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John Greenleaf Whittier Collection Finding Aid

Paige Harris

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Title: John Greenleaf Whittier Collection

Dates: 1790-2005

Creator/Collector: Whittier College

Extent: 15 boxes (337.5 linear feet)

Repository: Wardman Library-Whittier College. Whittier, California 90602

Abstract: Whittier was generally regarded as the most well-known Quaker in America, prompting the founders of Whittier city to select him as the namesake of their new town. The Collection emphasizes the poet's life as a demonstration of one particularly well-known Quaker mode of living and how it may have influenced the aspirations of the founders of Whittier city and Whittier College.

Language of Material: English, Italian

Access: The collection is open for research use.

Publication Rights: Authorization to publish, quote, or reproduce must be obtained from Wardman Library, Whittier College.

Preferred Citation: John Greenleaf Whittier Collection. Wardman Library-Whittier College

Acquisition Information: Acquisition information not available.

Biography/Administrative History: John Greenleaf Whittier was born to a Quaker family in Haverhill, Massachusetts in 1807, and as a young man became a moderately well-known poet who primarily published in newspapers and periodicals. Although he held some political aspiration, he published abolitionist pamphlets and founded the American Anti-Slavery Society, acts that made him unlikely to garner the support needed to be elected to office. Instead, he operated as a political lobbyist and poet. Past 1838, the majority of his poems addressed themes of slavery, freedom, and human dignity.

Whittier's poetry increased in popularity during the Civil War, and by 1887, Whittier was generally regarded as the most well-known Quaker in America, prompting the founders of Whittier city to select him as the namesake of their new town. Whittier was reportedly pleased by the naming, and corresponded with the planners of what would become Whittier College

during its construction, although he never visited the city. This finding aid was created by Paige Harris in 2023.

Scope and Content of Collection: The Whittier Collection is composed of books written by J.G. Whittier, those from his personal library, biographies about him and literary compilations that include his work, family manuscripts, artifacts, and art, general abolitionist literature, historic periodicals, and newspaper clippings. The Collection emphasizes primary sources and artifacts from the poet's life as a demonstration of one particularly well-known Quaker mode of living and how that example may have influenced the aspirations of the Whittier city and Whittier College founders.

Container List:

Cataloged books are searchable via Wardman Library catalog:

[https://library.whittier.edu/search/X?SEARCH=\(*\)&SORT=D&b=swhit](https://library.whittier.edu/search/X?SEARCH=(*)&SORT=D&b=swhit)

Filing cabinet papers and photos are accessible for search here:

<https://poetcommons.whittier.edu/finding/7/>

- Box 1- Abolitionist pamphlets
- Boxes 2-3- Ceramics
- Boxes 4-5- Papers about J.G. Whittier
- Boxes 6-8- Whittier family keepsakes
- Box 9- Photos and postcards
- Box 10- J.G. Whittier's almanacs
- Boxes 11, 15- Ephemera
- Box 12- Whittier family manuscripts
- Box 13- Antique chest
- Box 14- J.G. Whittier's hats
- Box 16- Scrapbooks
- Uncatalogued broadsides
- National Anti-Slavery Standard, 1854-1969

- The National Era, 1847-1858
- American Manufacturer, vol. 1 and 2
- The Captivity Narrative of Hannah Duston
- Harper's Weekly Magazine
- Youth's Companion magazine
- Donor plaques
- Uncatalogued photos and papers about J. G. Whittier