I. Title Leffingwell Family Collection, 1698-1888.

II. The papers of Christopher, William and Edward H. Leffingwell, Augustus deposited in the Library on by [R. Street and other members of the Leffingwell family a gift of the Leffingwell family]

III. Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 2 feet + 2 inches
Approximate number of items: 1000

IV. Restrictions: none

V. Literary rights of the unpublished writings of Christopher Leffingwell in these papers, and in other collections of papers in the custody of the New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, have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: Christopher Leffingwell (1734-1810) was born in Norwich, son of Benajah and Joanna Leffingwell and grandson of Thomas (1649-1724). He was active in business and built the first paper mill in Connecticut as well as manufacturing chocolate and running a fulling mill and dyeing house. During the American Revolution Leffingwell commanded the 20th Regiment of the State Militia with the rank of Colonel, taking part in the defense of New London in 1776. He was a member of the Conn. Committee of Correspondence and an advisor to Governor Trumbull and Silas Deane. After the war he was appointed the first naval officer under the new government. Leffingwell was married three times: to Elizabeth Harris, Elizabeth Coit (mother of William) and Ruth Perit of New Haven. (See The Leffingwell Record, p. 58)

William Leffingwell (1765-1834) the eldest son of Christopher Leffingwell and Elizabeth, second daughter of Capt. Joseph and Lydia (Lathrop) Coit of New London, was born in Norwich. He was married to Sally Maria Beers of New Haven in 1786, just before graduating from Yale. In the spring of 1793 he moved to New York and became a shipping merchant with Hezekiah B. Pierpont. Because of losses during the war between England and France he changed to a stock and insurance broker. In 1809 he retired to New Haven, having amassed a considerable fortune, and became active in both civic and Yale affairs. He was the father of Edward Henry and Caroline Mary Leffingwell. (See The Leffingwell Record, pp. 80-81 and Dexter, Yale Biographies, Vol. 4 pp. 488-490)

Edward Henry Leffingwell (1803-1888) was born in New Haven and graduated from Yale in 1822. He received a medical degree from Yale in 1824 and commenced practice in Lima, Peru where he married Maria Garcia. In 1834 he moved to New Haven where his wife died at the age of 21.

Processed by: Sally Pyle
Isabelle Gould
Biographies - continued

Leffingwell then traveled and studied physical science. From 1843 to 1852 he was professor of Chemistry and Natural History at the University of Missouri. Poor health forced him to retire, and he moved to Boston and then New Haven where he devoted himself to his collection of engraved portraits and autograph letters. He was active in the New Haven Colony Historical Society. When he died at age 85, he left the collection to his niece whom he had adopted as his legal heir. (See The Leffingwell Record, pp. 117-118 and Yale Obituaries 1880-1890, pp. 486-487).

William Coit Leffingwell (1788-1833) second son of William Leffingwell, was born in New Haven, graduated from Yale in 1807 and married Sarah Dunham of New York. He was a merchant in New York for many years while maintaining his residence in New Haven where he died at age 44. (See The Leffingwell Record, p. 114 and Yale Biographies, v. 6, p. 140).

Caroline Mary Leffingwell (1790-1877), sister of Edward H. and William C., married Augustus Russell Street (1791-1866) in 1815. He was graduated from Yale in 1812 and although he studied law, a sizeable fortune enabled him to devote himself to scholarly affairs. He founded the Street Professorship of Modern Languages at Yale and built the building for the Yale School of Fine Arts. He and his wife traveled extensively. They had three daughters. The eldest, Caroline Augusta Street, married Andrew Hull Poote (MSS #98). (See The Leffingwell Record, pp. 114-116 and Yale Obituaries, 1860-1870, pp. 195-196).

For biographies of other members of the family whose papers are in the collection, see The Leffingwell Record.

Analysis: This collection supersedes an earlier one with the same manuscript number entitled "The Papers of William Leffingwell". In April, 1980 papers of Christopher, Edward and other family members and additional papers of William Leffingwell were added to the previous collection. Papers of Caroline Mary and Augustus Russell Street were also added. Most of the additional papers come from the Autograph Collection of E.H. Leffingwell. All were inter-filed with the original collection and a new register prepared.

The new collection is housed in 5 boxes and one oversize volume and now consists of letters to and from, accounts and miscellaneous papers of family members. The letters of William from business associates and concerned with land leases in Vermont, Conn. and Ohio, still comprise the bulk of the collection. All letters are filed alphabetically by sender or recipient of the letters. Christopher Leffingwell's papers are chiefly concerned with his activities in the Revolutionary War while those to Edward mostly center around his autograph collection.

The collection starts with a deed from England dated 1698 and ends with obituaries of Edward in 1888. The papers are organized by individual, starting with ancestors of Christopher. Papers of various family members appear near the end of the collection. Miscellaneous papers are filed chronologically.

The oversize volume contains accounts from the shipping firm of Leffingwell and Pierpont for 1798-1799. The entire collection documents the lives and throws light on the activities of three generations of a wealthy Connecticut family.
LEFFINGWELL FAMILY COLLECTION
1698-1888

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