

# Guide to the Selden Huntington Family Papers

MS 1064



compiled by Diane Ellen Kaplan

January 1984

Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1064

**CREATOR:** Huntington, Selden, 1786-1846

**TITLE:** Selden Huntington family papers

**DATES:** 1762-1914

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, diaries, and financial and legal papers of three generations of the Selden Huntington family of Old Lyme and Middlesex County, Connecticut. The papers document Selden Huntington's business fortunes in East Coast shipping and land speculation in Maine, his relationship with his son Joseph Selden, breaking up of his marriage to his second wife Jeanette Stewart, and social and religious activities in the community. Joseph Selden Huntington's letters record his years at school in Kents Hill, Maine, his attempts to establish himself in business in New York City and Springfield, Massachusetts, and his travels in the South. Also included in the papers are Joseph Selden Huntington's diary, notebook, scrapbook, and love letters from his freshman to his junior year at Yale College.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1064>

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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.1064>.

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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### Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

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### Preferred Citation

Selden Huntington Family Papers (MS 1064). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

### SELDEN HUNTINGTON

Selden Huntington was born in Higganum, Connecticut on March 24, 1786. He was engaged in shipping and commercial pursuits in New England and was active in religious and temperance work. His son Joseph Selden was born of Huntington's marriage to Anna Lord Johnson. A daughter Emily was born to his second wife Jeanette Stewart. Huntington died in Higganum in June, 1846.

(*A Genealogy of the Huntington Family*, page 744.)

### JOSEPH SELDEN HUNTINGTON, born 1820

Joseph Selden Huntington, born November 24, 1820; married Sarah Elizabeth Huntington. She died at Old Lyme, Connecticut, December 27, 1904. He was a merchant. Their children were Anna Lord, Joseph Selden Huntington (died 1929), and Helen Townsend.

(*A Genealogy of the Huntington Family*, page 744.)

### JOSEPH SELDEN HUNTINGTON, died 1929

He was born at Old Lyme and prepared for college at the Hartford High School. Hé Boulé, Delta Kappa Epsilon.

He left the Class at the end of Junior year. He was reporter on the *Florida Times-Union* 1889-1890, and on the *New York Sun* 1891-1892, and on the *New York Herald* 1892-1893. He spent nearly a year in the Northwest, and served as United States deputy marshal in North Dakota, Minnesota and Montana during the railroad strike of 1894. He was engaged for some time in the newspaper advertising business with E. N. Blanke in New York City. He spent a year at home on account of the illness of his father, and then traveled for a considerable time in the West, after which he settled down as a farmer in Old Lyme. He represented that town in the Connecticut Legislature in 1901 and in the Constitutional Convention in 1902. Again in Legislature in 1911. In 1904 he was elected judge of probate for the district of Old Lyme. Although offered renomination by both parties, his ill health forced his retirement at the conclusion of one term of office.

Served two years during the War in France and Italy with A. E. F., Y. M. C. A. One of the most interesting talks we ever had at a Class Dinner was his account of his work abroad, where he seemed to have endeared himself so that he was everywhere known as "Uncle Joe".

Decorations: Italian Line Service and Merito de Guerra.

Married, March 3, 1921, Mrs. Grace Carleton Oram, daughter of Carleton Wiggins, N.A. They have no children. Spent part of 1923-1924 in France, Italy and England.

(*Thirty-fifth Reunion History of the Class of 1889, "Biographies of Non-graduates,"* pages 212-213.)

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## Scope and Contents

Through correspondence, diaries, and financial and legal papers, the Selden Huntington Family Papers document the activities of three generations of family members, residing primarily in Middlesex County (Higganum, Haddam, and Middlefield) and Old Lyme, Connecticut during the nineteenth century. Family members represented in the papers include Selden Huntington, his son Joseph Selden Huntington, and his grandson Joseph Selden Huntington, all of whom were involved in mercantile activities and oversaw family property in the area.

Loose correspondence and miscellaneous papers of all family members are arranged in chronological order in folders 1-25. Though these papers date from 1762, documents from the 18th century are very few. One 1793 letter gives the family history.

The bulk of the papers belonged to Selden Huntington, who travelled the East Coast procuring shipping business and speculating in land in Maine. The decline of Huntington's financial fortunes as well as of his health and marriage are detailed in his letters and diaries. Many letters to his business associates are found in his letterbooks (f.32-35).

Huntington married Jeanette Stewart in 1832. His diary records their meeting, courtship, and marriage, their trip to England soon after the marriage, and their subsequent separations while Huntington was away on business. Indications of marital difficulties can be found in the diary beginning in 1837 September, but real tension leading to a final separation can be seen in Jeanette's letter of 1838 September 23 and in letters in the letterbook of 1838 October concerning a forthcoming hearing of the case before the church in Haddam.

Many of Selden Huntington's letters date after his separation from his son Joseph Selden while the elder Huntington was away on business and the son attended school in Kents Hill, Maine. Letters to his son contain the day to day detail of life, of church activities, and temperance work. The letters are full of religious admonitions and concern for the son's financial security.

Joseph Selden writes of his life at school and, following 1837, of his attempts to establish himself in a business or in teaching. Besides his father, his other correspondents include former classmates, his former employer William R. Phelps of Suffield, Connecticut, a New York friend Gordon L. Ford, and his cousins Catherine and Sarah Huntington. Following the failure of his own business in Springfield, Massachusetts, Joseph went to seek his fortune in the South and West. There are letters from his travels from New Orleans, Galveston, St. Louis, Illinois, and Pittsburgh in 1846. Joseph returned home in 1846 to take care of his father's estate. The legal and financial papers (f.26-27) contain primarily documents relating to the settlement of Selden Huntington's estate. These include a complete inventory of personal and real property.

After 1846 the loose correspondence is extremely fragmentary. There are only a few letters from Joseph Selden Huntington to his wife in Old Lyme, some in 1880 sent from Fargo in the Dakota Territory. Folders 23-25 also contain letters of a Richmond family in Connecticut, William Hubbard in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, and Dr. Harmon Sawyer Herrick from Hamilton, Nevada, The relation (if any) of these people to the Huntingtons is unclear.

Joseph Selden Huntington, Jr. is represented in these papers solely by diaries, a letterbook of love letters from "Katheryn," a notebook of compositions, some of which were later published in local newspapers,

and a scrapbook of clippings and memorabilia, all dating from Huntington's student days at Yale College. Huntington's papers show him to have been more concerned with social activities than academics. He reports his frequent cuts from class and chapel, an arrest, and eventually his dismissal. His papers end with his departure for Florida to seek employment as a journalist.

The Selden Huntington Family Papers were acquired through several purchases between 1944 and 1949.

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## Collection Contents

### Inventory, 1762-(1831-1889)-1914

1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

b. 1, f. 1-25	Correspondence and miscellaneous papers	1762, 1793-1887, 1904, 1914
b. 1, f. 26-27	Legal and financial papers	1830-1847
b. 2, f. 28	Eunice (Carew) Huntington: diary (transferred to Strong Family Papers, Ms. Gr.No.1198)	1792-1794
Selden Huntington		
b. 2, f. 29-31	Diaries	1824-1843
b. 2, f. 32-35	Letterbooks	1834-1846
b. 2, f. 36	Receipt book	1830-1838
Joseph Selden Huntington, Jr.		
b. 3, f. 37-38	Diaries	1886-1889
b. 3, f. 39	Letterbook	1888-1889
b. 3, f. 40	Notebook	1887-1888
b. 3, f. 41	Scrapbook	1885-1886

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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  
Domestic relations  
Families  
Fathers and sons  
Husband and wife  
Merchants  
Real estate investment -- Maine  
Religion  
Shipping -- United States  
Speculation  
Students -- Conduct of life  
Temperance

Huntington, Joseph Selden, 1820-1893  
Huntington, Joseph Selden, 1867-1929  
Huntington, Sarah  
Huntington, Selden, 1786-1846  
Phelps, William R.

### Corporate Bodies

Yale College (1887- ). Class of 1889  
Yale University -- Students

### Geographic Names

Bradford County (Pa.)  
Connecticut  
Connecticut -- Commerce  
Fargo (N.D.)  
Haddam (Conn.)  
Hamilton (Nev.)  
Higganum (Conn.)  
Maine -- Commerce  
Massachusetts -- Commerce  
Middlefield (Conn.)  
Middlesex County (Conn.)  
New England  
New York (N.Y.)  
Old Lyme (Conn.)  
Springfield (Mass.)  
Suffield (Conn.)

### Genres / Formats

Diaries  
Inventories

### Names

Ford, Gordon Lester, 1823-1891  
Herrick, Harmon Sawyer, 1819-1891  
Hubbard, William  
Huntington, Catherine  
Huntington, Jeanette Stewart