

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>

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. 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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Armstrong, 1943.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. 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.

Preferred Citation

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

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.

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.

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: box 20, folder 50	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

Ledgers

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: [box 20, folders 51-52](#)Letterbooks

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: box 1, folder 1	1852-1861
b. 20, f. 51	Ledger A See also: box 17, folders 42-45	1865-1868
b. 21, f. 52	Ledger H See also: box 17, folders 42-45	1860-1865

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