

# Guide to the Ebenezer Wells Webster Papers

MS 1174



compiled by Diane E. Kaplan and William E. Brown, Jr.

October 1985

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## Collection Overview

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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1174

**CREATOR:** Webster, Ebenezer Wells, fl. 1822-1882

**TITLE:** Ebenezer Wells Webster papers

**DATES:** 1850-1899

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2 linear feet (7 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers consist of business correspondence and other business papers concerning Ebenezer Wells Webster's carriage business and that of his successor, Jeremiah Sanford Corban, in Plainville, Connecticut.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1174>

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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.1174>.

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 S. Tenenbaum and Whitlock's, 1954.

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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

Ebenezer Wells Webster Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Scope and Contents

The Ebenezer Wells Webster Papers consist almost entirely of the papers of Webster's carriage business in Plainville, Connecticut. Webster and Jeremiah Sanford Corban, his son-in-law and successor, were active in the carriage industry from the late 1850s to the 1890s.

The bulk of the papers is in the section *Correspondence and Papers*, which is arranged in chronological order. From 1858 to 1861 there is nearly a folder of material per month, each containing business correspondence, receipts, accounts, shipping invoices, and bills of lading, which document the brisk trade in the carriage industry prior to the Civil War. Webster was known as a manufacturer of side-spring "Concord" buggies, which sold for about \$70.00 each. The bills and receipts document an array of transactions with dealers in lumber, wheels and wheel stuffs, hardware, shafts and shackles, oils and varnishes, carpet and upholstery, saddlery, and coach lamps. Suppliers are from the New England region, most being in Hartford or New Haven, but orders come from a larger area. The shipping invoices note frequent sales to customers in the South, notably Albany and Griffin, Georgia.

With the advent of the Civil War, carriage makers in general suffered economic hardship. Not only was a principal market eliminated, but those individuals who extended credit to Southern customers were unable to collect outstanding debts. Webster makes reference to his economic troubles in a few letters to business associates. The quantity of papers for the period of the war is diminished, and receipts from wholesale grocery and newspaper vendors suggest that Webster may have turned to retailing to help stave off bankruptcy.

Webster continued in the carriage trade after the war, but apparently left the business to his son-in-law in 1868, when he and his second wife moved to Wisconsin. From this date the papers contain bills and receipts of Jeremiah Corban, who continued in the carriage trade in Plainville into the 1890s. Records of Corban's business dealings are more fragmentary than those of Webster.

The papers contain only scattered items of family correspondence which relate little information about the Webster family. Folders 94-96 contain receipts and other records of the Plainville Graded School from the 1890s, when Jeremiah Corban served as the secretary of the school board. *Printed Material* includes several illustrated carriage issues of periodicals such as *Hub News*, *Carriage Monthly*, and *Varnish News*.

The Yale University Library purchased the Webster Papers from S. Tenenbaum. The Library also purchased additional papers from Whitlock's Inc. in 1954.

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## Collection Contents

### *Correspondence and Papers*

b. 1, f. 1 - 15	1850 -1860 Feb
b. 2, f. 16 - 35	1860 Mar -1862 Jan
b. 3, f. 36 - 59	1862 Feb -1867 Aug
b. 4, f. 60 - 86	1867 Sep -1874 Dec
b. 5, f. 87 - 98	1875 Jan -1896, n.d.

### *Printed Material*

b. 5, f. 99 - 107	1868 -1899, n.d.
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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  
Businessmen  
Carriage and wagon making -- Connecticut

### **Geographic Names**

Connecticut -- Commerce  
Plainville (Conn.)

### **Genres / Formats**

Trade catalogs

### **Occupations**

Manufacturers

### **Names**

Corban, Jeremiah Sanford, fl. 1829-1896  
Webster, Ebenezer Wells, fl. 1822-1882