

# Guide to the Wood Family Papers

MS 1157



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

August 1982

Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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P.O. Box 208240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1157

**CREATOR:** Wood family

**TITLE:** Wood family papers

**DATES:** 1809-1934

**BULK DATES:** 1839-1868

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.75 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Chiefly the letters of William Cowper Wood to his parents written from Washington, D.C. and Joliet, Illinois. Also included is a ledger (1809-1837) kept by his father, Joseph Wood, a judge in New Haven, Connecticut, miscellaneous family letters, and genealogical materials.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1157>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1157>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

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 Mrs. F. C. Porter, 1906; and Norton E. Wood, 1943.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown, though much of the material in this collection is likely in the public domain. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

Wood Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Joseph Wood, the second son of David Wood, a pious farmer of Stanwich Parish, in the northern part of Greenwich, Connecticut, and grandson of Joseph Wood, of Huntington, Long Island, and Greenwich, was born on March 24, 1779. His mother was Sarah, daughter of Simon Ingersoll, of Greenwich.

He studied law with Judge Charles Chauncey, of New Haven, and on his admission to the bar in 1803 settled in Stamford, Connecticut, where he continued to practice until 1826. He was Clerk of the Stamford Probate Court from 1814 to 1816, and Judge of that Court from 1816 to 1819; and was one of the Representatives of the town in the General Assembly in 1821 and 1822.

From 1826 to 1837 he resided in Bridgeport, and then for four years in New York City, where he established a periodical devoted to agriculture.

In 1841 he removed to New Haven, and there spent the remainder of his life.

He was Judge of the New Haven County Court for two years (1844-46), in which office he showed conspicuously the true qualities of a jurist. He was also elected City Clerk for six years, 1844-49.

His death occurred in New Haven with tragic suddenness, from ossification of the arteries, on November 13, 1856, in his 78th year. He was a member of a circle of retired clergymen and laymen, who were in the habit of meeting weekly in President Day's study; and on the day of his death he was present at such a meeting and had taken part in the discussion of the morning, when he fell lifeless. A brief pamphlet, entitled *Memoranda respecting the late Hon. Joseph Wood*, was published soon after (New Haven, 11 pp.).

His religious character was unquestioned, and he served as a deacon in the First Church in New Haven from 1848 to his death. During his later years he gave much time to the study of the Scriptures and the investigation of questions of theology.

He married, on May 10, 1809, Frances, second daughter of Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth, of Windsor, and sister of his classmate. She died in New Haven, on March 14, 1868, in her 82d year.

Of their five children, one son was graduated here in 1833. The elder daughter married the Rev. Sylvester Cowles (Hamilton Coll. 1828); and the younger married Professor Chester S. Lyman (Yale 1837).

Judge Wood collected materials for the life of his distinguished father-in-law, which have been made use of by later hands.

(Taken from *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College*, Vol. V, by Franklin Bowditch Dexter).

For charts outlining the genealogical relations of the Wood family, please consult the [Genealogical Charts](#).

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## Scope and Contents

The Wood Family Papers consist largely of letters of William Cowper Wood (1821-1889) to his parents. He lived in Washington, D.C., from 1840 to 1841, traveled on business for several years, and then settled in Joliet, Illinois, in 1845. Other family correspondence is also included in the collection, as is a ledger of Joseph Wood, father of William C. Wood, and a small amount of genealogical material.

The bulk of these papers was donated to Yale University in 1943 by Norton Ellsworth Wood; the ledger and several other items were donated in 1906 by Mrs. Frank C. Porter.

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# Collection Contents

|                 |                        |  |
|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| b. 1, f. 1 - 44 | Family correspondence  | 1814, 1831-1868,<br>1884, 1934,<br>undated |
| b. 2, f. 45     | Joseph Wood: ledger    | 1809-1837                                  |
| b. 2, f. 46     | Genealogical materials | undated                                    |

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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.

### **Subjects**

Families  
Lawyers

### **Geographic Names**

Connecticut  
Middle West  
Southern States

### **Genres / Formats**

Account books

### **Names**

Wood, Joseph, 1779-1856  
Wood, William Cowper, 1821-1889

### **Families**

Wood family