

# Guide to the Samuel J. Hitchcock Papers

GEN MSS 1878



Sarah Lerner

December 2021

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 1878

**CREATOR:** Hitchcock, Samuel J. (Samuel Johnson), 1786-1845

**TITLE:** Samuel J. Hitchcock Papers

**DATES:** 1810-1845

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3 linear feet (9 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English (Latin script)

**SUMMARY:** Papers of Samuel J. Hitchcock, 1810-1845. Includes personal papers and business papers for matters primarily taking place in New Haven, Connecticut. Personal papers document Hitchcock's private and family correspondence and finances. Business papers document Hitchcock's work with Seth Perkins Staples in the operation of their law firm Staples and Hitchcock, as well his work with the Farmington Canal Company and Hartford and New Haven Rail Road Company.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.sjhitchcock>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.sjhitchcock>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Roger S. White, 2nd, 1913.

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## Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Samuel J. Hitchcock Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Samuel J. Hitchcock Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Manuscript Unit Processing Manual.

Former call numbers: MS Vault Sect. 13:3, Z117 00170, Z117 0196e, Z117 0196b, Z117 00196, ZZ117 15, Z117 0070h, Z117 0065, Z117 063, Z117 063c, Z117 063d, Z117 112, Z117 112c, Z117 112d.

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## Related Materials

Associated material: Samuel Johnson Hitchcock Papers (MS 1184), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Samuel Johnson Hitchcock, the eldest of twelve children of Benjamin and Mary (Johnson) Hitchcock, of Bethlehem, then part of Woodbury, Connecticut, and grandson of Benjamin and Elizabeth (Averett) Hitchcock, of Woodbury, was born in Bethlehem on February 4, 1786. His father being in straitened circumstances, this promising son, after having taught school for some winters, was gratuitously prepared for the Sophomore Class, by his pastor, the Rev. Azel Backus (Yale 1787). He was graduated with the highest honors, delivering with the Valedictory an Oration on the Wisdom of aiming at High Attainments.

He received his A.B. from Yale College in 1809. After graduation, he taught for two years at Fairfield Academy and then tutored at Yale. In the meantime, he also studied law under the direction of Seth P. Staples (Yale 1797). At Commencement in 1812 he gave a Master's Oration on Newspapers.

He resigned his office at Commencement in 1815, and was then admitted to the bar, and entered on practice in this city, where he soon attained distinction.

In 1820 he became associated with Mr. Staples as a teacher in his private Law School, which in 1824 was first recognized as a part of the College. To this School for the rest of his life he devoted much of his time and energy, with great success.

Although he preferred to avoid public office, he served as Judge of the New Haven County Court from 1838 to 1842, as Mayor of the City for three years from June, 1839, and as Chief Judge of the City Court from 1842 to 1844.

The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on him by Yale in 1842.

He took an active interest in internal improvements and was a member of the first Board of Directors of the Hartford and New Haven Railroad Company, and its President from 1837 to 1840.

He was also concerned in securing the first surveys for a railroad from New Haven to New York, and spent the winter before his death in Albany, endeavoring to procure from the Legislature the necessary franchises.

He died in New Haven on August 31, 1845, in his 60th year.

Judge Hitchcock was distinguished in his profession for accurate legal knowledge and great power of application; of studious and methodical habits, and sound, discriminating judgment, he was probably more eminent as a teacher than as an advocate. He served as a Deacon in the Center Church from 1833 until his death.

His portrait, painted by Jared B. Flagg, about 1840, belongs to the University.

He was married by the Rev. Aaron Dutton, on May 18, 1818, to Laura, daughter of Simeon and Parnel (Fowler) Coan, of Guilford, who died of consumption on October 3, 1832, in her 35th year.

He next married, on December 25, 1834, in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Narcissa, daughter of Walter and Elizabeth Burr (Sturges) Perry, of Southport, Connecticut, and widow of Joseph Whittemore, of Fredericksburg, who died in Fairfield in July, 1831. She died while visiting Southport on November 3, 1854, in her 59th year.

By his first marriage he had two sons and three daughters, of whom all but one daughter survived him. The youngest daughter married Judge Thomas D. Sherwood (Yale 1846).

By his second marriage he had one son, who was for a time a member of the Class of 1861 in Yale.

(Taken from Yale Biographies and Annals, 1805-1815, pp. 257-259).

Above taken from Guide to the Samuel Johnson Hitchcock Papers (MS 1184), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Scope and Contents

Papers of Samuel J. Hitchcock, 1810-1845. Includes personal papers and business papers for matters primarily taking place in New Haven, Connecticut. Personal papers document Hitchcock's private and family correspondence and finances. Business papers document Hitchcock's work with Seth Perkins Staples in the operation of their law firm Staples and Hitchcock, as well his work with the Farmington Canal Company and Hartford and New Haven Rail Road Company.

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## Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Personal Papers, 1810-1845. II. Staples and Hitchcock Papers, 1817-1827. III: Other Business Papers, 1825-1845.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Personal Papers, 1810-1845

Series I contains bills and notes payable and receivable, three volumes of private and family expenses, two claim books, hotel receipts, two journals, two ledgers, and one letter book kept by Samuel J. Hitchcock.

Series I is arranged alphabetically by format.

b. 1, f. 1	Bills and notes payable and receivable	1817-1821
b. 1, f. 2-4	Books of private and family expenses	1819-1845
b. 1, f. 5-6	Claim books	1817-1819
b. 1, f. 6A	Hotel receipts	1826-1845
b. 2, f. 7-8	Journals	1819-1845
b. 3, f. 10-11	Ledgers	1810-1844
b. 2, f. 9	<a href="#">Letter book</a>	1819-1837

**Series II: Staples and Hitchcock Papers, 1817-1827**

Series II contains a cash and receipt book, claim book, journal, ledger, and seven wastebooks kept by New Haven law firm Staples and Hitchcock.

Series II is arranged alphabetically by format.

b. 4, f. 12	Cash and receipt book	1817-1827
b. 5	Claim book	1820-1827
b. 6	Journal	1820-1826
b. 7	Ledger	1820-1825
b. 4, f. 13-19	Waste books	1818-1824

**Series III: Other Business Papers, 1825-1845**

Series III contains papers concerning the Farmington Canal Company and New Haven and Northampton Canal Company, as well as the Hartford and New Haven Rail Road Company.

Series III is arranged alphabetically by corporate entity.

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b. 8, f. 20-22	<a href="#">Papers concerning the Farmington Canal Company</a>	1825-1840
b. 8, f. 23-52b. 9, f. 53-64	Papers concerning the Hartford and New Haven Rail Road Company	1838-1845

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Geographic Names**

Connecticut -- Economic conditions -- 19th century  
New Haven (Conn.)

### **Subjects**

Lawyers -- Connecticut  
Railroads -- Connecticut  
Waterways -- Connecticut

### **Occupations**

Lawyers -- Connecticut -- 19th century

### **Corporate Bodies**

Farmington Canal Company  
Hartford and New Haven Rail Road Company

### **Contributors**

Hitchcock, Samuel J. (Samuel Johnson),  
1786-1845  
Staples, Seth Perkins, 1776-1861  
Staples and Hitchcock (New Haven, Conn.)

### **Acquired From**

White, Roger Sherman, 2nd, 1876-1941