

Guide to the Brewster Family Papers

WA MSS S-1309



by Diane J. Ducharme

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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-1309

CREATOR: Brewster family

TITLE: Brewster family papers

DATES: 1838–1879

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2 linear feet (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers contain diaries, artwork, and an album of Elizabeth Bates Brewster and her daughters Ada Augusta Brewster, Mary Brewster Long, and Elizabeth Brewster Scribner. Subjects discussed include child rearing and family life, nursing during the Civil War, school teaching, and life in Nevada and California.

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

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.brewster>.

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

The collection was purchased in 1987 on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Brewster Family Papers are 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

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

BREWSTER FAMILY

Elisha Brewster (-1871) m. 1833 Elizabeth Bartlett Bates (1814-1878)

-----Mary Thomas Brewster (1834-1873) m. 1872 Hon. Henry Long

-----Sylvinia Long (1873-1873)

-----Emma Frances Brewster (1835-1836)

-----Elizabeth Emmeline Brewster (1837- m. 1870 Eben Scribner (-1894)

-----Danny Scribner (1871-1873)

-----Eva Scribner (1873-

-----Ada Louise Scribner (1875-1898)

-----Nelly Lyman Scribner (1877-

-----Eudora Frances Brewster (1840-1843)

-----Ada Augusta Brewster (1842-

-----Emma Eudora Brewster (1846-1897)

-----Flora Louisa Brewster (1849-

-----Eva Octavia Brewster (1853-

-----Ernest Elisha Wrestling Brewster (1856-

Scope and Contents

The Brewster Family Papers contain diaries, artwork, and an album which document several aspects of the lives of Elizabeth Bates Brewster and three of her daughters. The material spans the dates 1838-1879.

The earliest item in the collection is a small pocket diary kept by Elizabeth Bates Brewster in April and May, 1839. The opening entry describes her hopes that the diary will assist her in "the education of our children," and there are frequent summaries of the children's lessons and activities. Other subjects include visits from family and friends, household chores, gardening, and impressions of nature. The diary also contains several poems, signed with Elizabeth's initials and dated 1838, including "The New England Mother's Lament" over a duel in Washington.

Her namesake Elizabeth Brewster Scribner is represented by an album and a diary. The album contains pressed leaves and flowers collected at special events or at historical sites. Elizabeth's diary describes her experiences as a "Lady Nurse" at McDougall Hospital, Fort Schuyler, New York, during the Civil War. She recounted the daily routine of the hospital, conversations with staff and patients, and encounters with relatives of soldiers. Also mentioned are the often futile medical treatments, relationships among staff members, the arrival of soldiers wounded at Gettysburg, and Elizabeth's promotion to Lady Superintendent in August 1864.

Box 2, folder 15 holds the extensive diary kept by Mary Brewster Long between 1867 and 1872. The first half concerns her life in the Brewster home at Kingston, Massachusetts. Topics include her work as a school teacher, her interest in painting, and social events such as church dinners and a magic-lantern show. Family news is also discussed, particularly Elizabeth Brewster's 1869 move to Nevada prior to her marriage to Eben Scribner. Mary joined her sister the following year, and the remainder of the volume describes her life in Nevada and California. There is little mention of the actual journey, although she referred to the scenery en route as "monotonous but not uninteresting." The diary offers more detailed information on Gold Hill, Silver City, American Flats, and Forrest Hills, the towns in which Mary lived. Teaching in frontier schools; family life; differences in Eastern and Western manners; and social occasions like a visit to the opera in Virginia City are also mentioned. Mary wrote extensively about personal relationships, including her troubled and eventually broken engagement to George Sherman, a prospector in Virginia City, and her growing friendship in California with Henry Long. The last entry in the diary records her engagement to Long.

Ada Augusta Brewster, a younger sister of Mary and Elizabeth, moved to California in the 1870s. There she studied painting under Virgil Williams and Raymond Yelland, eventually opening a studio of her own in San Francisco as a portraitist, illustrator, and china-painter. Nine drawings by her can be found in Box 1, folders 1-9. These are landscapes and seascapes of San Francisco Bay locations, signed and dated 1879. Executed in charcoal on board, they are academic compositions typical of the period, perhaps done as exercises for Yelland. Folders 10-12 contain three small watercolors of houses in Nantucket.

Collection Contents

Brewster, Ada Augusta		
California drawings		
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 1-3	Alameda Beach	1879
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 4	Berkley	1879
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 5	Foote Point	1879
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 6	San Francisco	1879
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 7-9	Saucilito	1879
Nantucket watercolors		
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 10	Old Coffin House	n.d.
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 11	Overman's House	n.d.
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 12	West Dover Street	n.d.
b. 1 (Oversize), f. 13	Portfolio cover	n.d.
Brewster, Elizabeth Bates		
b. 2, f. 14	Diary	1838-39
Long, Mary Brewster		
b. 2, f. 15	Diary	1867-72
Scribner, Elizabeth Brewster		
b. 2, f. 16	Album	1852-58
b. 3, f. 17	Diary	1863-64
Transcripts		
b. 3, f. 18	Diaries, incomplete	n.d.

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

Courtship
Drawing
Families
Teachers -- United States
Women artists
Women teachers
Women -- West (U.S.)

Geographic Names

California -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
Forrest Hill (Calif.)
Massachusetts -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
Nevada -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
Silver City (Nev.)
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
-- Hospitals
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
-- Participation, Female

Genres / Formats

Albums -- United States
Diaries -- United States
Drawings -- United States

Occupations

Nurses -- United States

Names

Brewster, Ada Augusta, 1842-
Brewster, Elizabeth Bates, 1814-1878
Long, Mary Brewster, 1834-1873
Scribner, Elizabeth Brewster, 1837-

Families

Brewster family