

A Guide to the Cushing Family Papers, 1843-1894 SC 0263

Cushing Family Papers
1843-1894



Title Statement

A Guide to the Cushing Family Papers, 1843-1894 SC 0263

Author: Tiffany Cole

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880 Madison Drive
MSC 1704
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807
Telephone: (540) 568-3612
library-special@jmu.edu
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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 0263

Unit Date

1843-1894

Language

English .

Abstract

The Cushing Family Papers, 1843-1894, are comprised chiefly of correspondence between members of Edwin M. and Bettie Cushing's immediate and extended family. Additional papers related to Edwin M. Cushing's appointments to local masonic lodges are included.

Creator

Cushing family

source

Green Valley Auctions, Inc.

Extent

0.2 cubic feet 1 box

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open to research. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collections Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk (library-special@jmu.edu).

Acquisition Information

Acquired at Green Valley Auctions' January 12, 2018 sale.

Processing Information

The collection was acquired with individual documents housed in plastic protectors and further housed in a three-ring binder. The archivist arranged the correspondence chronologically and by recipient.

Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Cushing Family Papers, 1843-1894, SC 0263, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Bio/Historical Note

Elizabeth E. "Bettie" McCoy Cushing (1829-1906), daughter of Jane Isabel Carson McCoy (1808-1884) and Judson McCoy, married Edwin M. Cushing (1830-1903), son of Merrill Cushing and Anne Barnes Cushing, in 1851. Both were Augusta County natives and continued to reside in Staunton, Virginia after their marriage. They were also devoted congregants of the local Methodist church. The Cushings had five children – William Amiss Cushing (1855-1907), Edwin Judson Cushing (1861-1930), Henrietta Cushing Harman (1864-1895), Gertrude Cushing Miller (1869-1904), and Katie Cushing Anderson (1858-1930).

During the Civil War, Edwin M. Cushing was a member of the Confederate commissary department and was an organizer and charter member of the Stonewall Brigade Band. He also served as the band's first president. Before and after the war, Cushing worked as an auctioneer. Cushing was also an active member in community organizations including the local Masonic lodges and the Knights of Pythias.

Scope and Content

The Cushing Family Papers, 1843-1894, are comprised chiefly of correspondence between members of Edwin and Bettie Cushing's immediate and extended family. Several folders of financial and personal papers are included though they do not all demonstrate a clear connection to the Cushings.

Related Material

Blackley Family Papers, 1830-2016, SC 0232, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Keywords

Letters (correspondence)

Legal documents

Biographical sketches
Financial Records
Certificates
Family papers
Freemasonry -- Virginia
Slavery -- Virginia -- Staunton
Staunton (Va.) -- History -- 19th century
Staunton (Va.) -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
Augusta County (Va.) -- History -- 19th century
Augusta County (Va.) -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
Green Valley Auctions, Inc.

Bibliography

Culbertson, Charles. "Forgotten folks: Staunton's Edwin Cushing was a living encyclopedia of local history." *The News Leader*, October 12, 2017. <https://stnva.nl/2yf1ey2> (accessed February 23, 2018). Obituary for Edwin Merrill Cushing, *Staunton Spectator*, December 11, 1903. Obituary for Elizabeth E. "Bettie" McCoy Cushing, *Staunton Spectator*, May 18, 1906.

Provenance

Based on a label present on the binder that originally housed the collection, it is presumed that these papers were consigned to Green Valley Auctions by Charles Culbertson, Augusta County historian.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series. Each series is further arranged chronologically.

- Correspondence, 1846-1894
- Papers, 1843-1889

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit ID 1

Unit Date 1846-1894

Scope and Content

Series 1: Correspondence, 1846-1894, is comprised almost exclusively of correspondence addressed to Bettie McCoy Cushing, with most letters written by her husband Edwin Cushing, her mother Jane Carson McCoy, and her cousin Ellie (also signed Ella) in Winchester. A small group of letters from Robert Cabell Anderson (1854-1924) to his future wife Katie Cushing Anderson, daughter of Edwin and Betting Cushing, are included. Additional family members present in the correspondence (as either author or recipient) include Judge Joseph Carson (1806-1871) and Judson McCoy. All correspondence is arranged by recipient.

Contextual evidence within the letters addressed "My dear child" (or similar variant) suggests that they were written to Bettie and/or Edwin Cushing from Bettie's mother Jane Carson McCoy. Mother McCoy, who frequently wrote from Allendale (an Allen family estate north of Mt. Jackson) provided updates to the Cushings on Bettie's siblings and other family members.

The subject matter of the letters is generally newsy with mentions of community happenings and family updates, leadership changes in local churches, health and illnesses, births and deaths, and weather reports. A cousin in Canton, Missouri wrote to Bettie McCoy Cushing in April 1852 about a presumed outbreak of an unnamed affliction in her family. The cousin writes, "Jimmie laid 15 weeks before he was able to sit up, no one thought he would live, but he is now able to go about the house & is beginning to gain a little flesh. Our little negro girl laid eleven weeks & died. & Willie has been confined to his bed nearly 4 weeks with the same disease." In a letter dated February 14, 1887, Bettie McCoy Cushing wrote to her daughter Katie Cushing Anderson expressing her condolences for the loss of the Andersons' young son, Cabell.

As Edwin M. Cushing's work as an auctioneer frequently required traveling away from his wife, Cushing's letters to Bettie are generally sentimental and mention his desire to see her soon. In a July 3, 1853 letter,

Cushing writes, "Here I am at the front window just as lonesome as a man without a friend in the world. I sit and look around & everything looks as natural as life except you are not here. Oh how lonesome."

Elizabeth "Bettie" McCoy Cushing correspondence

Unit Date 1846-1857

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Judson McCoy correspondence

Unit Date 1851

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Jane Carson McCoy correspondence

Unit Date 1854-1878, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Non-Cushing family correspondence

Unit Date 1858, 1879, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Elizabeth "Bettie" McCoy Cushing correspondence

Unit Date 1863-1894

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Edwin M. Cushing correspondence

Unit Date 1877-1879, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Katie Cushing Anderson correspondence

Unit Date 1879-1887

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Ann Cushing envelope

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Elizabeth "Bettie" McCoy Cushing correspondence

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Papers

Unit ID 2

Unit Date 1843-1889

Scope and Content

Series 2: Papers, 1843-1889, includes an obituary/biographical sketch of Eliza J. Carson, wife of Judge Joseph S. Carson; Edwin M. Cushing's membership certificates to local masonic lodges; miscellaneous

financial papers with no clear connection to the Cushings or related families; and a 17-page handwritten ex parte decision by Judge Lucas P. Thompson regarding a writ of habeas corpus obtained by P[reston].T. Burkholder, Augusta County citizen and farmer, during the Civil War. This document also has no obvious relationship to the Cushings, though it may be related to Edwin M. Cushing's time with the commissary department during the Civil War. Ephemeral materials include a portrait photograph of a toddler, the back of which is inscribed "Virginia May," and a note with handwritten prayers.

Financial papers

Unit Date 1843-1854, undated

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Ex parte, P[reston] T. Burkholder, upon writ of habeas corpus

Unit Date circa 1864

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Edwin M. Cushing masonic membership certificates and papers

Unit Date 1872-1889

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Eliza J. Carson obituary/biographical sketch

Unit Date 1879

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Ephemera

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [1000886361] 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)