

Clara A. Whitney Papers

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Collection Summary

Title: Clara A. Whitney Papers

Span Dates: 1872-1975

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1873-1887)

ID No.: MSS61895

Creator: Whitney, Clara A.

Extent: 75 items ; 4 containers ; 1.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and Japanese

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Diaries reflecting Whitney's life in Japan with her parents, American educators William C. Whitney and Anna L. Whitney, detailing Japanese social life and customs and the Whitney's travels through Europe and Asia. Includes writings and other material relating to her family and to the household of her father-in-law, Japanese naval officer Katsu Kaishū.

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.

People

Katsu family.

Katsu, Kaishū, 1823-1899.

Whitney family.

Whitney, Anna L. (Anna Lavinia), 1834-1883. Anna L. Whitney diary and religious journal. 1872-1875.

Whitney, Clara A.

Whitney, William C. (William Cogswell), 1825-1882.

Subjects

Americans--Japan.

Women--Japan.

Places

Asia--Description and travel.

Europe--Description and travel.

Japan--Description and travel.

Japan--Foreign relations.

Japan--History--Meiji period, 1868-1912.

Japan--Politics and government--1868-1912.

Japan--Social life and customs--1600-1868.

Japan--Social life and customs--1868-1912.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Clara A. Whitney were given to the Library of Congress by her daughter, Hilda K Watkins, in 1985-1986.

Processing History

The papers of Clara A. Whitney were organized in 1987. The collection and finding aid were revised in 2010.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Clara A. Whitney in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Clara A. Whitney are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Clara A. Whitney Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1860, Aug. 30	Born, Newark, N. J., daughter of Anna L. Whitney and William C. Whitney
1875	Arrived with parents in Japan, settling in Tokyo
1875-1889	Lived in Tokyo, Japan, with parents, teaching English to wealthy Japanese girls and carrying out missionary activities
1880-1881	Whitney family returned to the United States by way of Europe, spending several months in London, England
1882	Family lived in Philadelphia, Pa. Whitney family returned to London, England, where Clara's father, William C. Whitney, died in August, after which the family returned to Japan
1883	Death of her mother, Anna L. Whitney, in Japan
1886	Married Kaji Umetarō, son of Japanese naval officer Katsu Kaishū
1900	Left Japan, settling in Pennsylvania with her six children, writing about Japan to supplement income sent by her husband, Kaji Umetarō, who remained in Tokyo
1936, Dec.	Died, Media, Pa.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Clara Alma Norton Whitney Kaji (1860-1936) cover the years 1872-1975, with the bulk consisting of diaries, 1873-1887, together with speeches and writings, scattered correspondence, notebooks, account book, clippings, photographs, and scrapbook.

Clara Whitney's diaries begin during her girlhood in Newark, New Jersey. Starting with the third volume in 1875, they document her travels to and life in Japan, where her father, William C. Whitney, established a business college at the request of the Japanese government. Clara and her mother Anna taught English and encouraged Christianity among the daughters and wives of upper-class Japanese. Clara describes religious observances and rituals, children's games and parties, theatrical and musical performances, food and drink, Mount Fuji and other scenic places, earthquakes and monsoons, superstitions and folklore, and other aspects of Japanese life and culture. Her insight into the role of Japanese women, the political atmosphere of Meiji Japan, and Japanese efforts at westernization is also reflected in her writings.

Clara fills three diaries during the Whitney's return to the United States in 1880, describing stops in Hong Kong, Saigon, Singapore, Ceylon, Cairo, Naples, Rome, Florence, Geneva, and Paris, and a prolonged stay in London. There is no volume for 1881, but the 1882 diary finds the Whitney's retracing their route through Europe to Japan. In August, her father dies in

London, and Mrs. Whitney's health begins to fail. Clara's grief and religious beliefs are reflected in the diaries as well as her impressions en route. The entries after their arrival in Japan, and especially after Mrs. Whitney's death in April 1883, are intermittent, and more descriptive of Clara's state of mind than of her daily activities. The diaries end 1884, although there is an addendum written in 1887 after Clara's marriage to Kaji Umetarō. Anna Whitney's diary, 1873, mentions the Japanese students she tutored in Newark, and her "praise book" serves as a journal, 1872-1875, of religious devotions.

The collection includes Clara's biographical sketch of her mother; her unpublished novel, "The Guide of Her Youth"; notebooks containing short stories and articles for children about life in Japan; writings on the family and household of her father-in-law, Katsu Kaishū; school notebooks and household account book; and scrapbook of printed articles. Scattered correspondence, speeches, clippings and photographs complete the collection.

There are also typewritten transcripts filed with many of the writings. Selection from the diaries have been published in *Clara's Diary, an American Girl in Meiji Japan* (Tokyo, New York, and San Francisco: 1976 and 1979), edited by M. William Steele and Taniko Ischimata.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Diaries and journals
BOX 1	Whitney, Anna L.
BOX 1	Diary, 1873
BOX 1	Religious journal, 1872-1875
BOX 1	Whitney, Clara A.
BOX 1	1873-1877
	(6 folders)
BOX 2	1878-1879
	(6 folders)
BOX 3	1879-1887
	(5 folders)
BOX 3	Speeches, 1900-1904
BOX 3	Writings, circa 1880-1930
BOX 3	Biographical sketch of Anna L. Whitney, 1883
BOX 3	"The Guide of Her Youth," unpublished novel, 1880
	(3 folders)
BOX 4	Short stories and articles, 1881
BOX 4	Miscellany of short stories and articles, circa 1900-1930
BOX 4	Notes and fragments of draft of work on the Katsu household, with typewritten transcript, circa 1910
BOX 4	Miscellany, 1873-1975
BOX 4	Correspondence, commencement announcement, 1873-1937
BOX 4	Household account book and bank draft, 1891-1900
BOX 4	Notebooks
	(3 folders)
BOX 4	Newspaper clippings and transcripts, circa 1900-1975
BOX 4	Photographs
BOX 4	Scrapbook, circa 1882-1905