



Hudson Family Papers

1807-1963

6 boxes (3 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 332

Collection overview

Born in Torrington, Connecticut in 1806, and educated at the Torrington Academy and Berkshire Medical College (MD 1827), Erasmus Darwin Hudson became well known as a radical reformer. While establishing his medical practice in Bloomfield, Conn., and later in Springfield, Mass., and New York City, Hudson emerged as a force in the antislavery struggle, hewing to the non-resistant line. Touring the northeastern states as a lecturing agent for the Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society and general agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society, he regularly contributing articles to an antislavery periodicals and befriended many of the movement's leaders. In his professional life as an orthopedic surgeon, Hudson earned acclaim for his contributions to the development of modern prosthetics. During the carnage of the Civil War, he introduced remarkable improvements in artificial limb technology and innovations in the treatment of amputations and battle trauma, winning awards for his contributions at international expositions in Paris (1867) and Philadelphia (1876). Hudson died of pneumonia on Dec. 31, 1880.

Spanning five generations of a family of physicians and social reformers, the Hudson Family Papers include particularly significant content for Erasmus Darwin Hudson documenting his activities with the Connecticut and American Anti-Slavery societies. Hudson's journals and writings are accompanied by a rich run of correspondence with antislavery figures such as Abby Kelley, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Isaac Hopper, and Samuel May and a unique antislavery campaign map of New York State and surrounding areas (1841). Hudson's medical career and that of his son Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Jr. (1843-1887), a thoracic physician, is equally well documented through correspondence, medical notes, and handwritten drafts of lectures, with other material ranging from family records and writings of and other family members to genealogies of the Hudson, Shaw, Clarke, Fowler, and Cooke families, and printed material, memorabilia, clipping and photographs.

See similar SCUA collections:

African American

Antiracism

Antislavery

Civil War

Disability

Family

Massachusetts (West)

Medical

Reform

Social change

Background on Creator:

A thorough reformer in the nineteenth century mode, Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Sr. (1806-1880) was a pioneering

orthopedic surgeon, temperance advocate, anti-slavery organizer, and agent for the Connecticut and American Anti-Slavery Societies. The eldest of four children of Daniel Coe Hudson and his wife Rhoda (Fowler), Hudson was born in Torrington (now part of Torrington), Conn., on Dec. 15, 1806. Educated by private tutor and at the Torrington Academy, he began the study of medicine under Remus M. Fowler of New Marlboro, Mass., in 1823, before taking his medical degree at the Berkshire Medical College (a branch of Williams College) in 1827.

Soon after settling into private practice in Bloomfield, Conn., Hudson began to emerge on the reform circuit as a lecturer, writer, and activist. As early as 1828, Hudson was lecturing locally on temperance and within a few years, he became deeply immersed in the antislavery cause. For over a decade, he served as a lecturing agent for the Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society (1838-1839) and as a general agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society (1839-1850), touring Connecticut, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Maine, New Hampshire,

Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware. An effective writer, he contributed

several articles to the *Liberator* and the *Anti-Slavery Standard* and was co-editor of his own antislavery periodical published in Hartford, the *Charter Oak* (1838-1841). His correspondents and collaborators included some of the major antislavery activists of the period, including William Lloyd Garrison, Abby Foster Kelley, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglas, Isaac Hopper, Samuel May, and Lewis Hayden.

Despite such intense commitments to reform and a brief interlude as co-principal of a boarding school in Torrington with Rev. Epaphras Goodman (1833-1837), Hudson continued to grow as a medical professional. From Bloomfield, he went on to a position at the Connecticut State Emigrant Hospital and became active in the Hopkins Medical Association, the Hartford County Medical Society, and the Connecticut Medical Society. After stepping back from antislavery touring in 1850, he began to specialize in general and orthopedic surgery, first in Springfield, Mass., and then after 1855, in New York City. Orthopedics became his claim to fame.

Noted for his work in prosthetics, Hudson earned a commission from the Surgeon General to care for wounded soldiers requiring amputation and resection at the military hospital at Central Park in New York City and other hospitals. Becoming well known as an inventor of orthopedic apparatus, he contributed a number of related surgical reports to the United States Sanitary Commission and received awards for his innovations at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, France, in 1867, and at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, 1876. Among



Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Sr. and Jr.

his other publications were case studies that appeared in the *Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, 1870-1872) and monographs on *Resections* (New York, 1870), *Syme's Amputation* (New York, 1871), and *Immobile Apparatus for Ununited Fractures* (New York, 1872). The husband of Martha Turner, whom he married in 1828, Hudson died of pneumonia on Dec. 31, 1880, at his home in Greenwich, Conn.

Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Jr. (1843-1887), was a thoracic physician and educator.

1843

Born November 10, Northampton, MA, to Erasmus Darwin, Sr. and Martha Turner Hudson

1855

Moved with family to New York City, attended public schools

1864

Graduated from College of the City of New York

1867

Received M.D. from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons

1867-1868

House surgeon, Bellevue Hospital, and private practice, New York City

1869-1870

Health Inspector, New York City

1870-1880

Attending physician, Bellevue Hospital, Trinity House, and Trinity Chapel Parish; professor, Women's Medical College of the New York Infirmary; consultant to other physicians

1871

Married Laura Shaw, daughter of Dr. Samuel and Elizabeth Clarke Shaw of Plainfield, MA

1880-1887

Professor, New York Polyclinic; attending physician Bellevue and St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City; librarian and member of the Library Committee, New York Academy of Medicine; chairman, Ethics Committee, Medical Society of the County

1887

Died of pneumonia May 9 in New York City

Scope of collection

The Hudson Family Papers document five generations of five New England families, including the Hudson, Fowler, Shaw, Clarke, and Cooke families. Of principal interest are the papers, 1809-1880, n.d., of Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Sr. (1806-1880) which document through journals, correspondence, and writings, his service

with the Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society and eleven-year tenure with the American Anti-Slavery Society (A.A.-S.S.). Covering a circuit of at least eleven states in the Midwest, middle-Atlantic region, and his native New England between 1839 and 1850, Hudson recorded, often daily, his experiences organizing local anti-slavery societies: traveling, arranging meetings, attending conventions, raising funds, confronting what was frequently violent opposition, and maintaining contact with supporters of abolition such as William Lloyd Garrison, Sydney Gay, Isaac Hopper, Abby Kelley, Wendell Phillips, Gerrit Smith, Theodore Weld, and Henry Wright.

In some respects the wealth of information contained in Hudson's papers is not easily accessible. His handwriting poses one obstacle; his wife and other correspondents admonish him on this count. In addition, it was characteristic of him, particularly in the early years, to incorporate indiscriminately into a single volume financial records pertaining to the A.A.-S.S., personal financial records, and a faithful record of events, making it difficult for the reader to follow any one of these lines chronologically or thematically. Another factor is the amount of space he devotes to the reiteration of his moral stance, which had also motivated his establishing a boarding school with the Reverend Epaphras Goodman, as well as his temperance work. These problems can be circumvented owing to the contributions to the papers by their donor, Sidney Kaplan. The transcripts Kaplan prepared for most of the collection often include underlining to highlight names, dates, and places. He has also provided identification for many items and fragments, and an invaluable calendar of selected items (filed in the first folder of Box 1). Viewed from another perspective, Hudson's eclectic style offers a sense of immediacy--a vivid account of his daily life and convictions until his participation in the A.A.-S.S. drew to a close (coinciding with the movement's shifting emphasis from evangelism to politics). Samples of the articles Hudson wrote for *The Liberator* and the *Anti-Slavery Standard* (Boston and New York, 1837-1849), and *The Charter Oak* (Hartford, 1838-1841), which he co-edited, must be sought from other sources.

Regarding Hudson's medical career, more material is available from his student years and private practice in Connecticut (e.g., notes, financial and academic records, and letters of recommendation) than from the period beginning in 1850, when he adopted orthopedic surgery as his specialty, becoming a distinguished inventor of prosthetic devices during and after the Civil War. In later years he cultivated an interest in family history and acquired most of the Hudson and Fowler genealogies included in the papers.

The son of Erasmus Darwin and Martha Turner Hudson, E. Darwin Hudson, Jr. (1843-1887), also achieved prominence as a physician, and his papers, 1862-1887, establish his credentials as a surgeon, educator, public health officer, staff physician at several hospitals, and consultant, all in New York City. As such, they tend to include more biographical records (e.g., certificates, letters of award and appointment, and printed materials) than personal papers. Insight into Hudson Jr.'s character can be gathered from his private correspondence, and from a lengthy memorial address, 1887, delivered by a fellow physician, Laurence Johnson.

The Hudson Family Papers contain correspondence, legal and financial records, writings, genealogies, clippings and other printed materials relating to extended family members who may be considered significant in a regional context. Clara Elizabeth Hudson (1880-1963) was a community leader and the last of the Hudsons. Her papers, 1923-1951, and her book of family and local history, *Plain Tales from Plainfield*, provide several important links within this diverse collection. Samuel Shaw (1790-1869), a physician in Plainfield, MA, his son,

Samuel Francis Shaw (b.1833), a surgeon who served in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War, Charles Lyman Shaw (1842-1902), an educator, and Anne Laura Clarke (1788-1861), who traveled widely as a lecturer on history and who originated many of the Cooke and Clarke family records in the collection, are represented each by fewer than a dozen items. Even less is contained here for Martha Turner Hudson (1806-1887), Laura Shaw Hudson (1846-1921), Darwin Shaw Hudson (1876-1959), Sibyl Catlin Fowler (ca. 1787-1855), Elizabeth Clarke Shaw (ca. 1799-1863), and Stella Augusta Shaw (b. 1835). There is also a folder of unidentified letters, writings and fragments.

The accretion from Arvilla Dyer, 1984, includes Erasmus D. Hudson, Sr. correspondence, 1837-1888; bio-bibliographic materials; journal "1845?"; writings; letters to Martha Turner Hudson. Also additional materials re: Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Jr., Clara Hudson, and Samuel Shaw.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into seven series:

- **Series 1. Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Sr., Papers, 1809-1880, n.d.**
- **Series 2. E. Darwin Hudson, Jr., Family Papers, 1862-1951, n.d.**
- **Series 3. Fowler, Shaw, Clarke, and Cooke Family Papers, 1807-1886, n.d.**
- **Series 4. Photographs, 1873-1879, n.d.**
- **Series 5. Printed Materials**
- **Series 6. Copies of Materials Located in Other Repositories**
- **Series 7. Accretion**

Inventory

Series 1. Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Sr., Papers		1809-1880
Subseries A: Bio-Bibliographical		
Hudson Family records before E.D.	1809, ca. 1875	Box 1: 1
Letters of introduction and recommendation	1825-1841	Box 1: 2
Legal, financial, and educational records	1827-1833	Box 1: 3
Map of New York State showing Hudson's anti-slavery journeys	ca. 1841-1850	Box 1: 4
List of publications of E.D. Hudson, Sr. from National Union Catalogue		Box 1: 5
Subseries B: Journals		
Journal	1832-1838 (of Daniel Hudson, 1831)	Box 1: 6
Journal	1838	Box 1: 7
Journal	(1838), 1842, 1845	Box 1: 8
Journal	1839-1840	Box 1: 9

Journal	February-April, 1840	Box 1: 10
Journal	1840-1842	Box 1: 11
Journal	October, 1840- February, 1841	Box 1: 12

Subseries C: Correspondence

Correspondence	1825-1829	Box 1: 13
Correspondence	1830-1834	Box 1: 14
Correspondence	1835-1838	Box 1: 15
Correspondence	1839	Box 1: 16
Correspondence	1840	Box 1: 17
Correspondence	1841	Box 1: 18
Correspondence	1842	Box 1: 19
Correspondence	1843	Box 1: 20
Correspondence	1844	Box 1: 21
Correspondence	1845	Box 1: 22
Correspondence	1846	Box 1: 23
Correspondence	1847	Box 1: 24
Correspondence	1848	Box 1: 25
Correspondence	1851-1854	Box 1: 26
Correspondence	1861-1880	Box 1: 27
Correspondence	n.d.	Box 1: 28

Subseries D: Writings

Medical, moral, and on brother Daniel's death	1831-1834	Box 1: 29
Notes from Columbiana County Convention of Abolitionists	1841	Box 1: 30
Anti-slavery writings	n.d.	Box 1: 31

Subseries E: Transcripts

Journal	1838	Box 2: 32
Journal	(1838), 1842, 1845	Box 2: 33
Journal	1839-1840	Box 2: 34
Journal,	February-April, 1840	Box 2: 35
Journal	October, 1840- February, 1841	Box 2: 36
Journal (permanent copy),	1842-1843	Box 2: 37
Journal (permanent copy)	1845	Box 2: 38
Correspondence	1825-1829	Box 2: 39
Correspondence	1830	Box 2: 40
Correspondence	1831	Box 2: 41
Correspondence	1832	Box 2: 42
Correspondence	1833-1834	Box 2: 43
Correspondence	1835-1836	Box 2: 44
Correspondence	1837-1838	Box 2: 45
Correspondence	1839	Box 2: 46
Correspondence	1840	Box 2: 47
Correspondence	1841	Box 2: 48
Correspondence	January-June, 1842	Box 2: 49
Correspondence	July-October, 1842	Box 2: 50
Correspondence	January- August, 1843	Box 2: 51

Correspondence	September-October, 1843	Box 2: 52
Correspondence	1844	Box 2: 53
Correspondence	January-April, 1845	Box 2: 54
Correspondence	July-November, 1845	Box 2: 55
Correspondence	1846	Box 2: 56
Correspondence	1847	Box 2: 57
Correspondence	1848	Box 2: 58
Correspondence	1851-1854	Box 2: 59
Correspondence	1861-1870	Box 2: 60
Correspondence	miscellaneous, n.d.	Box 2: 61
Writings	1831-1834	Box 2: 62

Subseries F: Martha Turner Hudson

Incoming letters	1831-1842, n.d.	Box 2: 63
Transcripts of incoming letters	1831-1842, n.d.	Box 2: 64

Series 2. E. Darwin Hudson, Jr., Family Papers **1862-1951, n.d.**

Subseries A: E. Darwin Hudson, Jr.

Certificates, letters of award and appointment, and printed biographical records	1868-1887	Box 3: 1
Outgoing letters	1869-1880	Box 3: 2
Letters and tributes on his death	1887	Box 3: 3

Subseries B: Laura Shaw Hudson

Outgoing letters	1862-1880, n.d.	Box 3: 4
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Subseries C: Darwin Shaw Hudson

Certificates and printed materials	1894-1924	Box 3: 5
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Subseries D: Clara Elizabeth Hudson

Typescripts of writings, 1947, 1951; and financial record, 1923		Box 3: 6
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Series 3. Fowler, Shaw, Clarke, and Cooke Family Papers **1807-1886, n.d.**

Subseries A: Fowler Family

Genealogical records		Box 3: 1
Sibyl Catlin Fowler Papers	1837, n.d.	Box 3: 2

Subseries B: Shaw Family

Genealogical records		Box 3: 3
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Samuel Shaw Papers	1826-1867, n.d.	Box 3: 4
Elizabeth Clarke Shaw, Correspondence	1829-1863, n.d.	Box 3: 5
Stella Augusta Shaw, incoming letters	1863-1880	Box 3: 6
Samuel Francis Shaw Papers	1855-1880	Box 3: 7
Charles Lyman Shaw, writings	ca. 1894	Box 3: 8

Subseries C: Clarke Family

Genealogical records		Box 3: 9
Anne Laura Clarke Papers	1815-1864, n.d.	Box 3: 10
Other Clarkes	1807, 1886, n.d.	Box 3: 11

Subseries D: Cooke Family

Genealogies; transcript of Aaron Cooke's will; account of Minutemen;	all n.d.	Box 3: 12
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Subseries E: Unidentified manuscripts

Unidentified letters, writings, and fragments		Box 3: 13
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Series 4. Photographs

1873-1879

Hudson Family		Box 3: 1
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Series 5: Printed Materials

E.D. Hudson, Sr.		Box 3: 1
E.D. Hudson, Jr. and family		Box 3: 2
Clara Hudson, Plain Tales from Plainfield		Box 3: 3
Fowler genealogies		Box 3: 4
Photocopies of excerpts from Samuel Orcutt, History of Tarringford	1878	Box 3: 5
Samuel Orcutt, History of Tarringford	1878	Box 4: 6
Nahum Mitchell, History of the Early Settlement of Bridgewater	1840	Box 4: 7
Photo of a letter to E.D. Hudson Sr., removed from Mitchell's history of Bridgewater		Box 4: 8
"An Address to the Anti-Slavery Christians"; "Articles of Faith and Covenant...Congregational Church in Tarringford."		Box 4: 9
Miscellaneous		Box 4: 10

Series 6. Copies of Materials Located in Other Repositories

Photocopy of inventory of the Hudson Collection in Smith College Sophia Smith Collection, Northampton, MA		Box 3: 1
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Photocopies of the Clara E. Hudson Papers in the Forbes Library, Northampton, MA Box 3: 2

NO SERIES NUMBER: CARBON COPIES AND EARLY DRAFTS OF TRANSCRIPTS IN COLLECTION

File cards for correspondence (incomplete) Box 5: 1

Transcript of journal 1842-1843 Box 5: 2

Transcript of journal 1845 Box 5: 3

Transcripts of correspondence: early drafts Box 5: 4

Transcripts of correspondence: carbon copies Box 5: 5

Transcripts: miscellaneous; early drafts Box 5: 6

Calendar of Selected Items Box 5: 7

Series 7. Accretion

Subseries A: Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Sr.

Bio-bibliographic materials 1853-1883 Box 6: 1

Journal 1853-1883,
1845? Box 6: 2

Correspondence (originals) 1837-1888,
n.d. Box 6: 3

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1837-1846 Box 6: 4

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1847-1848 Box 6: 5

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1849-1858 Box 6: 6

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1861 Box 6: 7

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1862 Box 6: 8

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1863-1866 Box 6: 9

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1868-1869 Box 6: 10

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1870-1871 Box 6: 11

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1872 Box 6: 12

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1875-1877 Box 6: 13

Correspondence, (photocopies) 1880, n.d. Box 6: 14

Writings, undated Box 6: 15

Letters to Martha Hudson, (originals) 1862-1881 Box 6: 16

Letters to Martha Hudson, (photocopies) 1862-1881 Box 6: 17

Subseries B: Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Jr.

Notebook of essays, 1861; copyright contract, 1886; memorial tribute to classmate (?)Andrew Quakinbush, Jr. Box 6: 18

Subseries C: Clara Hudson

Journal n.d. Box 6: 19

Subseries D: Samuel Shaw

Article of agreement for forming partnership, 1818 Box 6: 20

Subseries E: Unidentified

Two lithographs, two poems Box 6: 21

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Sidney Kaplan in 1979. Accretion acquired from Arvilla Dyer, 1984. Copies of related papers were received from the Smith College Sophia Smith Collection, the Forbes Library, and the Northampton Historical Society in 1983.

Related Material

Additional Hudson family papers passed from Clara Elizabeth Hudson, either directly or indirectly, to the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, the Forbes Library, the Northampton Historical Society (all in Northampton, Mass.), and the Shaw Memorial Library and Shaw Historical Homestead (Plainfield, Mass.). Photocopies of some of these materials are available in the collection.

Separated Material

The following books have been transferred to the Rare Books stacks:

Barber, John Warner, *Historical Collections: Being a General Collection of Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes & c., Relating to the History and Antiquities of Every Town in Massachusetts, with Geographical Descriptions, Illustrated by 200 Engravings*. Worcester: Dorr Howland & Co., 1840. Call number: Special Collections F64 B23 1840.

Darby, William, and Theodore Dwight, Jr., *A New Gazetteer of the United States of America*. Hartford: Edward Hopkins, 1833. Call number: Special Collections E 154 D21 1833.

Processing Information

Processed by Laurie B. Gans, October 1983.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

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Cite as: Hudson Family Papers (MS 332). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Abolitionists--United States--Correspondence.
- Abolitionists--United States--Directories.
- Abolitionists--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- American Anti-Slavery Society--History--Sources.
- Antislavery movements--United States--History--Sources.
- Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society--History--Sources.
- Family--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- Family--United States--History--20th century--Sources.
- Hudson, Clara Elizabeth, 1880-1963.
- Hudson, E. Darwin (Erasmus Darwin), 1843-1887.
- Hudson, Erasmus Darwin, 1806-1880--Finance, Personal.
- Hudson, Erasmus Darwin, 1806-1880.
- Hudson, Martha Turner, 1806-1887--Correspondence.
- Orthopedic apparatus--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- Orthopedic surgery--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- Physicians--Connecticut--History--19th century--Sources.
- Physicians--New York--New York--History--19th century--Sources.
- Social reformers--United States--History--19th century--Sources.

Contributors

- Hudson Family **[main entry]**
- Hudson, Erasmus Darwin, 1806-1880.
- Hudson, E. Darwin (Erasmus Darwin), 1843-1887.
- Hudson, Clara Elizabeth, 1880-1963.
- Cook family.
- Clark family.
- Fowler family.
- Shaw family.

Genres and formats

- Accounts.
- Diaries.
- Genealogies.
- Histories.
- Maps.
- Medical records.
- Photographs.

Link to similar SCUA collections

