

# Guide to the Edwin Munsell Bliss Papers

MS 919



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 919

**CREATOR:** Bliss, Edwin Munsell, 1848-1919

**TITLE:** Edwin Munsell Bliss papers

**DATES:** 1847-1912

**BULK DATES:** 1873-1883

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.5 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, writings and travel journals kept during Edwin Munsell Bliss's travels in the Near East while an agent for the American Bible Society in the Levant (1872-1888). His writings are devoted to his travels, and letters from family and friends also describe their experiences as missionaries living and traveling in the Near East. Also included is the will of Bliss's first wife, Marie Louise Henderson Bliss.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0919>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0919>.

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

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

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### Preferred Citation

Edwin Munsell Bliss Papers (MS 919). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Edwin Munsell Bliss was born in Erzurum, Turkey, on September 12, 1848. He was the son of a minister sent to Constantinople by the American Bible Society for the Levant. He received an A.B. from Amherst College in 1871 and later studied at Yale Divinity School. He spent his life performing various jobs in the United States for the government and abroad with missionary organizations. He also worked for various newspapers, including a job at *The Independent* between 1891 and 1901. He was editor of the *Encyclopedia of Missions*. He was married to Marie Louise Henderson and after her death, to E. Theodora Crosby. He died on August 6, 1919.

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## Scope and Contents

The Edwin M. Bliss Papers deal for the most part with experiences of Americans living and traveling in the Middle East in the mid and late 1800s. Approximately one third of the collection is made up of essays written by Bliss (included are manuscript and typed drafts and galley proofs; many of the essays were probably published) describing his travels in the Near East, as well as Near Eastern and Biblical history. More detailed accounts of his travels can be found in his journals and letters written during a trip from Constantinople to Mesopotamia, Georgia, and Persia in 1879 and an undated trip from Alexandria to Khanakhi (Al-Khanakah) in Egypt. The papers contain correspondence of Bliss with family members and fellow missionaries, and some correspondence of his parents, Isaac and Eunice (Day) Bliss. Included are a journal in the form of a letter from Eunice Bliss describing her voyage to Turkey in 1847, and letters from her husband describing his travels around Turkey in the summer of 1850. Most of the Edwin Bliss correspondence is contained in two letterbooks covering the period 1873-1883; many of these letters offer lengthy discussions of political and social conditions in Constantinople and of his missionary work in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, also in the collection are Edwin Bliss's passports and travel documents and a draft of the will of Marie Louise (Henderson) Bliss.

## Collection Contents

|                  |   |                                      |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 - 17  | Writings  | 1912, undated                        |
|                  | Correspondence                                    |                                      |
| b. 1, f. 18      | Eunice (Day) Bliss                                | [1847?] July 1-15                    |
| b. 1, f. 19      | Isaac Groot Bliss                                 | 1850 May 31-<br>July 6               |
|                  | Edwin M. Bliss                                    |                                      |
| b. 1, f. 20      | Letterbook  | 1873-1883                            |
| b. 1, f. 21 - 22 | ALS to his family                                 | 1878 May 1-July<br>10, 1879 April 15 |
| b. 1, f. 23      | ALS to unidentified                               | undated                              |
| b. 1, f. 24      | Letterbook  | 1878 May 9-June<br>26                |
|                  | Travel journals                                   |                                      |
| b. 1, f. 25 - 26 | Journal of a trip from Constantinople to Persia   | 1879                                 |
| b. 1, f. 27      | Journal of Egyptian trip                          | undated                              |
| b. 1, f. 28      | Travel documents                                  | 1878-1879,<br>undated                |
| b. 1, f. 29      | Marie Louise (Henderson) Bliss: draft of her will | [pre-1897<br>December 12]            |

## **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**

Clergy  
Missionaries  
Missionaries' spouses  
Missionaries -- Middle East

### **Geographic Names**

Egypt -- Description and travel  
Middle East -- Description and travel

### **Genres / Formats**

Diaries

### **Names**

Bliss, Edwin Munsell, 1848-1919  
Bliss, Eunice Day  
Bliss, Isaac Groot, 1822-1889  
Bliss, Marie Louise Henderson, d. 1897