

Cases of Historical Interest In the Southern District of New York

United States v. Alger Hiss

Judges Samuel Kaufman and Henry W. Goddard

Alger Hiss was a lawyer who, early in his career, had clerked for Justice Holmes and later became a State Department official and part of the American delegation to the Yalta Conference. Whittaker Chambers publically accused Hiss of transmitting to him classified documents, including the so-called “Pumpkin Papers,” so that Chambers could pass them on to a Soviet officer. Hiss was charged with two counts of perjury before a grand jury. The first count charged that he lied when he testified under oath that he had never turned over any of the State Department documents to Chambers. The second count charged him with perjury when he testified that he had not seen Chambers after January 1, 1937. The first trial before Judge Kaufman ended in a hung jury and a second trial before Judge Goddard resulted in convictions on both counts and a five-year sentence. Future S.D.N.Y. Judge Thomas F. Murphy was the lead prosecutor at both trials and future S.D.N.Y. Judge Edward C. McLean worked on the defense team.

107 F.Supp. 128 (S.D.N.Y. 1952).

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/hiss/hiss.html>

