

Kingston Public Library: Local History Room
Manuscript Collection Finding Aid
September 22, 2003

Ada Brewster (1842 – 1929) Collection
Bulk date: 1864 – 1889
Manuscript Collection, MC-24

2 Boxes (8 linear inches)

Biographical sketch: What is known about Ada Brewster comes mainly from her 1929 obituary and is paraphrased below:

Brewster was born in Kingston on May 25, 1842, the daughter of Elisha and Elizabeth Bartlett and a direct descendant in the sixth generation from Elder William Brewster. Brewster was born in “Woodside” built circa 1690 by Joseph Holmes, the stepson of Major William Bradford. “Woodside” stayed in the Brewster family for over two hundred years and is the home to which Ada Brewster returned to in her later years and eventually died in.

As a child Brewster was known for her artistic talents and she eventually studied as a pupil of the crayon artist Samuel Rose. Brewster took a break from art when she enrolled with her two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, as a nurse during the Civil War. Brewster was stationed at the Portsmouth Grove Hospital in Rhode Island, where she remained until the end of the War.

After the War, Brewster returned to art, maintaining a studio in New York and working in St. Petersburg, Florida. Brewster also served as an adjuster in the Mint at Carson City and actually weighted the first trade dollar coined by the United States Government. Brewster was known as a historian, author, naturalist and collector.

The Collection focuses (primarily in the scrapbook) on Ada’s sisters Flora R. Brewster, Eva Octavia Brewster, and family friend Charlotte Cutts (who lived where Persey’s Restaurant, Main Street.)

Scope and Content Note: Of primary interest in this Collection are the pencil sketches of Indians, Chinese, and landscapes Brewster completed while either visiting or living in California, Nevada, and Florida (1:1-4.) Genealogical material on the Brewster family, as well as information on Kingston related topics such as the Bradford House (1:12) and the Helen Adams (1:8) estate auction, may also be of interest. A scrapbook (2) that contains photographs from the late 1800s through the early 1900s, created by Flora Brewster, shows many views of Woodside and other areas in Kingston.

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Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	Item
		<i>Drawings</i>
1	1	Sketches (pencil) 1879 – 1885 of Indians and Chinese in Kansas City and California
	2	Sketches (pencil and watercolor) 1879 –1885 California landscapes
	3	Sketches (pencil) 1865 – 1867 Kansas landscapes
	4	Sketches (pencil) 1879 – 1889 Florida and Nevada landscape
		<i>Family Information</i>
	5	Brewster family information – genealogies, birth, marriage, death listings, information on “Woodside,” Ada Brewster’s obituary; Eva Octavia Brewster’s will, <i>The Old Brewster Houses</i> , by Ada Brewster.
		<i>Manuscripts, pamphlets and books</i>
	6	“Kansas During and After the Rebellion” “The Wild Flowers of Kingston, Massachusetts,” by Charles E. Ridler (principle of Kingston High School 1874 – 1886)
	7	Pamphlets and books: “Charlie the Drummer-Boy” (from Miss Brewster July 1864; “The Morning Walk” 1839: “Cousin Benji’s Poems”; pamphlet with silhouettes; pamphlet with four leaf clover 1893; sketch book of Annie Fuller, 1883; “Manual of Painting in Water-colors, 1864, “Redpath’s Books for the Camp Fires, 1864
		<i>Kingston related series</i>
	8	Helen Adams estate auction
	9	C. Drew and Company history, by Bill Cavallini, 1988 and map of Kingston Water Supply, 1936
	10	Listing of provisions for the Ship, Paul Revere, 1882
	11	Information on Dan Fuller, obituary of Captain James H. Dawes, note re: stone on Burial Hill in Plymouth for brigantine General Arnold, note on snow storm of 1898, obituary of Edward Winslow Watson, 1876
	12	Major John Bradford House: correspondence, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, etc (1930s – 1965); “Joanes and his River,” 1953
		<i>Images</i>
2	1	Photographs: MC-33PEO030001: MC-33PLA030001 – MC-33PLA030009: MC-33HOU030001 Scrapbook: contains approximately 448 images.

Note: The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University has a collection of Brewster Family papers (WA MSS S-1309) including paintings and diaries (of Mary Brewster Long, Elizabeth Bates Brewster, and Elizabeth Brewster Scribner).

Acquisition: Juliette Ayer gave this Collection to the Local History Room in 2003. The two framed miniatures were donated by Margaret Warnsman in July 2004.

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Access: Unrestricted.

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Processor: Volunteer Dorothy Garfield processed and boxed this Collection.
Archivist Carrie Elliott created the finding aid for the Collection.