

# Burnham, Erastus W. collection

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## Table of Contents

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Summary Information .....	3
Biographical / Historical .....	3
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
Administrative Information .....	5
Controlled Access Headings .....	6
Collection Inventory .....	6
Series 1. Correspondence .....	6
Subseries 1.1. Whaling aboard the Hannibal near New Zealand .....	6
Subseries 1.2 Upon returning to U.S. from Hong Kong .....	6
Subseries 1.3. Civil War .....	6
Subseries 1.4. Letters from Mary's family in Glasgow .....	10
Subseries 1.5. Post-Civil War .....	10
Series 2. Civil War records .....	11
Series 3. Objects and ephemera .....	11
Subseries 3.1. Civil War .....	11
Subseries 3.2. Veterans associations .....	11
Subseries 3.3. Native American relics .....	12
Subseries 3.4. Other .....	12
Series 4. Burnham family .....	12
Series 5. Collection information .....	13

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Friends of Wood Memorial Library and Museum
<b>Creator:</b>	Burnham, Erastus A.
<b>Title:</b>	Erastus W. Burnham collection
<b>ID:</b>	2004.09
<b>ID [aspace_uri]:</b>	/repositories/21/resources/671
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1848-2010
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4.5 Linear Feet
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Erastus W. Burnham collection documents the life of Erastus W. Burnham of South Windsor. It contains Burnham's correspondence, including letters from aboard a whaling boat near New Zealand (1851-1852), 77 Civil War letters (1862-1865), and letters from Burnham's inlaws in Glasgow, Scotland (1855-1870). It also contains Civil War and veterans association ephemera, a collection of about 500 Native American artifacts from South Windsor, and biographical and genealogical material.

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Erastus W. Burnham collection (2004.09), Wood Memorial Library and Museum, South Windsor, CT.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Biographical / Historical

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Erastus W. Burnham was born on April 28, 1834, in South Windsor, Connecticut.

In 1851, at age 17, Burnham departed New London, CT, aboard the Hannibal, a whaling boat, which sailed around the Cape of Good Hope to Australia, then New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. The crew then sailed to the Arctic, whaling near the Bering Strait. In 1852,

they returned to Hong Kong, where Burnham deserted the voyage and became a policeman. Burnham resigned from the Hong Kong police on July 1, 1853, and returned to the U.S. by way of St. Helena and the Azores.

Upon returning to the U.S., Burnham worked in a paper mill in Holyoke, MA.

Burnham enlisted in the Civil War as a Union volunteer on December 28, 1861. He served in the Twelfth Connecticut Infantry Regiment, participating in the capture of New Orleans in 1862. Burnham reenlisted on January 5, 1864, and served through the war's conclusion in the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery Regiment. He mustered out in September 1865.

Following the war, Burnham returned to South Windsor, where he operated a tobacco farm and lived for the remainder of his life, passing away on April 11, 1921.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Scope and Contents

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The Erastus W. Burnham collection documents the life of Erastus W. Burnham of South Windsor. It contains Burnham's correspondence and collections of ephemera and Native American artifacts; and biographical and genealogical material assembled by Burnham's descendents and Wood Memorial staff.

Series 1. Correspondence (1851-1916) includes Erastus W. Burnham's correspondence, including four letters from while Burnham was on a whaling boat near New Zealand (1851-1852), letters from Burnham to his wife Mary soon after he returned from Hong Kong (1857-1858), 77 Civil War letters (1862-1865), letters from Burnham's inlaws in Glasgow, Scotland (1855-1870), and letters concerning a Hartford Courant article about Burnham's life (1916).

Series 2. Civil War records (1864-1865) contains documents from Burnham's Civil War service, including a list of disabilities that he received and passes to travel from camp in 1865.

Series 3. Objects and ephemera (1862-1912) includes Civil War ephemera, such as battlefield relics and Confederate bills; veterans association ephemera; ephemera from South Windsor, such as a penmanship practice book from Burnham's adolescence; and a collection about 500 Native American artifacts from South Windsor.

Series 4. Burnham family (2004-2010) includes biographical information about E. W. Burnham and genealogical information about the Burnham family, including oral histories recorded when descendants Elizabeth Burnham Bennett and Edwin Burnham donated the collection.

Series 5. Collection information (2004-2008) includes information about this archival collection.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Arrangement

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The collection is arranged in five series: Series 1. Correspondence; Series 2. Civil War records, Series 3. Objects and ephemera; Series 4. Burnham family; and Series. 5. Collection information.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Conditions Governing Access

There is no restriction on access to the collection for research use. Particularly fragile items may be restricted for preservation purposes.

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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Controlled Access Headings

- South Windsor (Conn.)
- Connecticut--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
- Veterans--Connecticut
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Military personnel--Union
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Military life--Union
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Correspondence
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Veterans--Union
- Correspondence
- Ephemera

## Collection Inventory

### Series 1. Correspondence, 1851-1916

#### Subseries 1.1. Whaling aboard the Hannibal near New Zealand, 1851-1852

Title/Description	Instances
Erastus W. Burnham (EWB) to father, Erastus W. Burnham Sr., 1851 Jun 13	Burnham 2
EWB to father, Erastus W. Burnham Sr., 1851 Jul 24-25	Burnham 2
EWB to mother, Emiline Parsons Burnham, 1851 Aug 17	Burnham 2
EWB to parents from Kamchatka Sea, 1852 Sep 29	Burnham 2

#### Subseries 1.2 Upon returning to U.S. from Hong Kong, 1857-1858

Title/Description	Instances
EWB to wife Mary, 1857 May 5	Burnham 2
EWB to Mary, 1857 May 14	Burnham 2
EWB to Mary, 1858 Jun 21	Burnham 2
Mary to EWB, 1858 Oct 4	Burnham 2

#### Subseries 1.3. Civil War, 1862, 1864-1865

Title/Description	Instances
First enlistment, infantry, 1862	

Burnham, Erastus W. collection

EWB to wife Mary from Ship Island, MS, 1862 Mar 15	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Ship Island, MS, 1862 Apr 10 (misdated as Mar 10)	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Ship Island, MS, 1862 Mar 16, 17, 18, 20	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Ship Island, MS, 1862 Mar 26	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Ship Island, MS, 1862 Mar 30	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Ship Island, MS, 1862 Apr 3, 5	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Mississippi River on his 28th birthday, 1862 Apr 28	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1862 Apr 30	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Camp Parapet, Shrewsbury, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, 1862 May 25	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1862 Jun 8	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Camp Parapet, Shrewsbury, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, 1862 Jun 14	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary and to sister Abigail Burnham Webb from Camp Parapet, Shrewsbury, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, 1862 Jul 3	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Camp Parapet, Shrewsbury, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, 1862 Jul 6	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Jefferson City, Jefferson Parish, LA, 1862 Jul 26	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary, likely from Camp Parapet, Between 1862 Jul 26 and 1862 Aug 15	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Jefferson City, Jefferson Parish, LA, 1862 Aug 15	Burnham 1
Second enlistment, heavy artillery, 1864-1865	
EWB to Mary from New Haven CT, awaiting transport, 1864 Jan 6	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Jan 11	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Jan 18	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Jan 25	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Jan 26	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Jan 30	Burnham 1

Burnham, Erastus W. collection

EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Feb 7	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Feb 8	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Feb 10	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Feb 15	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Feb 25	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Mar 3	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Mar 8	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Mar 31	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Apr 10	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Apr 15	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 Apr 17	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Reynolds, Fairlington, VA, 1864 May 10	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from near Richmond, VA, 1864 May 14-15	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary on their 9th anniversary from camp in the wilderness, and from front line, 1864 May 15, 18	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, 1864 May 21	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, 1864 May 22	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, 1864 May 24, 27, 29, 30	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, Between 1864 May 30 and 5 Jun	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, 1864 Jun 8	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, 1864 Jun 16	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, 1864 Jul 2	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Bermuda Hundred, VA, 1862 Jul 4	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Spring Hill, VA, 1864 Jul 15	Burnham 1



## Burnham, Erastus W. collection

EWB to Mary from camp in the woods near Broadway Landing, Appomattox River, VA, 1864 Aug 5	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary, 1864 Aug 8	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Broadway Landing, Appomattox River, VA, 1864 Aug 16	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Aug 21	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Front of Petersburg, VA, 1864 Aug 29	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Sep 11	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Regt. Hospital, 1864 Sep 17	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Sep 29	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Oct 7	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Oct 16	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Oct 21	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Oct 24	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Oct 30	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Nov 10	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Nov 15	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Nov 28	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Dec 2	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Dec 6	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1864 Dec 12	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Dec 14	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1864 Dec 17	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1865 Jan 16	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Morton, Petersburg, VA, 1865 Feb 7	Burnham 1

EWB to Mary from Broadway Landing, Appomattox River, VA, 1865 Apr 10	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary, 1865 Apr 28-29	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary on their 10th anniversary from Kingsland, VA, 1865 May 15	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Darling, VA, 1865 Jun 2	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1865 Jun 22	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Drewry's Bluff, VA, 1865 Jun 22	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Drewry, VA, 1865 Jun 9-10	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Lyon, Alexandria, VA, after 1865 Jul 10	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1865 Jul 28	Burnham 1
Mary to EWB from South Windsor, 1865 Jul 29	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Foote, MD, 1865 Sep 10	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Foote, MD, 1865 Sep 17	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Fort Foote, MD, 1865 Sep 21	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary from Alexandria, VA, 1865 Nov 18	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary, 1864 or 1965	Burnham 1
EWB to Mary, 1864 or 1965	Burnham 1
EWB to son Willey, 1864 or 1965	Burnham 1

### Subseries 1.4. Letters from Mary's family in Glasgow, 1855-1870

Title/Description	Instances
Fifteen letters from Mary's family in Glasgow, 1855-1870	Burnham 2

### Subseries 1.5. Post-Civil War, 1912-1916

Title/Description	Instances
Postcard regarding 24th reunion of the 1st C.V.H. Artillery Association, 1912 May 20	Burnham 2
Robert Alcorn to EWB re: Hartford Courant article, 1916 Apr 28	Burnham 2
Orlando Sheldon to EWB re: Hartford Courant article, 1916 Apr 28	Burnham 2
Letters (apparently drafts) from EWB to Orlando Sheldon, 1916	Burnham 2

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2. Civil War records, 1864-1865

Title/Description	Instances
List of disabilities received during the Civil War, written by EWB, Circa 1864	Burnham 2
Passes to travel, addressed to EWB, 1865	
Battery Morton, VA, 1865 Feb 14	Burnham 2
Battery Morton, VA, 1865 Feb 21	Burnham 2
Fort Willard, VA, 1865 Aug 10	Burnham 2

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 3. Objects and ephemera, 1848-1912

### Subseries 3.1. Civil War, 1862-1865

Title/Description	Instances
Battlefield relics: one musket ball, one flint stone, one button from clothing, and two sills (buckshot), 1862-1865	Burnham 4
Five Confederate bills (\$50, \$10, 75 cents, 10 cents, and a \$25 railroad note), 1862-1865	Burnham 2

### Subseries 3.2. Veterans associations, 1866-1912

Title/Description	Instances
Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) veteran medal, 1866	Burnham 5
Ribbon from the Battle Flag Parade in Hartford, CT for the 12th Regiment of Conn. Vols., 1879 Sep 17	Burnham 5
Unitate veteranorum unio, Hartford Battalion Welcome to Grant ribbon, 1880 Oct 16	Burnham 5
Filii veteranorum medal, 1881	Burnham 5
Receipts of dues paid by EWB to Post #71 G.A.R., 1885-1890	Burnham 2
By-Laws of the D.C. Rodman Post No. 65 of the Dept of Conn. G.A.R., 1887	Burnham 2
Booklet describing the monument on Groton Heights, which commemorated the men who fell at Fort Griswold on 1781 Sep 6, 1888	Burnham 2

First Connecticut Heavy Artillery second annual reunion ribbon, 1889	Burnham 5
Ribbon from Kilpatrick Post 71 G.A.R. Dept. of Mass, Holyoke, National Encampment: Boston, 1890 Aug	Burnham 5
First Connecticut Artillery ribbon dedicated to CT Gov. Buckingham, Circa 1890	Burnham 5
12th Regiment Conn. Vols. 25th Annual Reunion ribbon, 1892 Oct 19	Burnham 5
G.A.R. 26th National Encampment (Washington DC) souvenir medal, 1892	Burnham 5
31st National Encampment, Buffalo, medal, 1897	Burnham 5
First Cavalry 14th annual reunion ribbon, 1902 Sep 25	Burnham 5
Pension certificates, 1904 Jul 1, 1909 May 17, and 1912 Aug 7	Burnham 2
Civil War Veterans of Connecticut Reunion, Hartford, ribbon, 1911 Oct 4	Burnham 5
G.A.R. In Memoriam ribbon, Kilpatrick Post, No. 71, Dept. Massachusetts, Undated	Burnham 5
Memorial Day, Drake Post No. 4., G. A. R. ribbon, Undated	Burnham 5
G.A.R. pin, Undated	Burnham 5

### Subseries 3.3. Native American relics, Undated

Title/Description	Instances
Native American relics (one box), Undated	Burnham 3

### Subseries 3.4. Other, 1848

Title/Description	Instances
E. W. Burnham penmanship practice book, 1848	Burnham 2
Clay pipe, Undated	Burnham 4
Various tools, Undated	Burnham 4

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 4. Burnham family, 2004-2010

Title/Description	Instances
Hartford Courant article on E. W. Burnham (photocopy), 1916	Burnham 2

Burnham genealogy, 2004	Burnham 2
Elizabeth Barton Burnham Bennett and Edward Burhham oral histories (audio tapes and transcriptions), 2004	Burnham 2
Elizabeth Barton Burnham Bennet obituary, 2010	Burnham 2
Photographs of E. W. Burnham family (photocopies), Undated	Burnham 2

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 5. Collection information, 2004-2008

Title/Description	Instances
List of accessioned items, Circa 2004	Burnham 1
Supplemental information about E. W. Burnham and the collection (two folders), 2005-2008	Burnham 2
Wood Memorial Library exhibit materials on E. W. Burnham, 2008	Burnham 2
Information compiled by staff including E. W. Burnham obituary, Undated	Burnham 1
Transcriptions of letters (two folders), Undated	Burnham 2

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)