

Guide to the Adelbert F. Whitcomb correspondences and photographs

WA MSS S-4561



by Dan Duncan

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-4561

TITLE: Adelbert F. Whitcomb family correspondence and photographs

DATES: 1876-1912

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.46 linear feet (4 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection consists of correspondences and photographs, circa 1876-1927. The correspondences are between Montana Central Railway engineer Adelbert F. Whitcomb his mother, Palmyra E. Whitcomb and other family members documenting his travels. The photographs are of the surveying team and rail lines in the Montana Territory.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.afwhitcomb>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.afwhitcomb>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of David Kennedy, 2023

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research

Conditions Governing Use

The Adelbert F. Whitcomb Correspondence and Photograph collection is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

Biographical / Historical

Palmyra E. Whitcomb (1830-1913) and Erastus Whitcomb (1813-1882) had a large dairy farm in Richmond, Vermont. Their children were Montana Central Railway Engineer Adelbert Finney Whitcomb (1854-1930), Elizabeth Ann Whitcomb Hunter (1853-1928), Averintha Whitcomb Hodges (1856-1944), and Irving Barber Whitcomb (1859-1933).

Content Description

Correspondence and photographic prints sent to Palmyra E. Whitcomb by family members predominately from her son, Adelbert Finney Whitcomb, detailing his life in late 19th through early 20th century America as a railway civil engineer for the Montana Central Railway, and as the chief engineer of the Western Division of the Great Northern headquarters in Spokane, Washington. During this time, Adelbert spent time being treated at several prominent wellness sanitariums throughout the United States, which included the Battle Creek Sanitarium run by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg in Battle Creek, Michigan, and The Jackson Sanitarium in Dansville, New York.

Many of the letters represent the elegant stationary from these sanitariums and hotels where Adelbert traveled and worked. There are only a few letters to family members from Adelbert to his father, Erastus, his sister Elizabeth Ann Hunter, referred in letters as Mrs. Daniel J. Hunter, and her son Claude Hunter.

The 5 X 8 mounted photographs are of the surveying team in the Montana Territory by landscape photographer James Wantz, of Helena Montana. Some photographs have duplicates.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in two series, correspondence and photographs. The correspondence are arranged chronologically and the photographs are arranged by similar themes.

Collection Contents

Correspondence

b. 1, f. 1	Irving to Palmyra	1876
b. 1, f. 2	Adelbert to Erasmus	1879
b. 1, f. 3	Adelbert to Palmyra	1880
b. 1, f. 4	Adelbert to Palmyra	1881
b. 1, f. 5	Adelbert to Palmyra	1882
b. 1, f. 6	Adelbert to Palmyra	1883
b. 1, f. 7	Adelbert to Palmyra	1884
b. 1, f. 8	Adelbert to Palmyra	1885
b. 1, f. 9	Adelbert to Palmyra	1886
b. 1, f. 10	Adelbert to Palmyra	1887 January- April
b. 1, f. 11	Adelbert to Palmyra	1887 May- September
b. 1, f. 12	Adelbert to Palmyra	1887 October- December
b. 2, f. 1	Adelbert to Palmyra and Ann Hunter	1888
b. 2, f. 2	Adelbert to Palmyra	1889
b. 2, f. 3	Adelbert to Palmyra	1890-1893
b. 2, f. 4	Adelbert to Palmyra	1894
b. 2, f. 5	Adelbert to Palmyra	1895
b. 2, f. 6	Adelbert to Palmyra	1896
b. 2, f. 7	Adelbert to Palmyra and Ann Hunter	1897
b. 2, f. 8	Adelbert to Palmyra	1898
b. 2, f. 9	Adelbert to Palmyra	1899
b. 2, f. 10	Adelbert to Palmyra	1900
b. 2, f. 11	Adelbert to Palmyra	1901
b. 2, f. 12	Adelbert to Palmyra	1902
b. 2, f. 13	Adelbert to Palmyra	1903
b. 3, f. 1	Adelbert to Palmyra	1904-1906

b. 3, f. 2	Adelbert to Palmyra	1907
b. 3, f. 3	Adelbert to Palmyra	1908
b. 3, f. 4	Adelbert to Palmyra	1909
b. 3, f. 5	Adelbert to Palmyra	1910
b. 3, f. 6	Adelbert to Palmyra	1911
b. 3, f. 7	Adelbert to Palmyra	1912
b. 3, f. 8	Adelbert to Palmyra, Elizabeth Ann, and Claude	1913
b. 3, f. 9	Adelbert to Elizabeth Ann	1927

Photographs

b. 4, f. 1-2	Railway lines	circa 1887
b. 4, f. 3	Surveying locations	circa 1887
b. 4, f. 4	Hotel Broadwater	circa 1887
b. 4, f. 5	Belt Creek Canon	circa 1887
b. 4, f. 6-7	Surveying tools by cabins and tents, with men, women, horse and carriage	circa 1887
b. 4, f. 8	Montana Central Railway Engineering Party by cabins and tent with Asian cook	1887 December 20

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

Railroad companies -- United States
Railroad engineering
Railroads -- Montana
Sanatoriums -- United States