



# Newport Historical Society

## Guide to the Whitehorne and Ennis families correspondence , 1821 – 1884

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### Descriptive Summary

<i>Collection Identifier</i>	MS.098
<i>Title</i>	Whitehorne and Ennis families correspondence
<i>Creator</i>	Whitehorne, Samuel, ca. 1779-1844 Ennis, Eliza Ann (Whitehorne), 1803-1894 Ennis, William Esq., 1841-1938
<i>Date</i>	1821 – 1884
<i>Extent</i>	0.2 linear feet (4 folders)
<i>Language</i>	Material is in English.
<i>Abstract</i>	This collection contains approximately 43 letters written by, and on behalf of the members of the Whitehorne and Ennis family.

## Historical Note

### *Samuel Whitehorne:*

Samuel Whitehorne was born ca. 1779 and died in Newport, Rhode Island, on March 22, 1844, at age 65. He married Elizabeth Rathbone on August 24, 1802. Together they had four children, Elizabeth Whitehorne Ennis, Caroline Whitehorne, Mary Rathbone, and Harriet Whitehorne Bartlett.

He and his brother John Whitehorne were prosperous merchants and shipping magnates. Together they were involved in several businesses including a distillery, an iron foundry, and a bank. During his early professional career Whitehorne achieved great success and J. & S. Whitehorne were considered among "the principal store and shop keepers, whose places of business were either on the wharves, or on Thames Street." In 1843 Whitehorne's fortune took a turn for the worse as he was forced to file for bankruptcy on March 18. His credit had been over extended when two of his ships were lost at sea which eventually resulted in a loss of \$10,000. Four days after filing for bankruptcy Whitehorne suddenly died. The *Newport Mercury* on March 30, 1844, wrote, "It is in consolation to his friends to feel that a life of exemplary virtue and religious faith, has made his death a transition to a happier world." To settle his debts the *Newport Mercury* announced a public auction of his belongings on October 26, 1844. His house was sold to Jesse Chase.

Whitehorne was an active member of the parish at Trinity Church where he created a permanent fund for the benefit of the poor of the church. He and his brother John were also founders of the Zion Church, the Second Episcopal Parish in Newport organized in 1833.

### *Eliza Whitehorne Ennis:*

Daughter of Samuel Whitehorne and Elizabeth Rathbone, Eliza Whitehorne Ennis was born on December 29, 1803. She married William Ennis, Esq., on April 9, 1832. Together the couple had two children, Caroline Whitehorne Ennis born June 11, 1836, and William Ennis, Esq., born December 26, 1841.

### *William Ennis, Esq.:*

Son of William and Eliza Whitehorne Ennis, William Ennis was born on December 26, 1841, in Newport, Rhode Island. His family has been associated with Newport for generations as his father, William Ennis, was an attorney in the area, and his paternal grandfather, who was also named William, was a Rhode Island officer during the American Revolution. His maternal grandfather was Samuel Whitehorne, a prosperous merchant and shipping businessman who was involved with several commercial enterprises such as a distillery, an iron

foundry and a bank until his bankruptcy in 1843.

In 1860 Ennis was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy from Newport and graduated in 1864 as a lieutenant. After receiving his education, Ennis was assigned to the Fourth Artillery Regiment on June 13, 1864, and he fought in the American Civil War. He fought with distinction in the battle of Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee, and was given the honor being named first lieutenant in 1864. Later that year he earned the rank of captain.

After the Civil War, Ennis went on to be a military aide to General John M. Fields who was Secretary of War during President Andrew Jackson's administration. His military career continued as he played a role in Perce's Campaign and the campaign against the Ballock Indians. Ennis also fought in the Spanish-American War, then made his way to be stationed in both Saint Louis and Honolulu. While stationed at St. Louis, Missouri, he married Andrine Pierce, daughter of Andrew Pierce of Boston, who made his money in the railroad industry. He then ended his career as the commander of Fort Adams.

Ennis was a member of the Newport Reading Room and was a trustee of Long Wharf. At age 91 he suffered a hip injury while stepping into an automobile and although he recovered from the injury, he passed away shortly after in 1938. His funeral service was held at Trinity Church where he was given full military honors with a firing squad to salute the Newport native.

#### Sources:

- New England Historic Genealogical Registrar Vol. 146, 175.
- Newport Mercury, October 7, 1938.
- Newport Mercury, March 30, 1844, Vol. 83 No. 4, 275.

## Scope and Content

This collection contains approximately 43 letters written by members of the Whitehorne and Ennis family. These correspondences reveal family dynamics, address political appointments, and provide insights regarding the American Civil War. The collection includes letters written between Eliza Whitehorne Ennis and Samuel Whitehorne highlighting their close relationship. Eliza often confides in her father writing him letters on topics ranging from fashion, suitors, social gatherings, town gossip, and literature. These letters give insight into the life of a wealthy young female living in the early nineteenth century. Other highlights include correspondences written by William Ennis to his mother, Eliza Whitehorne Ennis. The bulk of these letters are written in 1864. While William often writes about life in the army, one letter, with its original envelope, discusses the battles occurring in Nashville in great detail. Also included in this collection are approximately 30 recommendation letters written on behalf of William Ennis, recommending him for

the position of Paymaster of the Army.

## Organization

Whitehorne and Ennis families correspondence is organized into one series, Correspondence.

Many letters within the collection are dated, therefore the folders are arranged chronologically, with undated correspondence being arranged alphabetically by senders last name placed behind chronologically organized letters.

## Subject Access

<i>People</i>	Bartlett, Harriet (Whitehorne), 1812-ca. 1901
	Ennis, Eliza Ann (Whitehorne), 1803-1894
	Ennis, William Esq., 1801-1849
	Ennis, William Esq., 1841-1938
	Handy, Mary Rathbone (Whitehorne), b. 1809
	Rathbone, Elizabeth, 1778-1856
	Whitehorne, John G., ca. 1772-1855
	Whitehorne, Samuel, ca. 1779-1844
<i>Organizations</i>	J. & S. Whitehorne
<i>Subjects</i>	Rhode Island--Politics and government--1775-1865
	Newport family
	Newport Harbor (R.I.)
	Social life and customs
	United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
<i>Form/Genre</i>	correspondence

## Access and Use

<i>Physical Access</i>	This collection is housed on site at the Newport Historical Society. Researchers can be seen by appointment during operating hours.
<i>Reproduction &amp; Use</i>	<p>NHS allows monitored personal photography of manuscript and artifact collections for research use only, with some limitations and restrictions. Fees apply. See our Personal Photography Policy and Agreement for more details.</p> <p>NHS also offers digital scans of collections material for educational, commercial or personal use. Fees apply.</p> <p>Personal photography or purchase of digital prints and scans does not imply permission to reproduce or publish these materials. Images from the NHS collections may be reproduced only with written consent of the Newport Historical Society. Permission is granted for one time, non-exclusive use only. All subsequent and additional use requests must be made in writing.</p> <p>We reserve the right to restrict photography of copyrighted, culturally sensitive or physically endangered materials.</p>
<i>Citation</i>	Whitehorne and Ennis families correspondence , MS.098, Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island

## Administrative Information

<i>Processor</i>	Processed by Mollie Surprenant, July 6 2017.
<i>Descriptive Rules</i>	Finding aid based on <i>Describing Archives: A Content Standard</i> (DACS)
<i>Accession Info</i>	<p>The Whitehorne and Ennis family correspondence collection was a gift of Frances E. Irvine in 2016.</p> <p>Accession Number: 2016.016</p>

## Inventory

### Series 01: Correspondence , 1821 – 1862

This series contains approximately 43 letters written by members of the Whitehorne and Ennis family. These correspondences reveal family dynamics, address political appointments, and provide insights regarding the American Civil War. The series includes letters written between Eliza Whitehorne Ennis and Samuel Whitehorne highlighting their close relationship. Eliza often confides in her father writing him letters on topics ranging from fashion, suitors, social gatherings, town gossip, and literature. Other correspondences are written by William Ennis to his mother, Eliza Whitehorne Ennis. The bulk of these letters are written in 1864. William often writes about life in the army and discusses the battles occurring in Nashville in great detail. Also included in this series are approximately 30 recommendation letters written on behalf of William Ennis, recommending him for the position of Paymaster of the Army.

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#### *File 01.001: Eliza Whitehorne Ennis correspondence with Samuel Whitehorne, 1821-1839, 1821 – 1839*

Correspondences written by Eliza Whitehorne Ennis to her father Samuel Whitehorne. The letters begin in 1821 when Eliza is seventeen years old. Letters are sent from Providence and Newport, Rhode Island. Correspondences include topics discussing social events occurring during the summer season of 1821, the relationship between Eliza and her sister Harriet Whitehorne Bartlett, religion, the happenings of Trinity church, and health issues occurring in the family while Samuel is away at sea. Highlights include a letter written in January of 1839, during the Irish potato famine period, where Eliza expresses her concerns for her father being aboard a vessel where the potatoes are "taken out," writing that the risk is too great.

#### *File 01.002: William Ennis correspondence with Eliza Whitehorne Ennis, 1860-1864 , 1860 – 1864*

Correspondence written by William Ennis received by his mother, Eliza Whitehorne Ennis. This correspondence series primarily consists of letters discussing life in the

army. William describes the different locations and events that occurred in Washington, Cincinnati, Paris (Kentucky), Lexington, Louisville and Atlanta. He writes that traveling is less than pleasant because "at any moment you might have the train fired into, and have the music of bullets about your ears." In a letter written in July 1864 William writes that people living in the North know little of what those living in the border states have suffered as they never know when they are safe. Three letters within this series address the campaign in Nashville. Amongst the military information William frequently urges his family to write to him.

*File 01.003: Correspondence regarding William Ennis, 1836-1840 , 1836 – 1840*

This correspondence series consists of letters of recommendation written on behalf of William Ennis for the appointment of Paymaster of the Army. Letters are written by local Newport men who attest to his work ethic, involvement in the community, and "his strong and respectable character," as written in a letter dated January 19, 1839.

*File 01.004: Correspondence regarding William Ennis, 1841-1848, 1841 – 1848*

This correspondence series consists of letters of recommendation written on behalf of William Ennis for the appointment of a position of Paymaster of the Army. This includes a letter written by the Rhode Island General Assembly on October 28, 1841 expressing Ennis's qualifications. Letters written by Samuel Ward King, the Governor of Rhode Island from 1839-1843, and Secretary of the Navy, George Edmund Badger, are also included in this folder.