

Edmund Cody Burnett Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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Washington, D.C.**

2009

Revised 2010 April

Contact information:

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009146>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lccn.loc.gov/mm88014399>

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Collection Summary

Title: Edmund Cody Burnett Papers

Span Dates: 1765-1967

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1907-1936)

ID No.: MSS14399

Creator: Burnett, Edmund Cody, 1864-1949

Extent: 21,550 items ; 63 containers ; 25.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Historian, editor, and educator. Correspondence, memoranda, drafts of writings, speeches, notes, research material, financial records, legal papers, and a project file from Burnett's work as editor of *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, published from 1921 to 1936; including also material on the Burnett family and farm in Tennessee, original and edited Civil War correspondence of the Burnett, Cody, Lightfoot, and McGarity families; and a translation of a cipher used by the Lee family of Virginia.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Burnett family.

Burnett, Edmund Cody, 1864-1949, ed. Letters of members of the Continental Congress. 1921-1936.

Burnett, Edmund Cody, 1864-1949.

Call, Arthur Deerin, 1869-1941--Correspondence.

Cody family.

Connor, R. D. W. (Robert Digges Wimberly), 1878-1950--Correspondence.

Farrand, Max, 1869-1945--Correspondence.

Funk, Charles Earle, 1881-1957--Correspondence.

Jameson, J. Franklin (John Franklin), 1859-1937--Correspondence.

Lee family.

Leland, Waldo Gifford, 1879-1966--Correspondence.

Lightfoot family.

Malone, Dumas, 1892-1986--Correspondence.

McGarity family.

Paullin, Charles Oscar, 1868 or 1869-1944--Correspondence.

Organizations

Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Tennessee Valley Authority.

United States. Continental Congress.

Subjects

Agriculture and state.

Agriculture--Economic aspects.

Agriculture--Tennessee.

Ciphers--Virginia.

Genealogy--Tennessee.

Nature.

New Deal, 1933-1939.

Water resources development--Tennessee Valley.

Places

Tennessee--History, Local.

Tennessee--Social life and customs.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775.
United States--History--Confederation, 1783-1789.
United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.
United States--Politics and government--1775-1783.
United States--Politics and government--1783-1789.
United States--Politics and government--To 1775.

Occupations

Editors.
Educators.
Historians.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Edmund Cody Burnett, historian, editor, and educator, were given to the Library of Congress in 1946 by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C. Several additions were given by Edmund Cody Burnett; his children, Edmund C. Burnett, Elizabeth S. Wiens, Sue S. Panzer, and Thomas M. Burnett; and others between 1929 and 1988, and by Elizabeth S. Wiens in 1997. Cipher materials concerning the Lee family of Virginia were transferred from the Ethel Armes Collection of Lee Family Papers in the Manuscript Division to the Burnett Papers in 1998.

Processing History

The papers of Edmund Cody Burnett were arranged and described in 1989 and 1992. The collection was expanded and revised in 1998. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Additional Guides

The Edmund Cody Burnett Papers have been described in *Library of Congress Acquisitions: Manuscript Division*, 1988, pp. 6-9.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Edmund Cody Burnett is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Edmund Cody Burnett are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Edmund Cody Burnett Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1864, Nov. 29	Born, Henry County, Ala.
1888	A.B., Carson (now Carson-Newman) College, Jefferson City, Tenn.

1890	A.B., Brown University, Providence, R.I.
1890-1894	Taught mathematics, Greek, and modern languages, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.
1894-1899	Instructor, Brown University, Providence, R.I.
1895	A.M., Brown University, Providence, R.I.
1897	Ph.D., Brown University, Providence, R.I.
1899-1900	Taught English, Bethel College, Russellville, Ky.
1900-1905	Professor of history, Mercer University, Macon, Ga.
1905-1907	Assistant treasurer, Swann-Day Lumber Co., Clay City, Ky.
1907-1936	Historian, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C.
1914	Married Susan Elizabeth Susong
1921-1936	Edited <i>Letters of Members of the Continental Congress</i> , 8 vols. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1921-1936
1938	Awarded Litt. D., Brown University, Providence, R.I.
1943	Awarded Loubat Prize for <i>The Continental Congress</i> . New York: Macmillan Co., 1941
1949, Jan. 10	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edmund Cody Burnett (1864-1949) span the years 1765-1967, with the focus on his role as editor of *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* between 1907 and 1936. The papers are divided into five series: [Correspondence](#), [Writings File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Letters Project File](#), and an [Addition](#).

During his tenure (1907-1936) in the Department of Historical Research at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Burnett edited the eight-volume work, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, and wrote a narrative history, *The Continental Congress*. Under the general guidance of department director J. Franklin Jameson, Burnett's *Letters* ranked among the department's most significant contributions to the field of documentary editing. The [Correspondence](#) series traces the development of the editorial project over thirty years and contains numerous examples of Burnett's endeavors to locate manuscript resources relevant to his research. His efforts to trace and precisely define eighteenth-century modes of expression and colloquialisms produced a wealth of incidental background information. Correspondence with Dumas Malone, editor of the *Dictionary of American Biography (DAB)*, and with Waldo Gifford Leland discuss both the content and style of Burnett's writings for the *DAB*, the Continental Congress project, and his book reviews and articles. Other correspondents include R. D. W. Connor, Max Farrand, Charles Earle Funk, J. Franklin Jameson, Arthur Deerin Call, and Charles Oscar Paullin.

The [Correspondence](#) series also reveals Burnett's interest in farming and agrarian issues. Detailed letters to his farm managers and family members, especially during his long absences while working in Washington, D.C., document the operation of the Burnett family's vegetable and cattle farm in northeastern Tennessee. Other subjects discussed include Burnett's concerns about the environmental impact of the Tennessee Valley Authority projects and the economic effects of

New Deal government farm programs. Throughout the collection, from Burnett's earliest to last years, there are examples of his profound respect for the simplicity and beauty of nature.

The [Writings File](#) consists primarily of Burnett's articles about Tennessee local history and edited collections of Civil War-era correspondence of the Burnett, Cody, Lightfoot, and McGarity families. The original letters published in these collected editions have been filed in the nineteenth-century portion of the Correspondence series. The Writings File does not contain all of Burnett's published works, and less than half of it pertains to the Continental Congress.

The [Miscellany](#) series relates chiefly to Tennessee local history and family history and genealogy. Included are several nineteenth-century legal documents, as well as a small group of speeches presented by Burnett at meetings of the Palaver Club of Washington, D.C., and the Agricultural History Society of America.

The [Letters Project File](#) series comprises Burnett's research files from the *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* project. The series consists largely of transcribed, photostatic, and printer's copies of original letters and documents found by Burnett and his staff in public repositories and private collections. Not all of the documents collected by Burnett appeared in the project's published volumes. Although Burnett made printer's copies from most of the photostatic copies, others were to have been included in a supplemental volume that was never completed. The series also contains transcribed letters omitted from publication because they lacked specific information on the Continental Congress that was already available in the official journals. A few of the documents copied from private collections are unavailable to the public in their original form. Cipher materials, editorial instructions, sundry lists and notes, and card files containing working research notes complete the series.

An [Addition](#) to the papers in 1998 consists of correspondence between Burnett, his family, and other parties, including J. Franklin Jameson, and is an extension of the Correspondence File. Also included in the Addition is a Letters Project File documenting the final disposition of *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* project material, translations prepared by Burnett of ciphers used by the Lee family of Virginia, miscellaneous items, and writings by Burnett.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- [Correspondence, 1840-1948](#)
- [Writings File, 1888-1949](#)
- [Miscellany, circa 1777-1967](#)
- [Letters Project File, circa 1765-1930](#)
- [Addition, 1866-1949](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-21	<p><u>Correspondence, 1840-1948</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received by Burnett and his family members, with miscellaneous attachments and enclosures.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically by year and month.</p>
BOX 22-25	<p><u>Writings File, 1888-1949</u></p> <p>Articles, book reviews, letters to the editor, and miscellaneous writings by Burnett and others, including printed, near print, typewritten and handwritten drafts, research notes, and related material.</p> <p>Arranged by type of material and usually alphabetically thereunder.</p>
BOX 25-27	<p><u>Miscellany, circa 1777-1967</u></p> <p>Certificates, contracts, estate documents, financial accounts, lists, newspaper clippings, notes, memoranda, obituaries, research material, and speeches by Burnett.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material or subject.</p>
BOX 28-60	<p><u>Letters Project File, circa 1765-1930</u></p> <p>Transcribed, photostatic, and printer's copies of letters and documents collected as part of the <i>Letters of Members of the Continental Congress</i> project at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C., cipher material, editorial instructions, speech, draft of an introduction, lists, notes, and card files.</p> <p>Organized by type of material and chronologically therein. Copies of letters and documents are arranged by date of original document.</p>
BOX 61-63	<p><u>Addition, 1866-1949</u></p> <p>Cipher material used by the Lee family of Virginia and letters sent and received by Burnett and his family.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.</p>

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-21	Correspondence, 1840-1948 Letters sent and received by Burnett and his family members, with miscellaneous attachments and enclosures. Arranged chronologically by year and month.
BOX 1	Jan. 1840-Dec. 1880 (18 folders)
BOX 1	Nineteenth-century undated documents and fragments
BOX 2	Jan. 1902-June 1915 (9 folders)
BOX 3	July 1915-Aug. 1917 (10 folders)
BOX 4	Sept. 1917-Dec. 1922 (13 folders)
BOX 5	Jan. 1923-Dec. 1929 (10 folders)
BOX 6	Jan. 1930-Sept. 1931 (8 folders)
BOX 7	Oct. 1931-Dec. 1932 (6 folders)
BOX 8	Jan. 1933-Feb. 1934 (9 folders)
BOX 9	Mar. 1934-Aug. 1935 (11 folders)
BOX 10	Sept. 1935-Jan. 1937 (10 folders)
BOX 11	Feb. 1937-May 1938 (8 folders)
BOX 12	June 1938-Feb. 1939 (9 folders)
BOX 13	Mar. 1939-Apr. 1940 (11 folders)
BOX 14	May 1940-Mar. 1941 (11 folders)
BOX 15	Apr.-Dec. 1941 (11 folders)
BOX 16	Jan.-Dec. 1942 (11 folders)
BOX 17	Jan. 1943-Mar. 1944 (13 folders)
BOX 18	Apr. 1944-July 1945 (13 folders)

Correspondence, 1840-1948

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 19	Aug. 1945-Dec. 1946 (13 folders)
BOX 20	Jan.-Dec. 1947 (12 folders)
BOX 21	Jan.-Dec. 1948 (6 folders)
BOX 21	Twentieth-century undated documents and fragments
BOX 22-25	Writings File, 1888-1949 Articles, book reviews, letters to the editor, and miscellaneous writings by Burnett and others, including printed, near print, typewritten and handwritten drafts, research notes, and related material. Arranged by type of material and usually alphabetically thereunder.
BOX 22	Articles
BOX 22	"Big Creek's Response to the Coming of the Railroad," 1927
BOX 22	"Ciphers of the Revolutionary Period," 1917
BOX 22	"The Committee of the States," 1913
BOX 22	"The Continental Congress and Agricultural Supplies," 1928
BOX 22	"Early Cocke County History," 1940
BOX 22	"The Government of Federal Territories in Europe," 1896
BOX 22	"Hall's Top," 1945
BOX 22	"The Hog Drivers' Play-Song and Some of its Relatives," 1949
BOX 22	"Hog Raising and Hog Driving in the Region of the French Broad River," 1946 (6 folders)
BOX 23	"Letters of a Confederate Surgeon: Dr. Abner Embry McGarity," 1945-1946 (9 folders)
BOX 24	"Letters of Barnett Hardeman Cody and Others, 1861-1864," 1939
BOX 24	"Letters of Three Lightfoot Brothers, 1861-1864," 1942
BOX 24	"The Name United States of America," 1925
BOX 24	"New York and the Continental Congress," undated
BOX 24	"Our Union of States in the Making," 1935
BOX 24	"The Passing of the Old Rail Fence: A Farmer's Lament," 1948
BOX 24	"Perquisites of the Presidents of the Continental Congress," 1929
BOX 24	"Political Development in the Nineteenth Century," undated
BOX 24	"Prophets Without Honor: Or Fresh Potlicker from an Old Pot," undated
BOX 24	"The Railroad Comes to Big Creek," undated
BOX 24	"Revolutionary Committees," undated
BOX 24	"Shingle Making on the Lesser Waters of the Big Creek of the French Broad River," 1946 (2 folders)
BOX 24	"The Solid South," undated
BOX 24	"Southern Statesmen and the Confederation," 1937
BOX 24	"The Ten-Mile Square," undated
BOX 24	"Washington and Committees at Headquarters," 1934
BOX 24	"The West and the Union, 1778-1808," undated
BOX 24	"Who Was the First President of the United States?" 1932
BOX 24	Book reviews, 1923-1948, undated (2 folders)

Writings File, 1888-1949

Container

Contents

BOX 24	Letters to the editor, 1929-1944
BOX 25	Miscellany
BOX 25	By Burnett
BOX 25	Preface to <i>The Continental Congress</i> , 1941
BOX 25	Foreword to <i>The History of Cocke County, Tennessee</i> , 1946
BOX 25	Poetry, 1888-1892, undated
BOX 25	Untitled, undated
BOX 25	By others, 1910-1941, undated
BOX 25-27	Miscellany, circa 1777-1967
	Certificates, contracts, estate documents, financial accounts, lists, newspaper clippings, notes, memoranda, obituaries, research material, and speeches by Burnett.
	Arranged alphabetically by type of material or subject.
BOX 25	Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C., progress reports and expense vouchers, 1916-1935
BOX 25	Certificates, contracts, financial accounts, 1840-1943, undated
BOX 25	Estate matters, circa 1837-1967
BOX 25	Lists, notes, and memoranda, 1916-1943, undated
BOX 25	Newspaper clippings, circa 1915-1946 (2 folders)
BOX 25	Obituaries, 1923-1953, undated
BOX 26	Research material
BOX 26	Family and Tennessee local history, circa 1840-circa 1964 (9 folders)
BOX 27	General, circa 1777-circa 1942
BOX 27	Speeches by Burnett, 1888-1942, undated (5 folders)
BOX 28-60	Letters Project File, circa 1765-1930
	Transcribed, photostatic, and printer's copies of letters and documents collected as part of the <i>Letters of Members of the Continental Congress</i> project at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C., cipher material, editorial instructions, speech, draft of an introduction, lists, notes, and card files.
	Organized by type of material and chronologically therein. Copies of letters and documents are arranged by date of original document.
BOX 28	Photostatic copies
BOX 28	1765-Apr. 1779 (7 folders)
BOX 29	May 1779-June 1782 (6 folders)
BOX 30	July 1782-June 1785 (6 folders)
BOX 31	July 1785-Feb. 1801 (8 folders)
BOX 32	Documents not printed
BOX 32	July 1774-July 1777 (6 folders)

Letters Project File, circa 1765-1930

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 33	Aug. 1777-Aug. 1779 (6 folders)
BOX 34	Sept. 1779-Dec. 1780 (7 folders)
BOX 35	Jan. 1781-Apr. 1782 (6 folders)
BOX 36	May 1782-Dec. 1783 (6 folders)
BOX 37	Jan. 1784-Dec. 1785 (6 folders)
BOX 38	Jan. 1786-June 1788 (6 folders)
BOX 39	July 1788-June 1827 (2 folders)
BOX 39	Printer's copies
BOX 39	Vol. I, 5 Sept. 1774-12 May 1819 (8 folders)
BOX 40	Vol. II
BOX 40	8 July 1776-22 Sept. 1777 (14 folders)
BOX 41	23 Sept. 1777-1 June 1778 (12 folders)
BOX 42	Vol. III, 3 June-31 Dec. 1778 (10 folders)
BOX 42	Vol. IV
BOX 42	3 Jan.-9 Mar. 1779 (2 folders)
BOX 43	15 Mar.-29 Dec. 1779 (13 folders)
BOX 44	Vol. VII
BOX 44	1 Jan.-22 Sept. 1783 (11 folders)
BOX 45	25 Sept. 1783-20 Oct. 1784 (12 folders)
BOX 46	25 Oct.-28 Dec. 1784 (2 folders)
BOX 46	Vol. VIII
BOX 46	1 Jan.-10 Nov. 1785 (10 folders)
BOX 47	10 Nov. 1785-30 Dec. 1786 (11 folders)
BOX 48	7 Jan. 1787-25 July 1789 (13 folders)
BOX 48	Supplement, 26 Aug. 1783-19 Oct. 1784
BOX 49	Other transcripts and copies
BOX 49	Cipher material, 1774-1805, undated (3 folders)
BOX 49	Miscellaneous transcripts

Letters Project File, circa 1765-1930

Container

Contents

BOX 49	Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C., 1768-1791, undated
BOX 49	Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., 1783-1787
BOX 50	Notes, 1774-1789, undated
BOX 50	Miscellaneous working papers
BOX 50	Address to Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, 1929
BOX 50	Attendance and representation, 1783-1788
BOX 50	Introduction to <i>Letters of Members of the Continental Congress</i> , 1928 (vol. IV)
BOX 50	Letters by depository, list of, 1926, undated (3 folders)
BOX 50	Principles, instructions, lists, and notes, 1930, undated
BOX 51-60	Research notes card file, circa 1774-1779, undated
BOX 61-63	Addition, 1866-1949 Cipher material used by the Lee family of Virginia and letters sent and received by Burnett and his family. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.
BOX 61	Cipher material used by Lee family of Virginia, undated
BOX 61	Correspondence
BOX 61	1866, 1881-1902 (5 folders)
BOX 62	1903-1926 (5 folders)
BOX 63	1927-1935, 1942-1949, undated (4 folders)
BOX 63	Letters project file, 1946
BOX 63	Miscellany, 1884, 1896-1903, 1909-1915, 1925, 1938, undated
BOX 63	Writings concerning Burnett family in Tennessee, undated