

Harry Payne Whitney Collection of Letters of William Collins Whitney

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Sherralyn McCoy



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

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

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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 ; 148 containers plus 10 oversize ; 41.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: 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 Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

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 Dept.

Tammany Hall.

United States. Navy Dept.

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.

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Financiers.
Sportsmen.

Administrative Information

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

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
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, bimetalism 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

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
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

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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
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BOX 14	1882, Apr. 13-Nov. 20
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Bound Correspondence, 1757-1904

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Bound Correspondence, 1757-1904

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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.
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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)
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Letterbooks, 1883-1904

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BOX 110	1878-1881
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	Correspondence, financial records, photographs, statements and reports, printed matter, scrapbooks of clippings and other papers.
	Arranged by type of material.
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BOX 113	Press clippings, 1879-1898
BOX 114	Copies of letters and newspaper articles, 1862-1895
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	Cancelled checks
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Miscellany, 1845-1942

Container

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	Cancelled checks
	Brook Street Kitchen
	Paid bills, 1882-1894
	Crank letters
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	Daily statements of Manhattan Railway Co.
	Copies of New York court decisions, 1867-1878
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	Groton School, Groton, Conn., papers, 1884-1888
	Cleveland, Grover, wedding cake box
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BOX 127	Illustrated Japanese bird book
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BOX 128	Office papers
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BOX 129	Additional correspondence and printed matter
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	Letter from Flora P. Whitney, 1877, June 15
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BOX 130-148	Scrapbooks, 1875-1899
	Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings.
	Arranged in the order received.

Scrapbooks, 1875-1899

Container

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BOX OV 1-OV 10	Scrapbooks