

**Ada Brewster Collection MC24**  
**2 document cases; 1 oversized folder**

**Biographical sketch**

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 where she died..

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 living at different times in Kansas, San Francisco, and St. Petersburg, Florida. Brewster also served as an adjuster in the Mint at Carson City, NV and actually weighed the first trade dollar coined by the United States Government. Brewster was known as a historian, author, naturalist and collector. She died in Kingston on February 18, 1929.

**Scope and Content Note**

Brewster's pencil sketches of Native Americans, Chinese workers, Western characters and scenes in California, Nevada, Kansas and other places are among the highlights of the collections. A folder of genealogical material on the Brewster family, which includes Brewster's 1929 obituary, may also be of interest. The scrapbook-style photograph album in Box 2 contains images from the late 1800s through the early 1900s, created both by Ada Brewster in her travels and by her sister Flora Brewster, including views of their home "Woodside" and other areas in Kingston, along with locations across the country.

**Box 1**

- 1.1 Pencil sketches 1879 – 1885 of Native Americans and Chinese workers in Kansas City and California
- 1.2 Pencil sketches and watercolors, 1879 –1885 California landscapes
- 1.3 Pencil sketches, 1865 – 1867, Kansas landscapes
- 1.4 Pencil sketches, 1879 – 1889, Florida and Nevada landscapes
- 1.5 Brewster family information – genealogies, birth, marriage, death listings, information on "Woodside," Ada Brewster's obituary; Eva Octavia Brewster's will, The Old Brewster Houses, by Ada Brewster.

- 1.6 "Kansas During and After the Rebellion." "The Wild Flowers of Kingston, Massachusetts," by Charles E. Ridler (principal of Kingston High School 1874 – 1886)
- 1.7 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

*Materials donated with the collection, but not related to Ada Brewster*

- 1.8 Helen Adams estate auction
- 1.9 C. Drew and Company history, by Bill Cavallini, 1988 and map of Kingston Water Supply, 1936
- 1.10 Listing of provisions for the Ship *Paul Revere*, 1882
- 1.11 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
- 1.12 Major John Bradford House: correspondence, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, etc. (1930s – 1965); "Joanes and his River," 1953
- 1.13 Two miniature portrait paintings copied by Ada Brewster [removed from frames; one frame retained]

**Box 2**

Photographs and scrapbook

There are 486 entries in the Images database with the suffix –brews. Those beginning doc- are scanned artwork, others are loose photographs in Box 2, and 448 are numbered images from the scrapbook, including the only known photograph of Lothrop Holmes (peo-03-0017-brews).

**Acquisition**

Juliette Ayer gave this Collection to the Local History Room in 2003. The two miniatures were donated by Margaret Warnsman in July 2004 (Acc2004-1)

**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).

**Access:** Unrestricted

**Processor:** Volunteer Dorothy Garfield processed and boxed this collection. Archivist Carrie Elliott created the finding aid for the Collection. The finding aid was revised by Susan Aprill, 2017-03-27.