L.L. Whitman correspondence, 1903-1911

Finding aid prepared by Gina C Giang.
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San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2203
Fax: (626) 449-5720
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Descriptive Summary

Title: L.L. Whitman correspondence
Dates: 1903-1911
Collection Number: mssHM 81903-82022
Creator: Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932
Extent: 121 items in 3 boxes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens Manuscripts Department
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Abstract: This collection consists of letters from L.L. Whitman and his wife to his mother R.J. Whitman, in South Paris, Maine.

Language of Material: The records are in English.

Access
Collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, please go to following web site.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], L.L. Whitman correspondence, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Acquisition Information
Purchased from DeWolfe and Wood, February 2015.

Biography
Lester L. (Lester Lee) Whitman was born in 1861. He was a well-known transcontinentalist. Whitman made several cross country automobile trips in a Franklin, a Reo, and an Oldsmobile. In Pasadena, California, he owned an automobile manufacturing shop. He held several automobile records including San Francisco, California to New York City in 15 days 2 hours and 12 minutes in 1906. He also made the ascent to Mount Wilson in his 1907 Franklin and said, "Not for five hundred dollars would I make the trip again."

Scope and Content
The Whitman correspondence begins on May 28, 1903 in Pasadena, California. Whitman writes to his mother about a potential automobile trip from San Francisco, California to New York and introduces her to his driving partner, E.I. Hammond. The duo will be trailing several hundred miles behind E.T. Fetch and M.C. Krarup, another pair on their way to New York. Whitman writes that he has more faith in his 4.5-horsepower Oldsmobile than the 1903 Packard, which Fetch is driving. Postcards and letters concerning his trip east are sent from various locations including Lovelock and Elko, Nevada, Ogden, Utah, Rawlins, Wyoming, and Elwood, Nebraska. On the road, Whitman and Hammond face mechanical issues, rugged roads, and harsh weather conditions. In one letter, Whitman writes about frightening a lone Indian to death when they approached him in their "machine." In another event, they recruited the help of two cowboys, who used "their lassos to pull us up a bank some 15ft high..." (July 20, 1903). When driving through the country side, the undeveloped roads prove to be difficult: "The country is all mud, terrible. We can make but little progress. This mud is the black adobe like lard and dries hard as flint" (Aug. 13, 1903). In Detroit, Michigan, Whitman meets Ransom E. Olds and appears to be an honored guest at an automobile race with 10,000 people in attendance. Whitman speaks too soon when he writes "I don't want any more endurance runs..." because he dashes across the continent again in 1904, 1906, and 1910 at record-setting rates, which include breaking Fetch's record. Whitman reflects that his automobile trip "helps to season and spice the short life we stay on this earth" (Oct. 18, 1903).
The correspondence resumes in June 1904 in Syracuse, New York. Whitman appears to be preparing for his next transcontinental trip with Charles S. Carris. Whitman and Carris left San Francisco, California on August 1, 1904 and arrived in New York City 33 days later on September 3, 1904. Whitman writes, "I am well and hearty- and have in my pocket a check for $1,200 - for my labor, pretty good eh?" (September 3, 1904).

After a brief vacation on the east coast, Whitman and his wife arrive home in Pasadena, California on November 13, 1904. At this point in time, the letters mainly concern family, friends, social life, and updates on Whitman's business as a car manufacturer with his partner W.G. Hansen. Concerning car sales, Whitman jokes: "If I can't sell them we can run them into the ocean" (July 11, 1909). There are a number of letters from Syracuse, New York as Whitman was offered a position with H.H. Franklin Mfg. Co. after his trip; however, he did not remain with the company for very long. In late 1910 and early 1911, Whitman and W.T. Harrington opened a garage selling automobiles and supplies in Pasadena, California. Unfortunately, business was "rotten" and the garage was bought out in late February. Besides occupying himself in the automobile industry, Whitman writes often about his vegetable garden, trapping gophers, and his health. He suffered from asthma, frequent headaches, and rheumatism. Thus, there are several letters from hot springs in San Jacinto, California, which he calls a "stinking place."

Much of the correspondence from Pasadena, California consists of letters from Whitman and his wife Sophia in the same envelope. Occasionally, there are letters addressed to an "Elizabeth," possibly a relative in South Paris, Maine. Some of the letters include dried pressed flowers. There are also clippings related to Whitman's travels from the Lewiston Saturday Journal and Pacific Automobiling in 1904. There are two pamphlets that Whitman wrote about his cross country trips: From Coast to Coast in a Motor-Car (1905) and Coast to Coast in a REO (1910). Note: Coast to Coast in a REO was transferred to the Rare Books Department in May 2015. The call number is RB 645458. Lastly, there is one photograph from Whitman's transcontinental trip in 1910.

Arrangement
This collection is arranged chronologically.

Personal Names
Carris, Charles S.
Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932
Hammond, Eugene I. (Eugene Irish), 1880-1948

Corporate Names
Reo Motor Car Company

Subjects
Automobile drivers
Automobile driving
Automobile industry and trade
Automobile racing
Automobile supplies industry
Automobile travel
Franklin automobile
Garages
Hot springs--California--San Jacinto
Oldsmobile automobile
Reo automobile

Geographic Areas
California--Description and travel
Pasadena--Social life and customs
San Gabriel Mountains (Calif.)--Description and travel
San Gabriel River Valley (Calif.)
Syracuse (N.Y.)
United States--Description and travel

Genre
Correspondence (letters)
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<th>Box 1</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, May 28)</td>
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<td>HM 81904</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, June 30)</td>
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<td>HM 81905</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 1)</td>
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<td>HM 81906</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 1)</td>
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<td>HM 81907</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to [Sophia Whitman] (1903, July 3)</td>
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<td>HM 81908</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 5)</td>
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<td>HM 81909</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 10)</td>
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<td>HM 81910</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 15)</td>
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<td>HM 81911</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 16)</td>
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<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 20)</td>
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<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, July 27)</td>
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<td>HM 81915</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, Aug. 3)</td>
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<td>HM 81916</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Aug. 13)</td>
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<td>HM 81917</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Aug. 16)</td>
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HM 81918  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Aug. 23)
  With envelope

HM 81919  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Aug 28)
  With envelope, Bill of Lading, and receipt

HM 81920  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, Sep. 3)
HM 81921  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, Sep. 6)
HM 81922  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Sep. 8)
  With envelope

HM 81923  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Sep. 17)
  With envelope

HM 81924  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Sep. 21)
  With envelope

HM 81925  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 telegram to R.J. Whitman (1903, Sep. 23)
  With envelope

HM 81926  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Oct. 6)
  With envelope

HM 81927  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1903, Oct. 11)
HM 81928  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Oct. 13)
  With envelope

HM 81929  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Oct. 16)
  With envelope

HM 81930  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Oct. 18)
  With envelope

HM 81931  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1903, Oct. 19)
  With envelope

HM 81932  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, June 26)
  With envelope
HM 81933  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, July 1)
   With envelope
HM 81934  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, July 8)
   With envelope
HM 81935  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, July 19)
   With envelope
HM 81936  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, July 21)
   With envelope and receipt
HM 81937  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, July 24)
   With envelope
HM 81938  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1904, Aug. 3)
HM 81939  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Aug. 11)
   With envelope
HM 81940  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Sep. 3)
   With envelope
HM 81941  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Sep. 14)
   With envelope
HM 81942  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Sep. 20)
   With envelope
   With envelope

Box 2
Correspondence 1904, Oct. 25-1909
HM 81944  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Oct. [25])
   With envelope and business card
HM 81945  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Oct. 27)
HM 81946  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Nov. 7)
   With envelope
HM 81947  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1904, Nov. 9)
HM 81948  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 postcard to R.J. Whitman (1904, Nov. 11)

L.L. Whitman correspondence, 1903-1911  mssHM 81903-82022  6
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<td>HM 81953</td>
<td>[Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1904, Nov. 28)</td>
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<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1905, Jan. 14)</td>
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<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1905, Jan. 23)</td>
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<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1905, Jan. 27)</td>
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<td>HM 81964</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1908, Nov. 15)</td>
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HM 81965  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1908, Dec. 13)
   With envelope. Includes letter from Sophia [Whitman] letter to R.J. Whitman

HM 81966  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Jan. 5-6)
   With envelope and pressed flowers

HM 81967  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Feb. 4)
   With envelope. Includes letters from Sophia [Whitman] to R.J. Whitman and Elizabeth ----- 

HM 81968  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Feb. 23)
   With envelope

HM 81969  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Mar. 2)
   With envelope and newspaper clipping

HM 81970  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Mar. 4)
   With envelope and business card

HM 81971  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Mar. 16)
   With envelope

HM 81972  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Mar. 26)
   With envelope and newspaper clippings

HM 81973  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Apr. 7)
   With envelope

HM 81974  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Apr. 18)
   With envelope

HM 81975  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, May 7)
   With envelope. Includes letter from Lester L. (Lester Lee) Whitman, 1861-1932 to R.J. Whitman on the same letter

HM 81976  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, June 16)
   With envelope

HM 81977  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, June 29)
   With envelope

HM 81978  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, July 11)
   With envelope. Includes letter from Sophia [Whitman] to R.J. Whitman

HM 81979  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Aug. 3)
   With envelope
HM 81980  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Aug. 30)
   With envelope and newspaper clipping. Includes letters from Sophia [Whitman] to R.J. Whitman and Elizabeth -----.

HM 81981  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Sep. 28)
   With envelope and newspaper clipping.

HM 81982  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Oct. 27)
   With envelope.

HM 81983  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Nov. 8)
   With envelope, pressed flowers, and fabric swatch. Includes letter from Sophia [Whitman] on the same letter and a note to Elizabeth -----.

HM 81984  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1909, Nov. 29)
   With envelope.

Box 3  Correspondence, Ephemera, and Photograph 1910-1911
HM 81985  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1910, Oct. 28)
   With envelope. Includes letter to Elizabeth -----.

HM 81986  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1910, Nov. 12)
   With envelope. Includes letters from Sophia [Whitman] to R.J. Whitman.

HM 81987  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1910, Nov. 25)
   With envelope. Includes letters from [Sophia Whitman] to R.J. Whitman. One letter written on letter from Elizabeth -----.

HM 81988  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1910, Dec. 16)
   With envelope. Includes letter [Sophia Whitman] to [R.J. Whitman].

HM 81989  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Jan. 3)
   With envelope. Includes letter to Elizabeth ----- on the same letter.

HM 81990  [Whitman, Sophia] letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Jan. 9)
   With envelope and pressed flower.

HM 81991  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Jan. 28)
   With envelope.

HM 81992  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Feb. 7)
   With envelope and business card.

HM 81993  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Feb. 9)
   With envelope. Includes letter to Elizabeth -----.
HM 81994  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Feb. 21)
With envelope. Includes letter from Sophia [Whitman]

HM 81995  [Whitman, Sophia] 1 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Mar. 7)
With envelope. Includes letter from L.L. Whitman on same letter and letter from Sophia [Whitman] to Elizabeth ----

HM 81996  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Mar. 27)
With envelope. Includes letter from Sophia [Whitman]

HM 81997  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Apr. 3)
With envelope. Includes letter from Sophia [Whitman]

HM 81998  [Whitman], Sophia letter to Elizabeth ----- (1911, Apr. 8-20)
With envelope. Includes letter to R.J. Whitman dated Apr. 20 1911

HM 81999  [Whitman, Sophia] letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Apr. 10)
With envelope

HM 82000  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Apr. 17)
With envelope

HM 82001  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Apr. 25)
With envelope

HM 82002  Whitman, Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, May 5)
With envelope and pressed flowers. Includes letter from Janette ----- dated Sep. 28, 1911 and Susie ---- dated Sep. 28, 1911

HM 82003  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, May 15)
With envelope

HM 82004  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 1 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, May 20)
With envelope. Includes letter from Sophia [Whitman], a flyer, and pressed flowers wrapped in portion of another letter

HM 82005  [Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, May 20)
With envelope

HM 82006  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, May 26)
With envelope

HM 82007  Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, June 10)
With envelope
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<td>HM 82008</td>
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<td>HM 82009</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, July 31)</td>
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<td>With envelope. Includes letters from Sophia [Whitman] to &quot;Little Henry&quot;, Elizabeth ------, and R.J. Whitman</td>
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<td>HM 82010</td>
<td>[Whitman], Isabel letters to &quot;Mother, Papa, and Grandma&quot; (1911, Aug. 25)</td>
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<td>HM 82011</td>
<td>[Whitman, Sophia] and Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Sep. 1)</td>
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<td>HM 82012</td>
<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Sep. 13)</td>
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<td>Whitman, Lester L. (Lester Lee), 1861-1932 letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Sep. 27)</td>
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<td>[Whitman], Sophia letter to R.J. Whitman (1911, Oct. 5)</td>
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<td>HM 82015</td>
<td>Godfrey, Abbie Prentiss letter to George Crockett (1911, July 7)</td>
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<td>HM 82016</td>
<td>[Whitman, Sophia] letter to ------ ------ [undated]</td>
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<td>HM 82017</td>
<td>Among the Automobiles [clipping] (1904, Oct. 22)</td>
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<td>From Lewiston Saturday Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>HM 82018</td>
<td>Whitman Reduces Transcontinental Record 28 Days [clippings] [1904]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Pacific Automobiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM 82019</td>
<td>L.L. Whitman's Second Transcontinental Tour [clipping] [1904]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Pacific Automobiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM 82020</td>
<td>From Coast to Coast in a Motor-Car by L.L. Whitman [pamphlet] [1905]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With note card: &quot;There are 'many men of many minds' and also men of many kinds. But this kind of a man, I am sure you'll agree. Is the kind we are always glad to see.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM 82021</td>
<td>Coast to Coast in a Reo [pamphlet] (1910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Original transferred to Rare Books Department, May 2015. Call number: RB 645458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM 82022</td>
<td>&quot;From N.Y. to S.F. in a Reo - 10 day - 18 hour - 12 min. From N.Y. to Los Angeles in a Reo - 12 day - 21 hour - 51 min&quot; [photograph] [1910]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photograph by N. Lazarnick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.L. Whitman's business cards [undated]</td>
<td>Includes pressed flowers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>