Hudson Family Papers

1807-1963

6 boxes (3 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 332

Read collection overview 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 Torringford (now part of Torrington), Conn., on Dec. 15, 1806. Educated by private tutor and at the Torringford 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 Torringford 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 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 on 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Born November 10, Northampton, MA, to Erasmus Darwin, Sr. and Martha Turner Hudson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Moved with family to New York City, attended public schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Graduated from College of the City of New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Received M.D. from Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867-1868</td>
<td>House surgeon, Bellevue Hospital, and private practice, New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869-1870</td>
<td>Health Inspector, New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1880</td>
<td>Attending physician, Bellevue Hospital, Trinity House, and Trinity Chapel Parish; professor, Women’s Medical College of the New York Infirmary; consultant to other physicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Married Laura Shaw, daughter of Dr. Samuel and Elizabeth Clarke Shaw of Plainfield, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1887</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Died of pneumonia May 9 in New York City</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**
# Collection 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  
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  1843  
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  1844  
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  1845  
  Box 1: 22
- Correspondence  
  1846  
  Box 1: 23
- Correspondence  
  1847  
  Box 1: 24
- Correspondence  
  1848  
  Box 1: 25
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<th>Subseries D: Writings</th>
<th>1831-1834</th>
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<tr>
<td>Medical, moral, and on brother Daniel's death</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes from Columbiana County Convention of Abolitionists</td>
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<td>Anti-slavery writings</td>
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<td>(1838), 1842, 1845</td>
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<td>Journal</td>
<td>1839-1840</td>
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<td>Journal</td>
<td>October, 1840-February, 1841</td>
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<td>1825-1829</td>
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<td>1833-1834</td>
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<td>1837-1838</td>
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<td>1841</td>
<td>Box 2: 47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>January-June, 1842</td>
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<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>July-October, 1842</td>
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<td>January-August, 1843</td>
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<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>September-October, 1843</td>
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<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Box 2: 52</td>
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<td>Subseries F: Martha Turner Hudson</td>
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<td>- Incoming letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Transcripts of incoming letters</td>
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### 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

#### Subseries C: Darwin Shaw Hudson

- Certificates and printed materials  
  1894-1924  
  Box 3: 5

#### Subseries D: Clara Elizabeth Hudson

- Typescripts of writings, 1947, 1951; and financial record, 1923  
  Box 3: 6

### Series 3. Fowler, Shaw, Clarke, and Cooke Family Papers  
1807-1886, n.d.

#### Subseries A: Fowler Family
### Series 6. Copies of Materials Located in Other Repositories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Box</th>
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<tr>
<td>Photocopy of inventory of the Hudson Collection in Smith College Sophia Smith Collection, Northampton, MA</td>
<td>3: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopies of the Clara E. Hudson Papers in the Forbes Library, Northampton, MA</td>
<td>3: 2</td>
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#### NO SERIES NUMBER: CARBON COPIES AND EARLY DRAFTS OF TRANSCRIPTS IN COLLECTION

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Transcript of journal</td>
<td>5: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript of journal</td>
<td>5: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts of correspondence: early drafts</td>
<td>5: 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcripts of correspondence: carbon copies</td>
<td>5: 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcripts: miscellaneous; early drafts</td>
<td>5: 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calendar of Selected Items</td>
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### Series 7. Accretion

#### Subseries A: Erasmus Darwin Hudson, Sr.

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<td>Journal</td>
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<td>Correspondence, (photocopies)</td>
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</table>
### 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

#### 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...*

**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.

**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.


**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.

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**Search terms**

**Subjects**

- Abolitionists--United States--Correspondence.
- Abolitionists--United States--Directories.
- Abolitionists--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- Antislavery movements--United States--History--Sources.
- Family--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- Family--United States--History--20th century--Sources.
- Family--United States--History--20th century--Sources.
- Hudson family.
- Hudson family.
- Hudson family--Genealogy.
- Hudson family.
- Hudson family--Genealogy.
- Hudson, E. Darwin (Erasmus Darwin), 1843-1887.
- Hudson, E. Darwin (Erasmus Darwin), 1843-1887.
- Cook family.
- Cook family.
- Fowler family.
- Fowler family.
- Fowler family--Genealogy.
century--Sources.
- Orthopedic apparatus--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- Orthopedic surgery--United States--History--19th century--Sources.
- Physicians--Connecticut--History--19th century--Sources.
- Social reformers--United States--History--19th century--Sources.

Names
- American Anti-Slavery Society--History--Sources.
- Clark family.
- Clark family.
- Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society--History--Sources.

1887.
- Hudson, Erasmus Darwin, 1806-1880.
- Hudson, Erasmus Darwin, 1806-1880.
- Hudson, Martha Turner, 1806-1887--Correspondence.
- Shaw family.
- Shaw family.

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

Link to similar SCUA collections
- African American
- Antiracism
- Antislavery
- Civil War
- Disability
- Family
- Massachusetts (West)
- Medical
- Reform
- Social change

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