

**David H. Sumner (1776-1867)**  
**Papers, 1807-1888**  
**Doc 96**

**Introduction**

This collection contains some of the business and personal papers of Hartland, Vermont, businessman and entrepreneur David H. Sumner for the period 1807-1888. The acquisition date of the collection is unknown, although some of the typescripts in the collection refer to it as the "Hatch Lot." Marvin Hatch owned David Sumner's house in the 1970s and may have been the source for these papers. The collection is stored in one records center box and consumes 1 linear foot of shelf space.

**Biographical Note**

David Hubbard Sumner (1776-1867) was a lumbering entrepreneur from Hartland, Vermont, active in the first half of the nineteenth century. Howland Atwood in his typescript biography of Sumner says, "David H. Sumner's empire of enterprises and influence roughly extended from Canada to the Caribbean and west to Louisiana. ... [His] companies for his extensive lumber and timber trade on the Connecticut [River] owned and controlled large tracts of land, estimated to be 60,000 acres."

Sumner was born in Claremont, New Hampshire, on December 7, 1776. His father wanted him to go to college, but David preferred the life of a businessman. He received training in Lyman's store in White River Junction and came to Hartland about 1805.

Sumner was in the lumber manufacturing business in Hartland and Dalton, New Hampshire, with lumber yards in Springfield, Massachusetts, and Hartford and Middletown, Connecticut. Other projects were road and bridge building. From 1809-1856 he had a store in Middletown, Connecticut; at one time it had a branch in Louisiana.

In Vermont he was captain of a local militia company in the War of 1812 and was postmaster in Hartland from 1813 to 1833.

Sumner built a prominent home in Hartland around 1807 designed by notable architect Asher Benjamin or one of his apprentices. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sumner was first married to Martha B. Foxcroft of Brookfield, Massachusetts, from 1805 until her death in 1824. His second wife was Wealthy Thomas of Windsor. They had two children, Mattie and David H Sumner, Jr. David H Sumner, Sr., died on August 29, 1867.

**Scope and Content**

This collection contains some of the business and personal papers of Hartland, Vermont, businessman and entrepreneur David H. Sumner for the period 1807-1888. The papers reflect

Sumner's involvement in transportation on the Connecticut River, including canals around falls that restricted navigation on the river, and bridges across the river. The collection also contains a significant amount of material about the buying and selling of land and the lumbering of that land.

This collection also includes two folders of personal papers, including several letters of condolence regarding the death of Martha B. Sumner, and one of sheriff's writs of attachment from Windsor County.

The notes attached to some of the papers on "tray slips" were written by Pliny F. Morse prior to 1959.

### Related Collections

The VHS manuscript collection includes extensive holding of Sumner's records. A small box of David Sumner receipts has been arranged and cataloged (MSA 880). The library's Brigham Manuscript Index contains an additional 33 collections of various sizes under Sumner's name, including six account books in the AC collection. Consult the manuscript index for additional resources.

The Vermont Historical Society Library has a copy of Howland F. Atwood's five-volume typescript history of Sumner entitled "D.H. Sumner – Pioneer Developer." (call. no. 920 Su662a)

### Inventory

- MSA 96:01 Account papers, 1810-1859  
*Includes:* cost of bridge near J.W. Willard's; Brookfield, Mass., disbursement paid by F.A. Foxcraft, 1810-1811; various lumber bills from the 1830s and 1840s.
- :02 Bridge papers 1826-1871  
*Includes:* papers of Hart Island, Dalton, Orford, and Plainfield, N.H.
- :03 Business papers, 1807-1810
- :04 \_\_\_\_\_, 1811
- :05 \_\_\_\_\_, 1812-1818
- :06 \_\_\_\_\_, 1819-1823
- :07 \_\_\_\_\_, 1824-1825
- :08 \_\_\_\_\_, 1826-1846
- :09 \_\_\_\_\_, 1847-1875
- Folders 3-9 include papers from J.B. Sumner, John Wyse, and others of Middletown, Conn., and a plan of Governor Wentworth's land in Vernon.
- :10 Canal papers, 1791-1854  
*Includes:* ms act incorporating the Water Quechee, 1796; act granting water and canal privileges to Joseph Kimball at Waterquechee Falls in 1791; affidavit about a canal at Hartland; bylaws of company rendering the Connecticut River navigable by Water Quechee Falls.

- :11 Land papers, n.d.-1822  
:12 \_\_\_\_\_, 1824-1845  
:13 \_\_\_\_\_, 1846-1875  
Folders 11-13 related to land in Upson, Hartland, Wenlock, and to Benning Wentworth lands.  
:14 Letters, 1808-1814  
Calendar of letters concerning economic conditions and the embargo, and War of 1812 on Lake Champlain.  
:15 Lumber papers, n.d.-1812  
:16 \_\_\_\_\_, 1818-1823  
:17 \_\_\_\_\_, 1824  
:18 \_\_\_\_\_, 1825-1835  
:19 \_\_\_\_\_, 1840-1841  
:20 \_\_\_\_\_, 1845-1882  
*Includes:* material on Connecticut River trade and navigation, Hartland, Vt., and Dalton, N.H., 1809-1825.  
:21 Miscellaneous papers, 1818-1871  
*Includes:* Concord, N.H., Congregational Journal, 27 Oct. 1852; petition for a road from Lottery Bridge in Claremont to Charleston; Facts about the death of Moses Goddard on train of Camden & Amboy Railroad, 7 March 1865; certificate of incorporation of Point Pleasant Petroleum Company in New York; manuscript poems; dance invitations from 1823; printed State of New Hampshire act incorporating the Connecticut River Company, 1824; printed remarks in favor of canal navigation on the Connecticut River; quarterly report of Hartland post office to general post officer, 30 March 1825; records of lands and deeds in Grafton County, N.H., 1778-1832.  
:22 Personal papers, Sept. 1798-Dec. 1823  
:23 \_\_\_\_\_, April 1824-May 1888  
Folders 22 and 23 include family letters.  
:24 Windsor County, Vt., sheriff's writs of attachment, 1805-1826  
:25 Typescripts of some of the above.

Revised by Laura P. Abbott  
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