



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the George Eli Whitney Papers

NMAH.AC.0463

Don Darroch

9/3/92

Archives Center, National Museum of American History

P.O. Box 37012

Suite 1100, MRC 601

Washington, D.C. 20013-7012

archivescenter@si.edu

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

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

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	George Eli Whitney Papers
Date:	1898-1957
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0463
Creator:	Whitney, George Eli, 1862-1963 (engineer) (Author)
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Transportation (Collector)
Extent:	0.5 Cubic feet (1 box)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of inventor and engineer George Eli Whitney.

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

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Whitney (1862-1963) was an engineer and inventor who developed many applications of steam power, including bicycles, cars, and boats from 1890s-1930s. 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 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 and Capt. Ted Middleton. 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
- Locomotive Company
- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Transportation

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	Newspaper clippings, 1955, 1957, undated
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
Box 1, Folder 10	Photographs, undated
Box 1, Folder 11	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1948
Box 1, Folder 12	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1949
Box 1, Folder 13	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1950
Box 1, Folder 14	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1951
Box 1, Folder 15	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1953
Box 1, Folder 16	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1954
Box 1, Folder 17	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1955
Box 1, Folder 18	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1956
Box 1, Folder 19	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1957
Box 1, Folder 20	George Eli Whitney to Capt. Ted Middleton, 1966-19667
Box 1, Folder 21	Miscellaneous, 1949-1953