Guide to the William Dwight Whitney Family Papers

MS 555

compiled by Manuscripts and Archives Staff

July 1998

Yale University Library
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Collection Overview

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CALL NUMBER: MS 555

CREATOR: Whitney, William Dwight, 1827-1894

TITLE: William Dwight Whitney family papers

DATES: 1778-1951

BULK DATES: 1814–1912

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 25.5 linear feet (57 boxes, 1 folio)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, journals and diaries, writings, legal and financial papers, and miscellanea of the William Dwight Whitney family, including William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894), his wife Elizabeth Wooster Baldwin Whitney (1824-1912), his brother Josiah Dwight Whitney (1819-1896), and his father Josiah Dwight Whitney (1786-1869). William Dwight Whitney material includes several hundred letters with his wife, journals and diaries (1843-1893), and a small quantity of professional papers. Material of his brother Josiah includes a geological survey of the Upper Mississippi (1862), and correspondence relating to the first systematic exploration and mapping of the American West. Information relating to Benjamin Silliman and the National Academy of Sciences is also documented. His family correspondence includes several hundred letters with William Dwight Whitney and their father, Josiah.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.mss.0555

Requesting Instructions
To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.mss.0555.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
b. box
Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Copyright status for collection materials is unknown, though much of the material in this collection is likely in the public domain. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation
William Dwight Whitney Family Papers (MS 555). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Existence and Location of Copies
Scrapbooks of William Dwight Whitney are available on microfilm (128 frames on 1 reel, 35mm) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost. Order no. HM107.

Biographical / Historical
Josiah Dwight Whitney was born on November 23, 1819 in Northampton, Massachusetts. He graduated from Yale College in 1839 (B.A.) and studied geology in Europe. He participated in the Lake Superior region survey (1847-1849) and several other expeditions through the 1860s. Whitney taught at Harvard University and published several works on geology. He died in Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire on August 19, 1896.

Scope and Contents
The major part of this collection consists of the correspondence of William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894). There are also many letters of his brother Josiah Dwight Whitney (1819-1896). The academic careers of these two brothers were responsible, along with many other scholars represented in this collection, for the tremendous rise in the reputation of American scholarship which took place in the later nineteenth century.

William Dwight Whitney, Sanskritist and linguist began his teaching career at Yale in 1854 where he later organized and became the head of the modern language department of the Sheffield Scientific School. Among the numerous positions of honor which he held were the presidency of the American Oriental Society, foreign Knight of the Royal Prussian Order pour is mérite (succeeding Thomas Carlyle), and first president of the American Philological Association. (Extensive correspondence deals with all of the above.)

Nationally and internationally, Whitney gained prominence as Editor of the Century Dictionary, a position which made him the undisputed authority on the forth and usage of the English language in America. A prolonged and often heated dispute with Friedrich Max Müller of Oxford University over the origin and
development of language earned for him the title of the champion of American scholarship here and in Europe. This verbal battle which is completely described in the collection was closely followed by the press with the result that Müller gained popular sympathy while Whitney was supported by many scientific scholars including Charles Darwin.

The personal letters of William Dwight Whitney are rich in New Haven and genealogical history. Mrs. Whitney was the daughter and sister of the Connecticut governors Roger Sherman Baldwin and Simeon Eben Baldwin and a cousin of Senator George Hoar and Edward Everett Hale. Whitney’s sons, Edward Baldwin Whitney married Josepha Newcomb, the daughter of Simon Newcomb. Thus the Whitney family was linked with many of the most prominent families in America.

The correspondence of Josiah Dwight Whitney, although not as extensive as that of his brother, furnishes a great deal of information of the first systematic exploration and mapping of the American West. Most popularly known for his discovery of Mount Whitney while state geologist for the state of California, he published numerous scientific works and held an appointment to the faculty of Harvard University from 1865 until his death. Included in his letters is a revealing account of Benjamin Silliman’s position in the controversial Emma Mine scandal.

This collection consists of 56 containers, holding approximately 35,000 items. The principal donors were the daughters of William Dwight Whitney. All items are catalogued individually.
### Collection Contents

**Series I: Correspondence, 1778-(1814-1894)-1951**

<p>| b. 1 | 1778 - 1843 August | 1778 - 1843 August |
| b. 2 | 1843 September - 1846 | 1843 September - 1846 |
| b. 3 | 1847 - 1850 April | 1847 - 1850 April |
| b. 4 | 1850 May - 1853 | 1850 May - 1853 |
| b. 5 | 1854 - 1855 October | 1854 - 1855 October |
| b. 6 | 1855 November - 1857 | 1855 November - 1857 |
| b. 7 | 1858 - 1860 July | 1858 - 1860 July |
| b. 8 | 1860 August - 1862 June | 1860 August - 1862 June |
| b. 9 | 1862 July - 1864 February | 1862 July - 1864 February |
| b. 10 | 1864 March - 1865 July | 1864 March - 1865 July |
| b. 11 | 1865 August - 1866 August | 1865 August - 1866 August |
| b. 12 | 1866 September - 1867 August | 1866 September - 1867 August |
| b. 13 | 1867 September - 1868 August | 1867 September - 1868 August |
| b. 14 | 1868 September - 1869 August | 1868 September - 1869 August |
| b. 15 | 1869 September - 1870 July | 1869 September - 1870 July |
| b. 16 | 1870 August - 1871 June | 1870 August - 1871 June |
| b. 17 | 1871 July - 1872 February | 1871 July - 1872 February |
| b. 18 | 1872 March - 1872 November 21 | 1872 March - 1872 November 21 |
| b. 19 | 1872 November 22 - 1873 July | 1872 November 22 - 1873 July |</p>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>1873 August - 1874 February</td>
<td>1873 August - 1874 February</td>
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<td>b. 21</td>
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<td>1874 March - October</td>
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<td>1874 November - 1875 May</td>
<td>1874 November - 1875 May</td>
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<td>b. 23</td>
<td>1875 June - 1876 January</td>
<td>1875 June - 1876 January</td>
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<td>b. 24</td>
<td>1876 February - September</td>
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<td>1876 October - 1877 April</td>
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<td>1877 May - December</td>
<td>1877 May - December</td>
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<td>b. 27</td>
<td>1878 January - October</td>
<td>1878 January - October</td>
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<td>b. 28</td>
<td>1878 November - 1879 September</td>
<td>1878 November - 1879 September</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 29</td>
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<td>b. 30</td>
<td>1880 September - 1881 June</td>
<td>1880 September - 1881 June</td>
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<td>b. 31</td>
<td>1881 July - 1882 March</td>
<td>1881 July - 1882 March</td>
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<td>1882 April - December</td>
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<td>1883 January - October</td>
<td>1883 January - October</td>
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<td>b. 34</td>
<td>1883 November - 1884 August</td>
<td>1883 November - 1884 August</td>
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<td>b. 35</td>
<td>1884 September - 1885 May</td>
<td>1884 September - 1885 May</td>
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<td>b. 36</td>
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<td>1886 April - 1887 April</td>
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<td>b. 38</td>
<td>1887 May- 1888 July</td>
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<td>b. 39</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1888 August - 1889 June</td>
<td>1888 August - 1889 June</td>
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<td>b. 40</td>
<td>1889 July - 1890 July</td>
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<td>b. 41</td>
<td>1890 August - 1891 October</td>
<td>1890 August - 1891 October</td>
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<td>b. 42</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1891 November - 1892 December</td>
<td>1891 November - 1892 December</td>
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<td>b. 43</td>
<td>1893 January - November</td>
<td>1893 January - November</td>
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<td>b. 44</td>
<td>1893 December - 1895 May</td>
<td>1893 December - 1895 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 45</td>
<td>Undated of Elizabeth Whitney, A - Z</td>
<td>1895 June - 1951</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undated of Elizabeth Whitney to Emily Perkins Baldwin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 46</td>
<td>Maria Whitney to W.D. Whitney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 46</td>
<td>Other Whitneys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 46</td>
<td>Elizabeth B. Whitney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 46</td>
<td>Miscellaneous to Elizabeth B. Whitney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 46</td>
<td>W.D. Whitney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 46</td>
<td>Letters of various Whitneys</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 46</td>
<td>Miscellaneous, A - Z</td>
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</tr>
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<td>b. 46</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
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# Series II: Papers of W. D. Whitney, (1839-1897)-1924

## Journals and diaries

| b. 47 | 1843 - 1855 | 1843 - 1855 |
| b. 48 | 1856 - 1887 | 1856 - 1887 |
| b. 49 | 1888 - 1893 | 1888 - 1893 |

## Writings

| b. 49 | Lecture, "The Birds of the Connecticut River Valley," with posters announcing its delivery | 1849 March 1 |
| b. 49 | Eulogy for Clinton Camp | [1853?] |
| b. 49 | Critique of James Frederick McCurdy's *AryoSemitic Speech* removed from Whitney's copy of the book | [1881?] |
| b. 49 | Critique of Alexander Melville Bell's *Visible Speech* | undated |
| b. 49 | "Some forms of the Verb in the catapatha Brâhmaṇa" | English | undated |
| b. 49 | Bound manuscript, "Portion of the BhâgwatGeetá" | undated |

## Notebooks and notes

| b. 49 | “Geometrical Diagrams” | English | 1839-1840 |
| b. 49 | “Diagrams Drawn ... Under the direction of H.B. Underhill” | English | 1840 |
| b. 49 | “Book of Miscellanies,” with lists of stuffed birds, eggs, and specimens of wood | English | 1842 June-1847 October |
| b. 49 | Ornithology | | 1843 April 9 - May 24 |
| b. 49 | Translations of German literature, especially of works by Goethe and Tieck | | 1843-1845 |

## Writings

| b. 49A | Bound manuscript, “Atharva Veda Sanhita”, Published as The Atharva-veda prātiçākhya or Čāunakiyā cataurādhyaṇyikā: text translation and notes by William D. Whitney... New Haven, The American Oriental Society, 1862. | 1859 |
| b. 50 | Ornithology | | 1846-1849 |
| b. 50 | “Plants gathered and pressed during 1847” | English | 1847 May-December |
| b. 50 | “Catalogue of pressed specimens,” kept jointly with Maria Whitney | English | 1847 May-1848 September |
### Notes and notes (continued)

<table>
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<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 50</td>
<td>&quot;Lists of Birds&quot;</td>
<td>1847-1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 50</td>
<td>Lecture notes from courses taken in Berlin and Tübingen</td>
<td>1850-1853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 50</td>
<td>&quot;Comparative Philology&quot;</td>
<td>1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 51</td>
<td>Linguistics (2 volumes)</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 51</td>
<td>Annotations, mostly in Sanskrit, on the backs of American Oriental Society</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>announcement slips</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 51</td>
<td>Linguistics, with some reprints</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 52</td>
<td>Linguistics, with some drafts and printed matter</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 52</td>
<td>Goethe's <em>Wilhelm Tell</em> and E.C.F. Krauss’ <em>Maria Stuart</em></td>
<td>undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 52</td>
<td>Memorandum book</td>
<td>1849, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 52</td>
<td>Miscellaneous, with some accounts and printed matter</td>
<td>1881, 1892,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 52</td>
<td>Bibliographical slips</td>
<td>undated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: These slips were arranged in 5 bundles, each of which is now in a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>separate folder</td>
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### Legal and financial papers

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>Account books, including one of “European Expenses”</td>
<td>1850 September</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- 1855 April,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1856 November-1858</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>Accounts of stocks, bonds, and other investments</td>
<td>1853 July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>1865 September-1867 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>Accounts re: distribution of gift copies of his writings</td>
<td>Circa1871-1893</td>
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### Check registers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>1877 September - 1878 July</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>1879 October - 1881 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>1881 July - 1883 December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>1884 January - 1887 November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 53</td>
<td>Income tax return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Legal and financial papers (continued)

### b. 53
- **Passport**
  - **Date:** 1856-1857

### Printed matter

**reel 1U**
- Scrapbooks of clippings, including articles by and about Whitney, 1864-1893, n.d.
  - This material has been microfilmed. Patrons must use HM 107 instead of the originals.
  - See: Historical MSS Film No. 107

### b. 53
- **Reviews of Whitney's lectures and articles**
  - **Date:** 1859-1873

### b. 53
- **Reviews of A Compendious German Grammar**
  - **Date:** 1870-1871, 1874

### b. 53
- **Reviews of Oriental and Linguistic Studies**
  - **Date:** 1872-1873

### b. 53
- **Reviews of Index to and translation of Atharva-Veda**
  - **Date:** 1883, 1906

### b. 53
- **Clippings about WDW's: controversy with Müller**
  - **Date:** 1875-1876, 1901

### b. 54
- **“Sham Indian Records”**
  - **Language:** English
  - **Date:** 1877

### b. 54
- **Biographical notices**
  - **Date:** 1870-1891, 1924

### b. 54
- **Obituaries**
  - **Date:** 1894-1895

### b. 54
- **Mailings of various clubs and organizations**
  - **Date:** 1851-1894

### b. 54
- **Copies of The Yale Gallinipper**
  - **Date:** 1846 February-March

### b. 54
- **Miscellaneous**
  - **Date:** 1848-1891, undated

### b. 55
- **Miscellaneous**
  - **Date:** 1851-1897

### b. 55
- **Railway and insurance company stockholders’ reports**
  - **Date:** 1864-1880

## Photographs and memorabilia

### b. 55
- **Photographs**
  - **Date:** undated
  - See also: box 48 folder 12 (Diary, 1863)
  - box 54 folder 65 (“Sham Indian Records”)

### b. 55
- **Tickets of admission to lectures, etc.**
  - **Date:** 1853-1856, 1876, undated

### b. 55
- **Wallets**
  - **Date:** undated
### Series III: Papers of Others, 1833, (1862–1912)

*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

**Josiah D. Whitney (1819-1896)**

| b. 56 | "Report of a Geological Survey of the Lead Region of the Upper Mississippi": manuscript English | 1862 |
| b. 56 | Miscellaneous clippings and printed matter | 1896-1909 |
| b. 56 | Maria Whitney: Diary and memorandum book | 1890 |
| b. 56 | Josiah D. Whitney (1878-1926) (attributed): ALS to “Dear Author” | 1899 April 20 |
| b. 56 | Margaret Dwight Whitney: Molly Day (Thacher) Kazan: “Blocks,” typescript of play, presented to Margaret D. Whitney | undated |

**Whitney family**

| b. 56 | Miscellaneous printed matter and memorabilia | 1833, 1869–1912, n.d |
| b. 56 | Hartford-New Haven Turnpike toll tickets, signed by James Hillhouse | undated |

**Unidentified**

| b. 56 | "Die Woche," MS parody of magazine, in German English | 1912 May 30 |
| b. 56 | Miscellaneous clippings | 1872-1906, undated |

**Diplomas and certificates**

*Folio.*

| b. 57 | Edward Payson Whitney | 1854 |
| b. 57 | William D. Whitney | 1850-1893 |
Appendix

NOTED CORRESPONDENTS IN THE WILLIAM DWIGHT WHITNEY COLLECTION

Abbe, Cleveland 1838-1916
Abbot, Ezra 1819-1884
Adams, Henry Brooks 1838-1918
Adams, Henry Carter 1851-1921
Adams, John 1735-1826
Agassiz, Alexander 1835-1910
Agassiz, Louis 1807-1873
Aiken, Charles Augustus 1827-1892
Alger, William Rounseville 1822-1905
Allen, Frederic de Forest 1844-1897
Allen, William Francis 1830-1889
Ashmun, George 1804-1870
Aufreucht, Theodor 1822-1907
Avery, John 1837-1887
Bache, Alexander Dallas 1806-1867
Baird, Spencer Fullerton 1823-1887
Baldwin, Emily (Perkins) 1796-1874
Baldwin, George William 1832-1930
Baldwin, Henry 1832-1905
Baldwin, Henry de Forest 1862-1947
Baldwin, Roger Sherman 1869-1956
Baldwin, Simeon Eben 1840-1927
Ballou, William Hosea 1857-1937
Barnard, Frederick Augustus Porter 1809-1889
Baynes, Thomas spencer 1823-1887
Beach, Frederick Converse 1848-1918
Beecher, Charles 1815-1900
Beecher, Charles: Emerson 1856-1904
Bickmore, Albert Smith 1839-1914
Bierstadt, Albert 1830-1902
Biot, Jean Baptiste 1774-1862
Bishop, Nathan 1808-1880
Bloomfield, Maurice 1855-1928
Boise, James Robinson 1815-1895
Booth, Newton 1825-1892
Botta, Anne Charlotte (Lynch) 1815-1891
Bowdoin, James 1726-1790
Bowles, Samuel 1826-1878
Bradley, Charles William 1807-1865
Bradley, Frank Howe 1838-1879
Brewer, William Henry 1828-1910
Brinton, Daniel Garrison 1837-1899
Bristed, Charles Astor 1820-1874
Brown, Francis 1849-1916
Brown, Samuel, Gilman 1813-1885
Browne, John Ross 1821-1875
Browne, William Hand 1828-1912
Brush, George Jarvis 1831-1912
Bumstead, Freeman Josiah 1826-1879
Bumstead, Horace 1841-1919
Burnett, Henry Lawrence 1838-1916
Camp, Mary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campbell Henry Colin</td>
<td>1862-1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carter, Franklin</td>
<td>1837-1919</td>
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<td>Caswell, Alexis</td>
<td>1799-1877</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cesnola, Luigi Palms di</td>
<td>1832-1904</td>
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<td>Chadbourne, Paul Ansel</td>
<td>1823-1883</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chamberlain, Joseph</td>
<td>1836-1914</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chase, Pliny Earle</td>
<td>1820-1886</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child, Francis James</td>
<td>1825-1896</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarke, Hyde</td>
<td>1815-1895</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clemens, Samuel Langhorne</td>
<td>1855-1910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cogswell, Joseph Green</td>
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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.

Subjects
Educators
Families
Geology -- United States
Literature -- History and criticism
Ornithology
Sanskrit language
Science

Geographic Names
Mississippi River
New Haven (Conn.) -- History
New Haven (Conn.) -- Social life and customs
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Occupations
Geologists
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Abbot, Ezra, 1819-1884
Adams, Henry, 1838-1918
Allen, F.D. (Frederic De Forest), 1844-1897
Avery, John, 1837-1887
Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
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Families
Whitney family

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