

Old Document Project Collection

Finding Aid

Windsor Historical Society
96 Palisado Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095

Creator: Windsor Historical Society

Dates: 1640 – 1899; scattered holdings 1900-1958

Extent: 3 linear feet

Accession #: 1984.60 (Hayden); 1993.12 (Barber); 1996.34 and 1997.20 (Shelton); 1935 (Pierson); 1998.52 (Silliman) and many others

Scope and Contents

The Old Document Project is a composite collection of some of the Windsor Historical Society's primary documents. It contains more than 1500 items dated from 1640 to 1899 and scattered holdings from the early 20th century. Each has been indexed by date, name, and document type.

The collection contains **land records** such as deeds, land grants, quit claims, leases, and surveys. **Business documents** include small account books, bills, payments, and receipts. A wide variety of **legal documents** include court summons, complaints, arrests, tax documents, insurance policies, and promissory notes. A significant portion of the collection pertains to the **settlement of estates** with documents such as wills, inventories, and probate records. There are **Town of Windsor contracts** for road work and school teachers as well as lists of district school pupils. Early **military documents** include orders, commissions, and regimental lists, while miscellaneous **personal records** include genealogies and single pieces of correspondence. **Other items** can best be described by their format – notes, signatures, calling cards, minutes, and sermons. Photographs, however, were not included in this project.

Project Administrative History

Windsor Historical Society has collected hundreds of historic documents since its founding in 1921. Some have been received as part of specific named collections; for others the provenance is uncertain. In 1997 an extensive project was begun to gather these documents together in order to preserve, record, and index them. Each item was placed in a protective sleeve, the sheets filed in loose leaf notebooks, and basic identifying information abstracted. Fields included the identifying number, date, document type, name, and a brief description. By early 2000 volunteers were entering this information into a computer database, and in 2005 these files were converted to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Many hands were involved in this extensive project. Over 100 document types were identified. Some effort has been made to standardize terms during file cleanup, but a controlled thesaurus of document types has not been defined. When a document had more than one significant name associated with it, multiple entries were made to the database in order to index each name. The handwriting was difficult to decipher at times, and variations in spelling and interpretation occurred during the transcription.

It is expected that further documents will be added to this collection as they are acquired or transferred from other files. The index will be updated periodically to make these supplementary materials accessible.

Arrangement

Although there are some short sequences of related items, documents were not placed in the collection in any particular order. They were given an identifying number that reflects the notebook volume and page number.

Document types by category

Military

- Account
- Bill of sale
- Commission
- Expenses
- Appointments
- Orders
- Pensions
- Payment
- Receipt
- Regimental list
- Debt notice
- Insurance
- Lawsuit
- Subpoena
- Tax assessment
- Tax list
- Tax notice
- Verdict
- Warrant
- Writ

Land

- Deed
- Land distribution
- Land grant
- Lease
- Quit claim
- Quit claim deed
- Survey
- Warranty deed
- Account
- Advertisement
- Bill of sale
- Expenses
- Insurance
- Payment
- Receipt
- Ship's manifest

Business

Other

Genealogy

- Birth record
- Death record
- Estate sale
- Genealogy
- Inventory
- Marriage record
- Obituary
- Probate record
- Will
- Application
- Census
- Contract
- Indenture
- Letter
- List
- Medical bill
- Minutes
- Patent
- Poem
- Prescription
- Road work
- Sermon
- Signature
- Speech

Legal

- Act of Legislature
- Complaint
- Court order

How to Research the Old Documents Project

Unfortunately, due to the sheer size of the collection—as of 2017 there are over 2300 documents cataloged—we cannot put a copy of the index online. However, if you are trying to find information about a specific individual or family, you can contact Michelle Tom, the librarian/archivist, at mtom@windsorhistoricalsociety.org, and she can

Terms used to describe the document were generally expressed in the single form of the word, for example, “letter” not “letters.”

If several significant names are represented in the record, multiple entries were made into the database. The deed recording a land sale from Oliver Hayden to Walter Thrall would have two entries, one with “Hayden, Oliver” in the name field and another with “Thrall, Walter” listed there. Often the names of witnesses or other signatories were indexed, and additional names may have been included in the very brief descriptive note.

In an effort to conserve space, the brief descriptions often included abbreviations and shortened forms of words. Frequently these were linked with slash marks (/). Extensive efforts have been made to expand these abbreviations during the data cleanup and to impose more uniformity in terminology. To search in this field, make creative use of synonyms or keywords to express a concept or just enter the first few letters of the word. For example, if you are looking for “student” try “school” or “scholar” or even just “sch” and for documents about ships try “boat” or “cargo.”

Related Materials in the Windsor Historical Society Collections

Barber Collection (1993.12)

Hayden Collection (1984.60)

Kendrick Collection (1993.60.87)

William and Henry Shelton Collections (1996.34 and 1997.20)

First School Society Collection (composite collection)

Subject file: Legal Issues

Subject Terms

Allyn family

Barber family

Bissell family

Ellsworth family

Filley family

Fyler family

Gaylord family

Griswold family

Hayden family

Marshall family

Moore family

Loomis family

Parsons family

Phelps family

Pierson family

Sill family

Stoughton family

Barber, Jerijah, Sr., 1738-1792

Barber, Jerijah, Jr., 1766-1820

Chaffee, Hezekiah, Dr., 1731-1819

Judson, Ephraim, 1737-1813

Loomis, James, 2nd

Shelton, William, 1805-1860

Autographs

Deeds – Connecticut – Windsor

First School Society (Windsor, Conn.)

Indentured servants

Schools – Connecticut – Windsor – 19th century

United States – History – Revolution, 1775 -1783 – Sources

Windsor (Conn.) – History – Sources

Administrative history

Collection primarily processed and indexed summer 1997-2001.

Index revised and finding aid written by Barbara Goodwin 2005-2006.

Indexing continues as we receive additional collection documents.