



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the George Eli Whitney Papers

NMAH.AC.0463

Don Darroch

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	George Eli Whitney Papers
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0463
Date:	1898-1957
Extent:	0.2 Cubic feet (1 box)
Creator:	Whitney, George Eli, 1862-1963 (engineer) Transportation, Division of, NMAH, SI.
Language:	English Collection is in English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Edward Bacon, October 31, 1992.

Provenance

Papers were "left for study" by Edward Bacon on September 30, 1991. Transferred from the Division of Transportation (now the Division of Work and Industry) to the Archives Center in August, 1992.

Processing Information

Processed by Don Darroch, volunteer, 9/3/92.

Preferred Citation

George Eli Whitney Papers, 1898-1957, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Whitney (1862-1963) was an engineer and inventor who developed many applications of steam power, including bicycles, cars and boats in the late 1800s. The Locomobile Company, of which Whitney was chief engineer, produced several thousand steam cars around the turn of the century. During WWI, Whitney designed the compound steam engine which powered about 300 U.S. Navy anti submarine ships. Whitney was the recipient of about 150 patents on his inventions, a number of which he sold rights to.

Scope and Contents

Correspondence includes about 3 dozen handwritten letters to John H. Bacon from Whitney. Bacon apparently undertook the task of collecting documentation of Whitney's career in the 1950s. Another 30 letters involve former associates of Whitney's, particularly Nathaniel Henry Cooledge (known as "Oliver") who was associated with Whitney as his trusted foreman and assistant for 50 years. Also included are agreements, contracts and patents concerning Whitney's inventions as well as newsclippings, photoprints, etc. A lengthy questionnaire prepared by John H. Bacon was filled out by Whitney in 1955 giving information on his major inventions and projects as well as his personal life.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Inventions -- 20th century
Inventors -- 1890-1960
Inventors -- 20th century

Types of Materials:

Clippings -- 1890-1960
Correspondence -- 1880-1950
Patents -- 20th century
Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- 1900-1950

Names:

Bacon, John H.
Cooledge, Nathaniel Henry
Locomobile Company
Transportation, Division of, NMAH, SI.

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	George E. Whitney replies to John H. Bacon Questionnaire , 1955-10-25 - 1955-10-25
Box 1, Folder 2	George W. Whitney letters to John H. Bacon , unspecified, 1955-09-16 - 1957-11-22
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters to George E. Whitney , 1913 - 1957
Box 1, Folder 4	Nathaniel Henry Cooledge ("Oliver") letters to J.H. Bacon , 1956-03-06 - 1957-01-23
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters to John H. Bacon from several correspondents , 1955 - 1957
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence and photographs, Long tricycle , 1947 - 1947
Box 1, Folder 7	Press clippings and photographs
Box 1, Folder 8	Letters regarding Whitney patents and other business , 1902 - 1907
Box 1, Folder 9	George E. Whitney patents and contracts , 1898 - 1932