

# NEW HAVEN COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## LIBRARY

Manuscripts

No. MSS#146

Date processed: March 21, 1985

- I. Title Whitney Family Collection, 1791-1913
- II. The papers of The Whitney family deposited in the Library ~~at various times as a gift~~  
~~at~~ ~~converted the deposit to a gift~~
- III. Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 3"  
Approximate number of items: 100
- IV. Restrictions: None
- V. Literary rights of the unpublished writings of in these papers, and in other collections of papers in the custody of the New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, have been dedicated to the New Haven Colony Historical Society.
- VI. Press release was issued on
- VII. Biographical note: Eli Whitney (1765-1825), the main figure in this collection and of the most importance in New Haven history, was born in Westboro, Mass. to Eli Whitney (1740-1807) and Elizabeth Fay (1740-1777). In 1817 he married Henrietta Frances Edwards (1785-1870). A complete account of his life may be found in the Whitney Genealogy, The Descendants of John Whitney who came from London, England to Watertown, Mass. in 1635, on pages 254-6; his son Eli (1820-1895) is described on page 437; and his grandson Eli (1847-1924) appears on page 597. The family memorabilia in Folders K-N were the gift of Elizabeth Fay Whitney (1879-1982).
- VIII. Analysis: This collection consists of 100 items, including two volumes. The documents in Folders A through J had originally been incorporated into MSS#146, National and Local Historic Figures A-Z under the heading Eli Whitney. With the addition of the family memorabilia in folders K-N, it was decided appropriate to form this Whitney Family Collection. The oldest item is a letter written by Eli to his father in 1791 upon his arrival in New Haven to attend Yale. The ancient (1798) deed for the Grist Mill, formerly called Todd's Mill on the Mill River in Hamden is the most historically significant document because it marks the beginning of what became one of the most influential industrial enterprises in American history. The bulk of the documents pertain to Eli Whitney (1765-1825) and are filed according to Correspondence - outgoing, Business Papers and Personal Papers. Material relating to other family members is filed under their names. Miscellaneous memorabilia comprise the remainder of the collection. Processed by: Patricia Bromley and are in the final four folders.

MSS#146 THE WHITNEY FAMILY COLLECTION 1791-1913

TABLE OF CONTENTSBox 1

- Folder A: Eli Whitney (1765-1825) (4)  
Correspondence - outgoing  
 ALS to his father, Eli Whitney, Sr.(1740-1807),  
 Westboro, Mass., Dec. 13, 1791, with typed copy.
- Folder B: Eli Whitney (1765-1825) (12)  
Correspondence - outgoing  
 ALS to Ebenezer Jackson, Savannah, Georgia,  
 1801, with typed copy  
 ALS to (?), New Haven, 1812\*  
 ALS to Colonel Bomford, U.S.Ordnance Dept.,1822  
 with typed copy  
 (See Ithiel Town, MSS#105, Folder D, ALS Whitney  
 to Town, 1826)
- Folder C: Eli Whitney (1765-1825) (3)  
Business Papers  
 Deed to grist mill, formerly called Todd's  
 Mill, on the Mill River in Hamden, from Charles  
 Chauncey, Pierpont Edwards and James Hillhouse,  
 1798 (torn) and xerox copy (Gift of New Haven  
 Water Company)
- Folder D: Photostat negative of deed in Folder C (1)
- Folder E: Eli Whitney (1765-1825) (2)  
Business Papers  
 Record of payments from citizens of South  
 Carolina for Messrs Miller and Whitney patent  
 licenses for ginning cotton, 1804;  
 Inspection certificate for five hundred  
 muskets manufactured by Eli Whitney, 1816,  
 signed by Luther Sage, U.S.Armory, Springfield,  
 Mass., with photostat
- Folder F: Eli Whitney(1765-1825) (6)  
Personal Papers  
 Deed to pew in the United Society Meeting  
 House to Philos Blake (ca.1793/4-1871?), 1815;
- Draft of his will (n.d.?) naming Eli W. Blake  
 (1795-1886) as one of his executors, and  
 authorizing Eli W. Blake and Philos Blake, his  
 nephews, to carry on his manufacturing business;
- List of Taxable Estate for 1823 (Xerox copy -  
 original in City & County Documents, MSS#28,  
 Item 15);

\*From the Leffingwell Autograph Collection

MSS#146 Whitney Family Collection

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)Box 1

- Folder F: Affidavit stating that he cannot appear as a witness in trial in New York because of illness, 1823 (original in White Papers, MSS#62, 5:C) and letter re affidavit -xerox copies
- Photograph of plaque in Hamden, 1929
- Folder G: Eli Whitney (1765-1825) (36)  
Personal Papers  
Probated will, 1826 - with transcript and photocopy negative
- Folder H. Eli Whitney, Jr. (1820-1895) (14)  
Papers  
List of Taxable Estate for 1832 and 1834 - xerox copies (originals in City and County Documents, MSS#28, Items 19 and 28)
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- Release of any claims against James Goodrich from the heirs of Eli Whitney, signed by Eli Whitney, Jr., 1843
- Description of improvement in revolving breech firearms, 1852 (copy)
- \* Drawing of pistol, 1852
- Release to the City of New Haven from pending suit, signed by Whitney, 1856
- Confidential agreement between Whitney and G. I. Gilbert for Whitney to purchase Water Company land, 1860 (Gift of Walter O. Filley, 1953)
- ALS to G. I. Gilbert re land sale, 1860.
- Folder I: Eli Whitney (1847-1924) (1)  
Certificate that he contributed to the Lincoln Highway Association, 1913
- Folder J: Eli Whitney Blake (1795-1886) Papers (4)  
ALS to James Goodrich, New Haven, 1829, re government contracts
- Patent for stone crusher, with drawing, 1860 (xerox copy) (Gift of Victor Valenti, Meriden)

\* Moved to Oversize Item 1.

Mss#146 Whitney Family Collection

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)Box 1

- Folder K: Family Memorabilia (2 vol.)  
 Book of handwritten poetry, 1832-1845,  
 written by Elizabeth F. Whitney, b.1819.  
First Lessons in Botany, 1860, belonging to  
 Susan Huntington Whitney (Brewster)(1849-1885)  
 and Henrietta Edwards Whitney, n.d.
- Folder L: Family Memorabilia (8)  
 Papers removed from book of poetry in  
 Folder K. Included is a Valentine poem, n.d.,  
 written (?) by Eli Whitney (1765-1825) to  
 Henrietta Edwards (1785-1870) proposing  
 marriage, with transcript. No signature.
- Folder M: Family Memorabilia (3)  
 Eulogy - Susan Huntington Whitney Brewster,  
 (1849-1885)
- Folder N: Family Memorabilia: Miscellaneous (4)  
 Includes letter to The Misses Whitney from  
 "Your loving Grandfather, E. Whitney" 1891
- Folder O *MISA Photographs*
- Oversize - Certificate from New Haven Colony Historical  
 Item 1 Society to Eli Whitney, Jr. (1820-1895), 1895.  
 Drawing of pistol, 1852. (2)