



Fairfield Museum
EXPLORE *the past*, IMAGINE *the future*

Southport Stations Collection, 1885-1992 Ms 56

Summary Information

Repository

Fairfield Museum and History Center

Creator

Hatch, Robert, architect

Creator

New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad Company .

Creator

Southport Conservancy (Southport, Conn.) .

Title

Southport Stations Collection, 1885-1992

ID

Ms 56

Date [inclusive]

1885-1992

Extent

0.5 Linear feet (1 Box,

Language

English

Preferred Citation note

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (Box #, Folder #). Fairfield Museum and History Center, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Biographical/Historical note

The New York and New Haven Railroad first opened in Southport on December 25, 1848. The depot which currently stands on the eastbound side of the track initially provided both passenger and freight service in direct competition with the coastal trade that had dominated Southport's economy in the early 19th century. Connecticut railroads grew dramatically in the 1870's. Increased traffic led to the construction of a freight house in 1870 next to the passenger station. In 1872 the freight house was moved to the westbound side of the tracks. This was the



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same year in which the New York and New Haven Railroad merged with another rail line to become the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad.

Peter Sturges acted as depot master and freight agent from 1848-1853; Aaron Jennings followed as depot master from 1853-1883 and he was succeeded by William E. Purdy from 1882-1922. Freight agents over the same period of time include David R. Banks, John Burke, Jim Lafferty, Henry Archer, John Donahue, Edward Smith, Henry P. Callahan and Harry Disbrow.

In 1985 the state of Connecticut purchased the majority of the railroad tracks, buildings and rights of way from the bankrupt Penn Central Railroad, who had acquired the line in 1968. In 1988 the Connecticut Department of Transportation announced that the Southport freight station was available for lease. Three years later the DOT, the town of Fairfield and the Southport Conservancy arranged a lease. The Conservancy restored the building to its original appearance and has since leased the building to an art gallery and restaurant.

Scope and Contents note

The items in this collection primarily came from two sources. Some were found in the Southport Passenger Station on the eastbound line by Messrs. Van-Eyck and Emerich when they had an antique shop in the station. The items were found stuffed in the rafters and relate to the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company. The station is now a restaurant. These items are from accession number L96.Jul.54. Other items are from accession number L93.May.26 and were donated by Leo Ott. He kept a scrapbook of materials related to the railroad. Other items are from V. Louise Higgins and unknown sources.

The collection consists of freight and financial records, reports, and memorabilia for the Southport depot and freight stations, 1886-1904, 1921; Western Union telegrams to and from the station, 1885-1890; and records of the Southport Conservancy's effort to restore the freight station, 1988-1992. Financial records are arranged first, followed by the telegrams. The materials from the Southport Conservancy encompass photographs, correspondence, and architectural drawings (blue line) of the renovation executed by Robert Hatch.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Fairfield Museum and History Center
370 Beach Rd.
Fairfield, CT
203-259-1598



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Conditions Governing Access note

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

Conditions Governing Use note

Use of the material requires compliance with the Fairfield Museum and History Center regulations.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Account books--Connecticut--Southport
- Historic buildings--Connecticut--Southport.
- Historic preservation--Connecticut--Southport.
- Railroad stations--Connecticut--Southport--Conservation and restoration.
- Railroads--Finance
- Receipts(financial records)
- Telegraph.