

**The New York Public Library
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Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Guide to the
Samuel B. Ruggles papers

1801-1881

MssCol 2643

Compiled by Jim Moske, September 2000

Summary

Creator: Ruggles, Samuel B. (Samuel Bulkley), 1800-1881

Title: Samuel B. Ruggles papers, 1801-1881

Size: .94 linear foot (2 boxes)

Source: Purchased from Doris Harris Autographs, 2000

Abstract: The Samuel B. Ruggles Papers document the business and civic activities of the New York lawyer, real estate developer and public servant. The collection spans from 1801-1881 and consists of correspondence, financial records, land records, writings, miscellaneous papers and ephemera. These materials are a valuable source of information regarding politics, economic development, real estate and public works in 19th century New York. There is also important material relating to American participation in the International Monetary Conference at the Paris Exposition of 1867 and the International Statistical Congress of 1869.

Access: Apply to Manuscripts and Archives Division for access at <http://www.nypl.org/mssref>.

Preferred citation: Samuel B. Ruggles papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Creator history

Samuel Bulkley Ruggles (1800-1881) was a lawyer, public servant and real estate developer in New York City. He actively promoted public works such as the Croton Aqueduct system to bring water to New York City. As Canal Commissioner, 1839-1858, he worked to improve the Erie Canal system. He also served as a trustee of Columbia College and the Astor Library

Scope and content note

Lawyer, public servant and real estate developer Samuel B. Ruggles was born on April 11, 1800 in New Milford, Connecticut. He graduated from Yale College in 1814, studied law with his father, Philo Ruggles, and established his own practice in New York City in 1821. By 1831 Ruggles had purchased land that he would develop as Gramercy Park and the surrounding residential area. He promoted the development of Union Square and worked for the city in laying sidewalks and installing sewers. His development efforts also included the construction of warehouses on the Atlantic Docks in Brooklyn. This project, undertaken with Edward Curtis, led Ruggles to financial failure in 1851 and marked the end of his interests in real estate development. Throughout his life, Ruggles played an active role in civic affairs. In 1838 he was

elected to the State Legislature where he served a one-year term and supported the development of the Croton Aqueduct system, which brought water to New York City from the Croton River. As Canal Commissioner (1839-1858) he worked to improve and enlarge the Erie Canal system. He was a delegate of the United States to the International Monetary Conference at the Paris Exposition of 1867. Ruggles also served as a trustee of Columbia College and the Astor Library. He was the author of numerous reports on transportation, commerce and monetary policy, including Report upon the Finances and Internal Improvements of the State of New York (1838) and International Coinage (1867).

Ruggles was married on May 15, 1822 to Mary Rosalie Rathbone (d.1878). Their children were John Rathbone (b.1823), Ellen Caroline (b.1825) and James Francis (1827-1895). Samuel B. Ruggles died at Fire Island, New York in 1881.

Arrangement

The Samuel B. Ruggles papers are organized into the following series:

Series I. Correspondence, 1832 - 1881

Series II. Miscellaneous Papers and Ephemera, 1801 - 1878

Key terms

Subjects

Aqueducts -- New York (State)
Canals -- New York (State)
Railroads -- United States
Real estate development -- New York (State) --
New York
Real property -- New York (State)
Real property -- New York (State) -- New York
Sewerage -- New York (State) -- New York
Sidewalks -- New York (State) -- New York

Occupations

Lawyers

Places

Croton Aqueduct (N.Y.)
Erie Canal (N.Y.)
New York (N.Y.) -- Politics and government -- To
1898
New York (State) -- Politics and government -- 1775
-1865
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Names

Allison, William B. (William Boyd), 1829-1908
Curtis, Edward
Daly, Maria
Dexter, S. Newton.
Ely, Alfred, 1815-1892
Furst, George A.
Hunt, Washington, 1811-1867
Ruggles, Charles Herman, 1789-1865
Ruggles, Samuel B. (Samuel Bulkley), 1800-1881
Silliman, Benjamin D. (Benjamin Douglas), 1805
-1901
Tallmadge, Nathaniel Pitcher, 1795-1864
Verplanck, Gulian C. (Gulian Crommelin), 1786
-1870

Speial Formats

Maps

Container list

Series I. Correspondence, 1832 - 1881

Samuel B. Ruggles's correspondence files contain incoming and outgoing letters regarding business, real estate, land purchases, the New York City water supply system, the Canal Board, monetary policy, the Paris Exposition of 1867, the International Statistical Congress of 1869, personal affairs and family matters. Correspondents include William Boyd Allison, S. Newton Dexter, Alfred Ely, Nathaniel Pitcher Tallmadge, Gulian C. Verplanck and Benjamin D. Silliman. Letters of Whig statesman and New York Governor Washington Hunt are of particular interest for their discussion of national politics, railroads and canals. Also included are items written by relatives of Samuel Ruggles, such as his son James, his daughter Eleanor, and several family cousins

Series II. Miscellaneous Papers and Ephemera, 1801 - 1878

Items filed in this series document the business affairs and professional activities of Samuel B. Ruggles. Included are receipts, contracts and other financial records, many of them dealing with sewer and sidewalk work done for the City of New York by Ruggles and his associate George A. Furst. There are also accounts and financial records related to the Atlantic Docks project and the Dauphin & Susquehanna Coal Company. Deeds, maps, receipts and tax records document the landholdings of the Ruggles family in New York City and New York State, including plots in the vicinity of today's Gramercy Park. The series also includes notes, drafts and manuscripts of writings by Samuel B. Ruggles on such topics as international monetary policy, agricultural production, commercial transport, the census of 1860 and German history. Other miscellaneous items include a list of books in Samuel B. Ruggles's home library, his Yale diploma and a lock of his hair

- b.1 f.1 Allison, William Boyd, 1877
- b.1 f.2 Astor, William Waldorf, 1880
- b.1 f.3 Bostwick, Samuel A., 1879 - 1881
- b.1 f.4 Burgess, J. W., n.d.
- b.1 f.5 Cullum, George Washington, 1879
- b.1 f.6 Curtis, Edward, 1840 - 1851, n.d.
- b.1 f.7 Daly, Maria, n.d.
- b.1 f.8 Davis, Charles Augustus, 1838
- b.1 f.9 Derby, E. H., 1872
- b.1 f.10 Dexter, S. Newton, 1840 - 1841
- b.1 f.11 Ely, Alfred, 1862
- b.1 f.12 Goddard, Charles B., 1837
- b.1 f.13 Hewitt, Abram Stevens, 1876
- b.1 f.14 Hunt, M. H., 1865, n.d.
- b.1 f.15 Hunt, Washington, 1848 - 1865, n.d.
- b.1 f.16 International Statistical Congress], 1869 - 1872
- b.1 f.17 Kennedy, John Pendleton, n.d.
- b.1 f.18 King, Preston, 1838 - 1862
- b.1 f.19 Low, Abel Abbot, 1869
- b.1 f.20 Macready [William Charles?], 1849
- b.1 f.21-25 Miscellaneous, 1832 - 1881, n.d.
- b.1 f.26 Morgan, Edwin D., 1859 - 1863

Series II. Miscellaneous Papers and Ephemera,... (cont.)

- b.1 f.27 Paris Exposition], 1866 - 1867
- b.2 f.1 Parker, C. E. R., 1872 - 1873
- b.2 f.2 Robertson, Wyndham, 1839
- b.2 f.3 Ruggles, Charles H., 1840 - 1853
- b.2 f.4 Ruggles, Eleanor, 1879, n.d.
- b.2 f.5 Ruggles, George David, 1879
- b.2 f.6 Ruggles, James, 1868 - 1880
- b.2 f.7 Ruggles, Julia, 1850 - 1970, n.d.
- b.2 f.8 Ruggles, Mary, 1879, n.d.
- b.2 f.9 Ruggles, Rosalie, n.d.
- b.2 f.10 Seward, William H., 1838 - 1864
- b.2 f.11 Sherwood, Lizzie, n.d.
- b.2 f.12 Silliman, Benjamin D., 1839 - 1840, n.d.
- b.2 f.13 Strong, George Templeton, 1848 (3 items)
- b.2 f.14 Strong, John Ruggles, 1878 - 1880
- b.2 f.15 Tallmadge, Nathaniel Pitcher, 1831 - 1840
- b.2 f.16 Verplanck, Gulian C., 1841
- b.2 f.17 Wilson, George, 1878 - 1881
- b.2 f.18-19 Accounts and contracts, 1830 - 1878
- b.2 f.20 Books at 24 Union Place, 1842
- b.2 f.21-22 Land papers - New York City, 1813 - 1876, n.d.
- b.2 f.23-24 Land papers - New York State, Madison County, Chittenango, 1854 - 1876
- b.2 f.25 Land papers - New York State, Madison County, Sullivan, 1854
- b.2 f.26 Legal career, 1819 - 1822
- b.2 f.27 Lock of hair, n.d.
- b.2 f.28 News clippings regarding railroads, 1865
- b.2 f.29 Ruggles, Philo, 1801
- b.2 f.30 Writings, n.d.
- b.2 f.31 Yale College, 1814
- f.200-A-4 Map of Cholera Hill, n.d.
- f.200-A-4 Map of the Lower Division of the Lands of Samuel B. Ruggles in the Twelfth Ward of the City of New York, 1831
- f.200-A-4 Map of the Real Estate in the City of New York Between South Side of Washington Parade 4th Street and the North Side of Bellevue 28th Street, 1831
- f.200-A-4 Map of 3rd and 4th Avenues between 91st and 93rd Streets, New York City, n.d. (With annotations)
- f.200-A-4 Map of Warren County, PA, n.d.