

# Guide to the Foster and Company Records

MS 1403



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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1403

**CREATOR:** Foster and Company

**TITLE:** Foster and Company records

**DATES:** 1836-1890

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 9 linear feet (20 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The records consist of account books, cashbooks, invoice books, journals, ledgers, and letterbooks documenting the business transactions of Foster and Company, a retail and wholesale grocery in Hartford, Connecticut.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1403>

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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.1403>.

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

Purchased from Armstrong, 1943.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Preferred Citation

Foster and Company Records (MS 1403). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

The business began operation under the name Foster and Hosford, and changed its name to James P. Foster (1837-1839). The firm then became Foster and Company for the remainder of the time documented in the records. James Phelps Foster (1800-1878) and his brother Ralph Henry Foster (d. 1877) headed the business in 1842. Three sons of James Phelps Foster, Frederick Rose Foster (b. 1827), James Phelps Foster, Jr., and George Bushnell Foster operated the business after 1880.

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## Scope and Contents

The Foster and Company Records consist of cashbooks, invoice books, journals, ledgers, other account books, and letterbooks which document the business transactions of a retail and wholesale grocer in Hartford, Connecticut. The records date from 1836 until 1890 but the bulk of the material dates before 1865. The records include accounts for Foster and Hosford (1836-1837) and James P. Foster (1837-1839), predecessor firms to Foster and Company. The firm was run as Foster and Co. by James Phelps Foster and his brother Ralph Henry Foster and, after 1880, by James Phelps Foster's three sons.

The records are arranged by record type and include an extensive, though incomplete, set of the standard general ledgers and journals which characterize double entry bookkeeping. There are also nine volumes of cashbooks, which detail cash expenditures and income and seven volumes of invoice books which record wholesale purchases. The invoice books also contain annual inventories of stock and net worth; the 1839 value of the company was \$5,238, while the 1862 inventory lists this total as \$12,787. Other volumes include accounts of bills payable and receivable, charges by Wells and Burnham and Bell and Baldwin for carting, a journal of Ralph Rose Foster, and a "Ham Book", which details purchases of ham, lard, pork, apples, and cider. Two letterbooks contain copies of out-going letters concerning purchases for the store and other details of its operation.

The library purchased the records of Foster and Company in 1943 from Armstrong. The records were transferred from the Account Books Collection (MS 29) in 1985.

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## Arrangement

Arranged in eight sections: Accounts, 1839-1863; Cashbooks, 1836-1890; Ham Book, 1861-1867; Invoice Books, 1836-1864; Journals, 1840-1861; Ledgers, 1836-1869; Letterbooks, 1836-1866; and Oversize, 1852-1868.

## Collection Contents

### Inventory, 1836-1890

#### Accounts

b. 1, f. 1	Bills payable and receivable See also: <a href="#">box 20, folder 50</a>	1839-1854
b. 1, f. 2-3	Cartage accounts with Wells & Burnham and Bell & Baldwin	1853-1854, 1863

#### Cashbooks

b. 1, f. 4	[A] English	1836-1840
b. 1, f. 5	B	1840-1842
b. 2, f. 6	C	1842-1845
b. 2, f. 7	[D] English	1845-1848
b. 2, f. 8	[E] English	1848-1854
b. 3, f. 9	[F] English	1853-1856
b. 3, f. 10	J	1860-1862
b. 3, f. 11	K	1862-1864
b. 4, f. 12	L	1864-1890
b. 4, f. 13	<i>Ham Book</i> English	1861-1867

#### Invoice Books

b. 4, f. 14	A	1836-1841
b. 4, f. 15	B	1841-1846
b. 5, f. 16	C	1846-1849
b. 5, f. 17	D	1850-1853
b. 5, f. 18	E	1853-1858
b. 6, f. 19	F	1858-1862
b. 6, f. 20	G	1861-1864

#### Journals

b. 7, f. 21	C	1840-1841
b. 7, f. 22	D	1841-1843

## Journals (continued)

b. 8, f. 23	E	1843-1844
b. 8, f. 24	F	1844-1845
b. 9, f. 25	G	1845-1846
b. 9, f. 26	J	1848-1849
b. 10, f. 27	K	1849-1850
b. 10, f. 28	L	1850-1851
b. 11, f. 29	M	1851-1852
b. 11, f. 30	O	1853-1854
b. 12, f. 31	P	1854-1855
b. 12, f. 32	Q	1855-1856
b. 13, f. 33	R	1856-1857
b. 13, f. 34	S	1857-1858
b. 14, f. 35	U	1859
b. 14, f. 36	W	1860-1861
b. 15, f. 37	Foster, Ralph Rose	1860-1862
b. 15, f. 38	AA	1862-1863
b. 16, f. 39	BB	1863
b. 16, f. 40	DD	1864
b. 17, f. 41	FF	1865-1866
<u>Ledgers</u>		
b. 17, f. 42	1836-1844	1836-1844
b. 17, f. 43	1841-1847	1841-1847
b. 18, f. 44	1841-1869	1841-1869
b. 18, f. 45	1860-1865	1860-1865
	See also: <a href="#">box 20, folders 51-52</a>	
<u>Letterbooks</u>		
b. 19, f. 46	A	1836-1847
b. 19, f. 47	B	1856-1858
b. 19, f. 48	Financial data	1844-1845; 1862-1866
b. 19, f. 49	Miscellaneous papers	1855

Oversize

b. 20, f. 50	Accounts See also: <a href="#">box 1, folder 1</a>	1852-1861
b. 20, f. 51	Ledger A See also: <a href="#">box 17, folders 42-45</a>	1865-1868
b. 21, f. 52	Ledger H See also: <a href="#">box 17, folders 42-45</a>	1860-1865

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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**

Business  
Grocery trade

### **Geographic Names**

Connecticut -- Commerce  
Hartford (Conn.) -- Commerce

### **Genres / Formats**

Account books  
Ledgers

### **Names**

Foster, James Phelps, 1800-1878

### **Families**

Foster family

### **Corporate Body**

Foster and Company