

Harry Payne Whitney Collection of Letters of William Collins Whitney
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2011

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81045468>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012064>

Prepared by Sherralyn McCoy

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2012

Collection Summary

Title: Harry Payne Whitney Collection of Letters of William C. Whitney

Span Dates: 1757-1942

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1883-1904)

ID No.: MSS45468

Creator: Whitney, William C. (William Collins), 1841-1904

Collector: Whitney, Harry Payne, 1872-1930

Extent: 20,000 items

Extent: 148 containers plus 10 oversize

Extent: 41.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm81045468>

Summary: Secretary of the navy, financier, and sportsman. Correspondence, legal and financial records, scrapbooks, photographs, genealogies, and printed matter relating chiefly to William C. Whitney's business and political career in New York, and as secretary of the navy in the first Grover Cleveland presidential administration.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Cleveland, Grover, 1837-1908.

Greely, A. W. (Adolphus Washington), 1844-1935.

Whitney family.

Whitney, Harry Payne, 1872-1930. Harry Payne Whitney collection of letters of William Collins Whitney. 1757-1942.

Whitney, William C. (William Collins), 1841-1904.

Organizations

Lady Franklin Bay Expedition (1881-1884)

New York (N.Y.). Law Department.

Tammany Hall (Political organization)

United States. Navy Department.

United States. Navy.

Subjects

Bimetallism.

Fraud--New York (State)--New York.

Genealogy.

Horse racing.

Political corruption--New York (State)--New York.

Presidents--United States--Election.

Silver question.

Tariff.

Tweed Ring.

Yachting.

Places

Arctic regions--Discovery and exploration.

New York (N.Y.)--Politics and government--To 1898.

New York (N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

New York (State)--Politics and government--1865-1950.

Polar regions--Discovery and exploration.

United States--Foreign relations--1865-1898.
United States--Politics and government--1865-1900.
Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

Titles

William C. Whitney papers
William Collins Whitney papers

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Financiers.
Sportsmen.

Provenance

The Harry Payne Whitney collection of letters of William Collins Whitney was given to the Library of Congress by the heirs of William C. Whitney and others, 1942-1979.

Processing History

The collection was arranged and described in 1983. Additional material was processed in 2001, and the finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

A card index to the correspondents is available in the Manuscript Reading Room.

Transfers

Photographs of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Collins Whitney is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Harry Payne Whitney Collection of Letters of William Collins Whitney is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Harry Payne Whitney Collection of Letters of William Collins Whitney, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

William Collins Whitney

Date	Event
1841 July 15	Born, Conway, Mass.
1863	Graduated, Yale College, New Haven, Conn.
1863-1864	Harvard Law School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1865	Admitted to the bar; practiced in law in New York, N.Y.
1869	Married Flora Payne (died 1893)
1871	Active in the movement against the Tweed Ring
1872	Inspector of schools, New York, N.Y.
1875-1882	Corporation counsel
1885-1889	Secretary of the navy
1888	LL. D, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1896	Married Edith Sibyl May Randolph (died 1899)
1904, Feb. 2	Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The Harry Payne Whitney Collection of Letters of William Collins Whitney spans the years 1757-1942, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1883-1904. William Collins Whitney (1841-1904), a financier and sportsman, was secretary of the navy in the first administration of Grover Cleveland and corporation counsel in the New York Law Department. The collection consists of correspondence, business, legal and financial records, scrapbooks, genealogies, printed matter, photographs, and other papers organized in six series: [Bound Correspondence](#), [Letterbooks](#), [Legal File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Scrapbooks](#), and [Oversize](#).

Topics include Whitney's work in the modernization of the United States Navy and his fight against political corruption and fraud in New York City, primarily in relation to Tammany Hall and the Tweed Ring. Other subjects relate more broadly to New York city and state politics, the New York Democratic Party, national politics, and foreign relations. Featured are Grover Cleveland's nomination and election as governor of New York and president of the United States, presidential campaigns from 1884 to 1896, bimetallism and the silver question, tariffs, social life in New York and Washington, D.C., horse racing and yachting, and Whitney family affairs.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [Bound Correspondence, 1757-1904](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1883-1904](#)
- [Legal File, 1838-1896](#)
- [Miscellany, 1845-1942](#)
- [Scrapbooks, 1875-1899](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-95	<u>Bound Correspondence, 1757-1904</u> Incoming correspondence. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 96-104	<u>Letterbooks, 1883-1904</u> Handwritten and typed copies of outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically, with a few items overlapping.
BOX 105-110	<u>Legal File, 1838-1896</u> Various professional legal papers. Unarranged.
BOX 110-129	<u>Miscellany, 1845-1942</u> Correspondence, financial records, photographs, statements and reports, printed matter, scrapbooks of clippings and other papers. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 130-148	<u>Scrapbooks, 1875-1899</u> Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings. Arranged in the order received.
BOX OV 1-OV 10	<u>Oversize</u> Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings. Arranged according to the series from which the volumes were removed.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-95	Bound Correspondence, 1757-1904 Incoming correspondence. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1757, Apr. 19-1867, Aug. 22
BOX 2	1867, Aug. 23-1868, Apr. 8
BOX 3	1868, Apr. 10-1869, July 1
BOX 4	1869, July 3-1871, July 8
BOX 5	1871, July 11-1873, Jan. 19
BOX 6	1873, Jan. 24-1874, Sept. 24
BOX 7	1874, Sept. 29-1875, Mar. 2
BOX 8	1875, Mar. 3-1877, Feb. 3
BOX 9	1877, Feb. 8-Dec. 29
BOX 10	1878, Jan. 1-1879, Sept. 13
BOX 11	1879, Sept. 14-1881, Feb. 5
BOX 12	1881, Feb. 9-Sept. 16
BOX 13	1881, Sept. 17-1882, Apr. 12
BOX 14	1882, Apr. 13-Nov. 20
BOX 15	1882, Nov. 21-1883, Dec. 27
BOX 16	1883, Dec. 28-1884, Dec. 3
BOX 17	1884, Dec. 4-1885, Mar. 14
BOX 18	1885 Mar. 15-Apr. 5
BOX 19	Apr. 6-May 6
BOX 20	May 7-June 7
BOX 21	June 8-15
BOX 22	June 16-30
BOX 23	July 1-30
BOX 24	July 31-Sept. 21
BOX 25	Sept. 22-Oct. 19
BOX 26	Oct. 20-Nov. 5
BOX 27	Nov. 6-Dec. 6
BOX 28	Dec. 9-30
BOX 29	1885, Dec. 31-1886, Jan. 10
BOX 30	1886 Jan. 11-Feb. 9
BOX 31	Feb. 10-Mar. 15
BOX 32	Mar. 16-Apr. 24
BOX 33	Apr. 26-May 31
BOX 34	June 1-22
BOX 35	June 23-July 21
BOX 36	July 23-Aug. 28

Bound Correspondence, 1757-1904

Container	Contents
BOX 37	Aug. 30-Oct. 9
BOX 38	Oct. 12-Dec. 1
BOX 39	Dec. 2-31
BOX 40	1887 Jan. 1-29
BOX 41	Jan. 31-Mar. 2
BOX 42	Mar. 3-25
BOX 43	Mar. 26-Apr. 22
BOX 44	Apr. 23-May 28
BOX 45	May 29-July 12
BOX 46	July 13-Aug. 8
BOX 47	Aug. 9-Sept. 9
BOX 48	Sept. 10-Oct. 18
BOX 49	Oct. 19-Dec. 9
BOX 50	1887, Dec. 10-1888, Jan. 15
BOX 51	1888 Jan. 16-Mar. 10
BOX 52	Mar. 11-Apr.30
BOX 53	May 1-June 27
BOX 54	June 28-Aug. 20
BOX 55	Aug. 21-Oct. 14
BOX 56	Oct. 15-Dec. 1
BOX 57	Dec. 3-1889 Jan. 2
BOX 58	1889 Jan. 3-Feb. 18
BOX 59	Feb. 19-May 28
BOX 60	May 31-Nov. 14
BOX 61	Nov. 19-1890 Jan. 25
BOX 62	1890, Jan. 26-Nov. 7
BOX 63	1890, Nov. 8-1891, Feb. 3
BOX 64	1891 Feb. 4-May 12
BOX 65	May 13-Aug. 31
BOX 66	Sept. 1-Dec. 28
BOX 67	1891, Dec. 29-1892, Feb. 19
BOX 68	1892 Feb. 20-Mar. 30
BOX 69	Mar. 31-June 6
BOX 70	June 7-21
BOX 71	June 22-27
BOX 72	June 28-July 6
BOX 73	July 7-15
BOX 74	July 16-Aug. 11
BOX 75	Aug. 12-Sept. 16
BOX 76	Sept. 17-Oct. 16
BOX 77	Oct. 17-Nov. 8

Bound Correspondence, 1757-1904

Container	Contents
BOX 78	Nov. 9-12
BOX 79	Nov. 13-Dec. 10
BOX 80	1892, Dec. 11-1893, Jan. 23
BOX 81	1893 Jan. 24-Feb. 5
BOX 82	Feb. 6
BOX 83	Feb. 6-Feb. 8
BOX 84	Feb. 9-Apr. 18
BOX 85	Apr. 21-Nov. 22
BOX 86	1893, Nov. 23-1894, Mar. 5
BOX 87	1894 Mar. 6-May 16
BOX 88	1894, May 24-1896, Mar. 25
BOX 89	1896 Mar. 26-June 19
BOX 90	June 20-26
BOX 91	June 27-July 5
BOX 92	July 6-18
BOX 93	1896, July 20-1897, Sept. 23
BOX 94	1897, Sept. 24-1904, Feb. 2
BOX 95	1904, Feb. 3-July 19 and undated
BOX 96-104	Letterbooks, 1883-1904 Handwritten and typed copies of outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically, with a few items overlapping.
BOX 96	1883, May 4-1884, Dec. 27 (Ser. 1, Vol. 1) 1875, Aug. 10-1879, Jan. 15 (Ser. 1, Vol. 2) 1885, Apr. 1-Nov. 18 (Ser. 1, Vol. 3)
BOX 97	1886, Feb. 23-1887, Apr. 11 (Ser. 1, Vol. 4) 1900, Mar. 1-June 12 (Ser. 1, Vol. 5) 1889, Nov. 7-1900 July 13 (Ser. 1, Vol. 6) 1900, July 16-1903 Jan. 27 (Ser. 1, Vol.7)
BOX 98	1892, July 14-1897 Aug. 10 (Ser. 2, Vol. 1) 1903, Jan. 27-Mar. 24 (Ser. 2, Vol. 2) 1896, Apr. 29-1898, Apr. 16 (Ser. 2, Vol. 3) 1898, Apr. 18-Aug. 5 (Ser. 2, Vol. 4)
BOX 99	1898, Aug. 6-Dec. 14 (Ser. 2, Vol. 5) 1898, Dec. 14-1899, May 2 (Ser. 2, Vol. 6) 1899, May 3-Sept. 18 (Ser. 2, Vol. 7) 1899, Sept. 18-1900, Jan. 30 (Ser. 2, Vol. 8)
BOX 100	1900, Jan. 29-May 4 (Ser. 2, Vol. 9) 1900, May 4-July 31 (Ser. 2, Vol.10) 1900, July 31-Oct. 30 (Ser. 2, Vol. 11) 1900, Oct. 26-1901, Jan. 7 (Ser. 2, Vol. 12)
BOX 101	1901, Jan. 7-Mar. 5 (Ser. 2, Vol. 13) 1901, Mar. 4-May 10 (Ser. 2, Vol. 14)

Letterbooks, 1883-1904

Container	Contents
	1901, May 7-Aug. 20 (Ser. 2, Vol. 15)
	1901, Aug. 21-Nov. 22 (Ser. 2, Vol. 16)
BOX 102	1901, Nov. 25-1902 Jan. 31 (Ser. 2, Vol. 17)
	1902, Jan. 31-Apr. 9 (Ser. 2, Vol. 18)
	1902, Apr. 9-July 15 (Ser. 2, Vol. 19)
BOX 103	1902, July 17-Nov. 22 (Ser. 2, Vol. 20)
	1902, Nov. 24-1903, Feb. 28 (Ser. 2, Vol. 21)
	1903, Feb. 24-May 21 (Ser. 2, Vol. 22)
BOX 104	1903, May 21-Sept. 22 (Ser. 2, Vol. 23)
	1903, Sept. 10-1904, Jan. 22 (Ser. 2, Vol. 24)
	1904, Jan. 4-June 8 (Ser. 2, Vol. 25)
BOX 105-110	Legal File, 1838-1896 Various professional legal papers. Unarranged.
BOX 105	1838-1884 1867-1879
BOX 106	1866-1887 1864-1894
BOX 107	1865-1891 1877-1896
BOX 108	1859-1889 1870-1878
BOX 109	1865-1885 1867-1878
BOX 110	1878-1881
BOX 110-129	Miscellany, 1845-1942 Correspondence, financial records, photographs, statements and reports, printed matter, scrapbooks of clippings and other papers. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 110	College addresses, 1860-1863
BOX 111	Invitations 1885-1889
BOX 112	1882-1891 Calling cards
BOX 113	Press clippings, 1879-1898
BOX 114	Copies of letters and newspaper articles, 1862-1895
BOX 115	Paid bills 1868-1884
BOX 116	1869-1896 Cancelled checks Paid bills 1868-1894
BOX 117	1894-1898

Miscellany, 1845-1942

Container	Contents
	Bank books Cancelled checks Brook Street Kitchen Paid bills, 1882-1894 Crank letters
BOX 118	Recipes and menus Grocery books, 1870-1892 Daily statements of Manhattan Railway Co.
BOX 119	Copies of New York court decisions, 1867-1878 Copy of navy investigation file, 1882-1888 Photographs Copies of letters Press clippings College papers Canadian fisheries, 1845-1896
BOX 120	Draft of report of the secretary of the navy, 1886-1887 "Turf" "Useless"
BOX 121	Ledger, 1893 Address books Groton School, Groton, Conn., papers, 1884-1888 Cleveland, Grover, wedding cake box Court records Animal pedigrees
BOX 122	Press clippings, 1877-1896
BOX 123	Correspondence of Thomas J. Regan, 1898-1904
BOX 124	Office papers Miscellaneous legal material Genealogical magazines and documents
BOX 125	Printed material 1872-1896 1862-1892 Envelopes
BOX 126	Letters and other papers, 1894-1902
BOX 127	Illustrated Japanese bird book <i>Country Life Magazine</i> , 1932, Apr.-May
BOX 128	Office papers Printed matter
BOX 129	Additional correspondence and printed matter Correspondence and other material, 1877-1942 Correspondence and clippings, 1888-1938 Letter from Flora P. Whitney, 1877, June 15 Telegram to Flora P. Whitney, 1886, Oct. 13
BOX 130-148	Scrapbooks, 1875-1899 Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings. Arranged in the order received.

Scrapbooks, 1875-1899

Container	Contents
BOX 130-148	1875-1899 <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX OV 1-OV 10	Oversize Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings. Arranged according to the series from which the volumes were removed.
BOX OV 1-OV 10	Scrapbooks