

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

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**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

Cardiff Giant Scrapbook, 1899-1948

**LOCATION(S):**

Folio vols. "C"

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**SIZE OF COLLECTION:**

1 folio volume

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**SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:**

Newsclippings in scrapbook; Alice Lawrence, letters to Clarence Brigham, 1943, AAS archives; New York State Historical Association, letter to Clarence Brigham, 1950 January 11, AAS archives

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**SOURCE OF COLLECTION:**

Letters and some clippings purchased from Alice A. Lawrence, 1943

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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:**

The Cardiff Giant, a ten foot long piece of gypsum in the shape of a man, was unearthed on 16 October 1869, on a farm in Cardiff, N.Y. The discovery generated a great deal of discussion and controversy for more than a year, until it was proven to be a hoax, carved in Chicago and secretly buried in Cardiff in 1868.

The Giant was exhibited in Syracuse, N.Y., and elsewhere for several years, until its owner, Calvin O. Gott (1832-1886), of Fitchburg, Mass., placed it in storage with Sumner S. Lawrence (1838-1908), a Fitchburg contractor and builder. In 1913, Lawrence's widow, H. Frances Lawrence ( - ), sold the statue at a sheriff's sale to her son, Ralph C. Lawrence ( - ), who later that year sold it to E. S. Calkins of Syracuse.

This scrapbook contains correspondence with members of the Lawrence family regarding the Cardiff Giant in the period 1899 to 1939. There are many letters from individuals wishing to lease or purchase the statue for exhibit. There are also newsclippings about the giant from various newspapers, 1903 to 1939. After the letters and clippings were acquired by the American Antiquarian Society in 1943, they were mounted in a scrapbook and additional materials were added at AAS until 1948, when the Giant was purchased by the Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y. Further items were added when the volume was on loan to the New York State Historical Association from 1948 to 1950.

See also the "Cardiff Giant" scrapbook in the Paine Family, Papers, c. 1721- c. 1918.