

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**

**WESTERN ARCHIVES**



**THE ELIJAH WOODMAN FAMILY FONDS**

**AFC 65**

Inventory prepared by Alison Mitchell-Reid, based on student finding aid project(s) undertaken in partial fulfilment of archives course requirements – October 2009

Updated by Amanda Jamieson – October 2012

**WESTERN ARCHIVES**  
**AFC 65**  
**THE ELIJAH WOODMAN FAMILY FONDS**

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**THE ELIJAH WOODMAN FAMILY FONDS**  
**AFC 65**  
**FONDS DESCRIPTION**

**Dates**

1836 - 1922

**Extent**

6.5 cm of textual records and other material  
35 photographs, 4 post cards, 1 drawing, 1 tote bag, 1 map

**Biographical Sketch**

Elijah Crocker Woodman was born to Edmund and Lydia (née Crocker) Woodman on September 22, 1797 in Buxton, Maine. He married Aphia Elden on February 25, 1819. Elijah and Aphia had seven children, six of whom were born in the United States:

- Emeline Woodman Leonard (b. 29 Aug. 1819)
- Abigail Woodman Summers (b. 14 Mar. 1821)
- Francis Woodman (b. 2 Mar. 1823)
- Lydia Woodman O'Dell (b. 25 July 1825)
- Edmund Balfour Woodman (b. 20 Aug. 1827)
- Henry Clay Woodman (b. 30 July 1830)
- Susan Elden Woodman (b. 5 Sept. 1832, d. 9 July 1851)

Elijah Woodman came to Upper Canada in 1830; his family joined him in 1832, and the family settled in Otter Creek, near what is now Tillsonburg, Ontario. Woodman was also one of Southwestern Ontario's earliest Freemasons, having been initiated in Maine in September, 1820. Woodman operated a sawmill in Otter Creek until 1836, when tough economic conditions spurred the family to move to the village of London.

Concerns about Upper Canada's governance and land granting policies, among other things, led to the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837 and 1838. Although he was not personally involved in the rebellion, Woodman sympathized with the reformer prisoners; he visited them in jail, brought food and moral support, and assisted in contacting defence witnesses. In June of 1838, Woodman was charged with assisting prisoners to break out of jail and was arrested and imprisoned. After spending the summer in the basement of the London jail, Woodman was released, re-imprisoned, and released again. Fleeing to Wisconsin, and then to Detroit, Michigan, Woodman became involved in the patriot movement and was captured in the December, 1838 invasion of Windsor.

Convicted of "piratical invasion of Upper Canada," Elijah Woodman was sentenced to death by hanging. His sentence was commuted to "transportation for life," and he was shipped aboard the *Buffalo* from Quebec to Van Diemen's Land (now known as Tasmania). Arriving in February of 1840, Woodman spent two years performing hard labour in a road

gang. In 1842, after he received a “ticket of leave” to pursue work with a private employer, Woodman began performing farm work on the estate of William Kermode, north of Hobart.

Woodman was officially pardoned on July 16, 1845, but due to ill health and poverty, it would take him two years to secure passage on a ship to North America. The whaler *Young Eagle* finally agreed to take him to America on March 1, 1847. Woodman’s illness progressed during the course of the voyage and he died, likely of tuberculosis, on June 6, 1847. Being several days from land, the crew of *Young Eagle* decided to bury him at sea.

### **Scope and Content**

This fonds consists of copied and transcribed correspondence and other documents relating to the personal and business activities of Elijah Woodman. Included are letters, diaries, genealogical documents, and historical narratives. Photographs, post cards, and a tote bag that Woodman may have carried are also included. This material was maintained by Frank Leonard, Elijah Woodman’s grandson; the genealogical documents were also created by Frank Leonard.

### **Arrangement**

The fonds is arranged into the following series:

- Series 1: Woodman family genealogical documents
- Series 2: Elijah Woodman family correspondence
- Series 3: Elijah Woodman’s diaries and other documents
- Series 4: Elijah Woodman’s sawmill document

### **Finding Aids**

File list is available.

### **Custodial History**

It is likely that the material was retained by the descendants of Frank Leonard, Elijah Woodman’s grandson.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

This fonds may have been borrowed from the Leonard Family in 1974 or 1976.

### **Associated Material**

This fonds is associated with the Elijah Leonard Family fonds held at the University of Western Ontario Archives. Please see finding aid AFC 64. Series 1 was also compiled by Frank Leonard, Elijah Woodman’s grandson.

A book by Fred Landon, entitled [An exile from Canada to Van Diemen’s Land; being the story of Elijah Woodman, transported overseas for participation in the Upper Canada troubles of 1837-38](#) is available at the University of Western Ontario Archives reading room. Please see call number F1032.25.W6L3.

**Source of Supplied Title**

Title based on contents of the fonds.

**Conditions Governing Access**

No restrictions on access.

**Note**

This fonds was formerly identified as E36.

**THE ELIJAH WOODMAN FAMILY FONDS**  
**AFC 65**  
**SERIES DESCRIPTIONS and FILE LISTS**

**Series 1      Woodman family genealogical documents**

**Dates**

1878-1921

**Extent**

1 cm of textual records

35 photographs ; 10 x 15 cm or smaller. - 4 post cards. – 1 drawing : photocopy

**Scope and Content**

This series includes genealogical documents relating to the family of Elijah Woodman. Included are handwritten pages from a Woodman and Elden family Bible, clipped newspaper obituaries, and genealogical histories compiled by Frank Leonard, Elijah Woodman's grandson. Photographs, post cards, and a reproduction of a sketch of Elijah Woodman in profile are also included.

**Note**

Title based on contents of the series.

**File List**

| <b>Title</b>        | <b>Dates</b>     | <b>Box/File</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Family history      | 1878, [ca. 1920] | AFC 65 - 1 / 5  |
| Newspaper clippings | 1911-1921        | AFC 65 - 1 / 8  |
| Photographs         | [187-?]-1912     | AFC 65 – 1 / 10 |

**THE ELIJAH WOODMAN FAMILY FONDS**  
**AFC 65**  
**SERIES DESCRIPTIONS and FILE LISTS**

**Series 2      Elijah Woodman family correspondence**

**Dates**

1837 – 1922, [192-?]

**Extent**

2 cm of textual material

**Scope and Content**

This series contains photocopies and typed transcripts of Elijah Woodman's correspondence. Letters from Woodman to his family - written during his imprisonment, sea voyage, exile, and return - are included. Correspondence from Frank Leonard, Elijah Woodman's grandson, speaking of his grandfather's letters is also included.

**Note**

Title based on contents of the series.

**File List**

| <b>Title</b>  | <b>Dates</b>  | <b>Box/File</b> |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Correspondence                                      | 1837-1922   | AFC 65 - 1 / 2  |
| Correspondence: transcripts (1839, 1843-1845, 1847) | typed transcription [192-?]<br>(originally created 1839-1847) | AFC 65 – 1 / 3  |



**THE ELIJAH WOODMAN FAMILY FONDS  
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SERIES DESCRIPTIONS and FILE LISTS**

**Series 3      Elijah Woodman's diaries and other documents**

**Dates**

1838 - 1923

**Extent**

2 cm of textual material  
1 map  
1 tote bag

**Scope and Content**

This series contains documents relating to Elijah Woodman's experiences in the Upper Canada rebellion, as well as his incarceration and transportation to Van Diemen's Land. Copies of Woodman's diaries and pardon, a map of Van Diemen's Land, and a tote bag that he may have carried are included. A list of prisoners aboard the *Buffalo*, and historical documents relating to the rebellion, are also included.

**Note**

Title based on contents of the series.

**File List**

| Title                          | Dates      | Box/File        |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Diaries, "Jail Night Thoughts" | 1838-1840  | AFC 65 – 1 / 4  |
| Map, Van Dieman's [sic.] Land  | [185-?]    | AFC 65 – 1 / 6  |
| Miscellaneous, tote bag        | [18-?]     | AFC 65 – 1 / 7  |
| Pardon                         | 1845       | AFC 65 – 1 / 9  |
| Rebellion of 1837-1838         | 1911, 1923 | AFC 65 – 1 / 11 |

**THE ELIJAH WOODMAN FAMILY FONDS**  
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**SERIES DESCRIPTIONS and FILE LISTS**

**Series 4      Elijah Woodman's sawmill document**

**Dates**

1836

**Extent**

1 p.

**Scope and Content**

This series contains one handwritten promissory note relating to Elijah Woodman's sawmill operation in Otter Creek, Ontario.

**Note**

Title based on contents of the series.

**File List**

| Title            | Dates | Box/File       |
|------------------|-------|----------------|
| Business receipt | 1836  | AFC 65 – 1 / 1 |