 1991
	47a	Landfill siting letter, 1992
7	48-52	Recycling Plan and Related Documents, 1989

Series 2—WOW Opposition and Legal Challenges

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
8	53	WOW correspondence, press statements, position papers, etc., 1985
	54	Correspondence, papers, etc., 1986
	55	WOW PR statements, 1987
	56	WOW proposed Bylaws, statements, meeting agendas, 1988
	56a	“POWI-WOW” event, includes photos & news article, 1988
	56b	Correspondence to “Lou” in England from Paul Connett (insight into strategy to fight inc.)
	57	WOW material, 1989; radio spot
	57a	Pete Seegar concert material (poster, ticket, <i>Sierra Magazine</i> article, thank you note, 1989
	58	WOW material 1990
	59	WOW thank you notes, etc-after incinerator bond defeat, 1990; Proposed “Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan” presented to SWDA by St. Lawrence County Solid Waste Coalition
8	60	WOW material, 1991
	61	Undated WOW material
9	62	WOW supplemental material, news clippings, etc, 1983-85
	63	Extra News clippings and supplemental WOW material, 1988
	64	Extra news clips, 1989
	65	WOW extra material, statements, PR, etc.
10	66	Draft Health Risk Assessment for incinerator project, 1988
	67	Judge’s & commissioners rulings on Health Risk Assessment, 1989, 1990
	68	WOW’s legal submissions on HRA
	69	SWDA/Harbert-Triga submissions for HRA; Department of Health comments
	70	WOW press releases, HRA; expert testimony, HRA
	71	St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center comments; WOW public hearing comments; HRA “Smoking Gun
	72	“New Evidence” binder submission to DEC Judge on HRA
11	73-74	two binders with material and documents related to a legal challenge to the adjudication for the Health Risk Assessment for the incinerator (material in first binder refoldered 73 a, b, c & d)
12	75	examples of environmental legal costs for SWDA, 1988-90
	76	Legal correspondence to/from various parties
	77	Draft petition for “party” status submitted by WOW
	77a	WOW request for party status, landfill permit
	78	Response of SWDA to WOW’s petition for “party” status
	79	Notice and petition for Article 78 proceeding on party status
	80	Legal documents concerning recycling—depositions, briefs

Series 3—News Clippings concerning the incinerator/solid waste/recycling; 1983-2000

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
13	81	News clippings, 9/83-6/85
	82	News clippings 7/85-9/85
	83	News clippings 10/85-12/85
	84	News clippings 1/86-2/86
	85	News clippings 3/86
	86	News clippings 4/86-12/87
14	87	News clippings 1/88-4/88

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	88	News clippings 5/88
	89	News clippings 6/88-7/88
	90	News clippings 8/88-10/88
	91	News clippings 11/88-12/88
15	92	News clippings 1/89-2/89
	93	News clippings 3/89-4-89
	94	News clippings 5/89-6/89
16	95	News clippings 7/89-8/89
	96	News clippings 9/89-10/89
	97	News clippings 11/89-12/89
17	98	News clippings 1/90-2-90
	99	News clippings 3/90-4/90
	100	News clippings 5/90-6/90
18	101	News clippings 7/90
	102	News clippings 8/90-9/90
	103	News clippings 10/90-11/90
	104	News clippings 12/90
19	105	News clippings 1/91
	106	News clippings 2/91-3/91
	107	News clippings 4/91-5/91
	108	News clippings 6/91-7/91
	109	News clippings 8/91-12/91
20	110	News clippings 1/92-2/92
	111	News clippings 3/92
	112	News clippings 4/92
	113	News clippings 5/92-6/92
21	114	News clippings 7/92-8/92
	115	News clippings 9/92-10/92
	116	News clippings 11/92-12/92
	117	News clippings 1/93-2/93
	118	News clippings 3/93-4/93
	119	News clippings 5/93-6/93
	120	News clippings 7/93-8/93
	121	News clippings 9/93-10/93
	122	News clippings 11/93-12/93
22	123	News clippings 1/94-6/94
	124	News clippings 7/94-12/94
	125	News clippings 1/95-6/95
	126	News clippings 7/95-8/95
	127	News clippings 9/95 (note—no clippings from Oct.-Dec. 1995)
	128	News clippings 1/96-5/96
	129	News clippings 6/96-12/96
23	130	News clippings 1997
	131	News clippings 1998
	132	News clippings 1999-2000

Series 4—News clippings on general environmental issues; 1984-1993

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
24	133	News clippings 1984-1986 (note—no clippings for 1987)
	134	News clippings 1988
	135	News clippings 1/89-8/89
	136	News clippings 9/89-12-90
	137	News clippings pre-1991
25	138	News clippings 1991
	139	News clippings 1992
	140	News clippings 1/93-7/93
	141	News clippings 8/93-12/93

**Series 5—Information on organization of Development Authority of the North Country (DANC);
News clippings concerning DANC Rodman Landfill; 1985-1994**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
26	142	Binder from DANC board member containing DANC Act legislation, meeting minutes, bylaws, policies, & budget info
	143	Rodman Landfill News Clippings, 1987
	144	Rodman Landfill News Clippings, 1988
	145	Rodman Landfill News Clippings, 1989-1991
	146	Rodman Landfill News Clippings, 1992-1994

Series 6—Other Material

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
27	Unfolded	Various New York State DEC-generated documents on solid waste disposal, recycling, etc.; NYS Solid Waste Management Board documents; NYS Legislative Commission on Solid Waste Management; New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection
		VHS videotape. Dr. Paul Connett on Health Impacts of Burn Barrels, 27 min. Nov. 2000
28	147	Sealand Hazardous Dump Site documentation & reports (Lisbon, NY)
	148	Sealand Site news clippings
	149	Binder containing a report on Medical Waste Disposal alternatives produced for the St. Lawrence Hospital Council, 1991
	150	Envelope containing permitting information on the proposed Chatham Forest Products Oriented Strand Board (OSB) manufacturing plant in Ogdensburg, 1998-2000
29	151	PhD Thesis--CAN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES “JUST GET THINGS DONE”? AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICALLY BUFFERED INSTITUTIONS IN A CONTENTIOUS POLICY ARENA, by Carolyn Bourdeaux, Syracuse University Graduate School. Chapters 1-9, pp 1-324
	152	Appendix B-1 of above. Case study narrative of SWDA