

**John D. Whiting**

**A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress**

**Prepared by Laura J. Kells**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**Washington, D.C.**

**2006**

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Manuscript Division, 2008**

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## Collection Summary

**Title:** John D. Whiting Papers

**Span Dates:** 1890-1970

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1904-1964)

**ID No.:** MSS85237

**Creator:** Whiting, John D. (John David), 1882-1951

**Extent:** 900 items; 18 containers; 7.8 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Repository:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Abstract:** Businessman, photographer, author, tour guide, and intelligence officer. Correspondence, diaries, photographs, notebooks, reports, printed matter, and other papers pertaining to Whiting's life as a prominent member of the American Colony in Jerusalem.

## 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.

### Personal Names

Spafford, Anna T., 1842-1923.

Spafford, Jacob.

Vester, Bertha Spafford, 1878-1968.

Whiting family.

Whiting, Alice Brauch.

Whiting, Edmund Wilson.

Whiting, Grace Spafford.

Whiting, John D. (John David), 1882-1951

### Organizations

American Colony (Jerusalem)

American Colony (Jerusalem). Photo Dept.

Fr. Vester & Co.

Great Britain. Army--Intelligence specialists.

### Subjects

Americans--Jerusalem.

Arab-Israeli conflict--1948-1967.

Christian communities--Jerusalem.

Communal living--Jerusalem.

Diplomatic and consular service, American--Jerusalem.

Historic sites--Middle East.

Industries--Middle East.

Industries--Palestine.

Locusts--Middle East.

Missionaries--Jerusalem.

Missionaries--United States.

*National geographic magazine.*

Photography--Middle East.

World War, 1914-1918--Jerusalem.

World War, 1914-1918--Military intelligence--Great Britain.

### Locations

Hezekiah's Tunnel (Jerusalem)

Jerusalem--Commerce.

Jerusalem--History--Siege, 701 B.C.  
Jerusalem--History.  
Middle East--Antiquities.  
Middle East--Commerce.  
Middle East--Description and travel.  
Middle East--History.  
Palestine--Commerce.  
Palestine--Foreign relations--United States.  
Palestine--History.  
United States--Foreign relations--Palestine.

### **Occupations**

Authors.  
Businessmen.  
Intelligence officers.  
Photographers.  
Tour guides.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Provenance:**

The papers of John D. Whiting, businessman, photographer, author, tour guide, and intelligence officer, were given to the Library of Congress by Wendy Whiting Blome and John F. Whiting in 2005-2006.

### **Processing History:**

The papers of John D. Whiting were arranged and described in 2006. The register was revised in 2008.

### **Transfers:**

Some photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

### **Copyright Status:**

Copyright in the unpublished writings of John D. Whiting 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.

### **Restrictions:**

Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning these restrictions.

### **Preferred Citation:**

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

## **Biographical Note**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1882, June 10	Born, Jerusalem, Palestine (Ottoman Empire)
1903-1904	Salesman and bookkeeper, Wingrave and MacNaughton Co., Chicago, Ill.
1904-1948	Partner and business manager, Fr. Vester and Co., American Colony Store, Jerusalem

1908-ca. 1915	Deputy consul of the United States for Jerusalem
1909	Married Grace Spafford
1918	Undercover intelligence officer, General Headquarters Advance Field Intelligence, British Army
1951, Oct. 3	Died, Jerusalem, Israel

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of John David Whiting (1882-1951) span the years 1890-1970, with the bulk of the material dating from 1904 to 1964. They document his life and career as a member of the American Colony in Jerusalem, a Christian utopian community founded in 1881. Whiting, the first child born at the American Colony, married the daughter of the American Colony leaders, Horatio and Anna Spafford, and, aside from a few periods abroad, raised a family and resided at the American Colony until his death. He was a business manager and artifact dealer with the colony's enterprise, Fr. Vester and Co., also known as the American Colony Store. Over the years he guided religious pilgrims, archaeologists, and other tourists on tours to ancient historic sites in the Middle East. Whiting was a photographer with the American Colony Photo Department, and he published articles on the Holy Land and the Middle East in *National Geographic*. His intimate knowledge of the region also led to service as deputy United States consul for Jerusalem and to his military intelligence work during World War I. The material in this collection has been arranged into diaries, family correspondence, film catalogs and caption lists, general correspondence, photographs, subject file, and miscellany.

Whiting's diaries span the years 1905 to 1941 but do not cover the entire period. Many focus on Whiting's travels and provide details of his guided trips to ancient sites in the Middle East that he conducted throughout these years. The earliest diaries describe the use of horses and camels for these excursions and those from the 1930s tell of travel by car and airplane. His 1912 diary recounts a trip to London where Whiting sold antiquities and photographs by the American Colony Photo Department. The journal for 1918 focuses on the intelligence work Whiting carried out in the region for the British Army from September to November. In addition to the daily accounts, the book contains notes for his intelligence reports. Diaries from the 1930s and 1940 provide the most detail about Whiting's home life.

The family correspondence section, 1946-1951, n.d., focuses on events in the lives of the next generation of the Whiting family, but it also describes the dangerous situation in Jerusalem and its effects on the American Colony during the last years of Whiting's life. This correspondence chronicles the move by Edmund Wilson Whiting, John and Grace Whiting's youngest son, and his wife, Alice Brauch Whiting ("Sally"), from the United States to Jerusalem, to live at the American Colony in August 1947, at what proved to be the beginning of the Arab-Israeli War. The major portion of the letters are from Alice to her parents in Iowa describing her life at the American Colony, the increasing tensions in Jerusalem, the birth and illness of their first child, and their return to the United States in early 1948. Letters from John and Grace Whiting describe acts of hostility and terrorism in Jerusalem and John's declining health.

Film catalogs and caption lists, 1929-1950, n.d., provide negative numbers and captions for photographs Whiting took during his trips. Many of these catalogs and caption lists relate to his "Diaries in Photos" that are housed in the Library's Prints and Photographs Division. These albums contain captioned scenes of Petra, the Dead Sea, Jerusalem, and Cappadocia, as well as shrines, mosques, tombs, and holy or sacred spots in Palestine, Turkey, Syria, Gaza, Lebanon, and other areas to which he traveled. The "Diaries in Photos" complement his written diaries of the trips.

In the general correspondence, 1903-1920, n.d., letters sent and received by Whiting provide details about his personal life and business enterprises. Arranged chronologically, these letters chronicle two periods separated by a gap during the years of World War I when the American Colony received no postal service. Correspondents in the early years include Americans who had visited the American Colony and lecturers who purchased American Colony photographs and lantern slides of sites in the Holy Land for their presentations. Some of Whiting's letters contain lengthy accounts of his trips. There is very little correspondence after 1911 until 1918, but a few typed copies of letters from the United States in 1916 provide accounts of funds raised to support American Colony relief activities during the war. The largest group of letters dates from 1919 and documents Whiting's efforts to reestablish contact with friends and business contacts. The letters include his lengthy accounts

of wartime conditions and American Colony activities during World War I. A letter from 17 July 1919 is particularly informative.

A section of photographs includes pictures of family members and scenes depicting American Colony life and an album documenting the locust plague of 1915. Another portion of photographs is housed in the Prints and Photographs Division, including twenty-seven albums depicting family and American Colony life, events in World War I and the early British Mandate era, and scenes of the people and places of the Middle East, many of the images produced by Lewis Larsson, Eric G. Matson, and other American Colony Photograph Department photographers. Also housed in the Prints and Photographs Division are Whiting's "Diaries in Photos" from his travels in the 1930s.

Among the subject files are published volumes of the *National Geographic* containing articles by Whiting and photographs by him and other American Colony photographers as well as his correspondence with the magazine. Included in material relating to his service as deputy United States consul for Jerusalem are his reports on industry and commerce in the region. Grace Spafford Whiting's commonplace book, "Things To Be Remembered," contains lists of deaths of American Colony residents from 1885 to 1962. Many of the entries also include cause of death and place of burial. Also enclosed in this book is a description by Jacob Spafford, adopted son of Anna and Horatio Spafford, of his discovery of the inscription in Hezekiah's Siloam tunnel as a boy, and John D. Whiting's curfew pass issued by the Palestine police in 1936.

## **Related Materials**

The John D. Whiting Papers are closely related to the American Colony of Jerusalem Papers and the G. Eric and Edith Matson Collection in the Prints and Photographs Division.

## **Arrangement of the Papers**

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Diaries
BOX 1	1905-1918 (7 folders)
BOX 1	1934-1935 (4 folders)
BOX 2	1938-1941 (3 folders)
BOX 3	Family correspondence, 1946-1951, n.d. (5 folders)
BOX 4	Film catalogs and caption lists
BOX 4	Caption lists
BOX 4	“Diaries in Photos,” 1934-1939
BOX 4	Miscellaneous, 1934-1935, n.d.
BOX 4	Film catalogs
BOX 4	“Kodachrome and contax,” 1929, 1940, 1950
BOX 4	Vol. 1, nos. 1-1900, 1934-1938
BOX 4	Vol. 2, nos. 1901-2664, 1938-1950
BOX 4	General correspondence
BOX 4	1903-1909 (6 folders)
BOX 5	1910-1918 (10 folders)
BOX 5	1919
BOX 5	Jan.-May (4 folders)
BOX 6	June-Dec. (6 folders)
BOX 6	1920, 1944, n.d. (3 folders)
BOX 6	Photographs
BOX 6	American Colony in Jerusalem
BOX 6	Buildings, 1997, n.d.
BOX 6	Daily life, 1900, 1917-1924, 1934-1935, n.d. (2 folders)
BOX 7	Artifacts and antiquities, undated
BOX 7	Bedouin, Arab, Turkish life, 1933, n.d.
BOX 7	Family <i>For additional material see Container 6, Daily life</i>
BOX 7	Lind, Anna Grace Vester (niece), 1922, n.d.
BOX 7	Spafford, Anna (mother-in-law), ca. 1910, n.d.
BOX 7	Spafford, Jacob, undated
BOX 7	Vester, Bertha Spafford (sister-in-law), 1937, 1949, n.d.
BOX 7	Whiting, David (son), 1935, 1965, n.d.

## Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 7	Whiting, Edmund Wilson (son)
BOX 7	Miscellaneous, undated
BOX 7	World War II, Royal Canadian Air Force
BOX 7	India and Tibet, 1945, n.d.
BOX 7	Miscellaneous, 1945, n.d.
BOX 7	Whiting, Grace Spafford (wife), 1911, 1958-1964, n.d.
BOX 7	Whiting, John D., 1911, 1923, n.d.
BOX 7	Guided trips and other travel, 1934-1935, n.d. (2 folders)
BOX 8	Locust plague album, photographs by Lewis Larsson, 1915
BOX 9	Miscellaneous, 1938, 1964, n.d.
BOX 9	Municipal elections, Jerusalem, Palestine, 1934
BOX 9	Portraits, 1909, 1957, n.d.
BOX 9	Religious groups, 1890, 1928?, n.d.
BOX 9	Samuel, Herbert Louis
BOX 9	At signing ceremony, undated
BOX 9	With Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby and Emir Abdullah Ibn Hussein, undated
BOX 9	Tel Aviv, Palestine, 1936-1938
BOX 9	Wartime scenes, ca. 1918, 1945, n.d.
BOX 9	Weddings, 1949, n.d.
BOX 9	Subject file
BOX 9	Military Intelligence work, 1918-1919, n.d. <i>For additional material see Container 1, 1918</i>
BOX 9	<i>National Geographic</i>
BOX 9	Correspondence, 1910-1911, 1918-1919
BOX 9	Published vols.
BOX 9	1913
BOX 10	1914
BOX 10	1915 (1 vol.)
BOX 11	(1 vol.)
BOX 11	1917-1918 (2 vols.)
BOX 12	1920, 1926 (2 vols.)
BOX 13	1927-1929 (2 vols.)
BOX 14	1935-1937 (2 vols.)
BOX 15	1938-1939 (3 vols.)
BOX 16	1940
BOX 16	Pro-Jerusalem Society, 1919-1920, n.d.
BOX 16	United States Consulate, Jerusalem
BOX 16	Appointment as deputy consul, 1908
BOX 16	Consular reports, 1909-1915, n.d. (3 folders)
BOX 16	Miscellany, 1908-1910, n.d.

## Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 17	Whiting, Grace Spafford
BOX 17	Charms and amulets
BOX 17	Article
BOX 17	Correspondence, 1960-1961
BOX 17	Texts, 1961, n.d.
BOX 17	Catalog and notes, undated
BOX 17	Miscellany, undated
BOX 17	Miscellany, 1924-1928, 1938, 1960
BOX 17	"Things to Be Remembered," commonplace book, 1925-1963, n.d. (2 folders)
BOX 17	Miscellany
BOX 17	Financial papers, 1916-1919, 1944, n.d.
BOX 17	Letter asking for independence of Arabs, in Turkish, photostatic copy, undated
BOX 17	Lists, minutes, and notes, 1912-1913, 1919-1922, n.d.
BOX 17	Memorabilia, 1921, 1928, n.d.
BOX 17	Printed matter, 1919, 1962-1970
BOX 18	Souvenir album, photographs and flowers of the Holy Land, undated