

Edward W. Washburn Family Papers

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Prepared by David Mathisen

Collection Summary

Title: Edward W. Washburn Family Papers

Span Dates: 1817-1934

ID No.: MSS49528

Creator: Washburn, Edward W. (Edward Wight), 1881-1934

Extent: 1,000 items ; 9 containers plus 3 oversize ; 4.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Chemist, civil servant, and educator. Diaries, correspondence, school material, notebooks, photographs, financial and military papers, genealogical records, writings, printed matter, and miscellaneous documents pertaining to the family of Edward W. Washburn, mainly in Maine and Nebraska, including Edward's parents, William Gilmor and Flora Ella Wight Washburn, and grandparents, George A. and Elizabeth Gilmor Washburn. Contains Civil War correspondence and military records of George A. Washburn as captain in the 12th Maine Infantry Regiment.

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

Butler, Benjamin F. (Benjamin Franklin), 1818-1893.

Washburn family.

Washburn, Edward W. (Edward Wight), 1881-1934.

Washburn, Eliza Gilmor, 1820-1898.

Washburn, Flora Ella Wight, 1852-1934.

Washburn, George A., 1819-1883.

Washburn, William Gilmor, 1851-1932.

Wight family.

Organizations

Constitution (Frigate)

United States. Army--Military life.

United States. Army. Maine Infantry Regiment, 12th (1861-1864). Company K.

Subjects

Genealogy.

Places

Boston (Mass.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Louisiana--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Maine--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Maine--Social life and customs.

Massachusetts--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Mississippi--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Nebraska--Social life and customs.

New Orleans (La.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Ship Island (Miss.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Occupations

Chemists.

Civil servants.

Educators.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The family papers of Edward W. Washburn, chemist, civil servant, and educator, were given to the Library of Congress by his heirs via Charles Saylor in 1972.

Processing History

The Washburn Family Papers were processed in 1985. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Edward W. Washburn family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Edward W. Washburn Family Papers 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, Edward W. Washburn Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1881, May 10	Born, Beatrice, Neb.
1899-1901	University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb.
1905	B.S., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.
1906-1908	Research associate in physical chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.
1908	Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.
1908-1910	Associate in chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.
1910	Married Sophie Wilhelmina de Veer
1910-1913	Assistant professor of physical chemistry, University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, Ill.
1913-1916	Professor of physical chemistry, University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, Ill.
1916-1922	Professor of ceramic chemistry, University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, Ill.
1918-1919	Vice chairman and acting chairman, Division of Chemistry, National Research Council
1919	Delegate, International Chemistry Union, London, England, International Research Council, Brussels, Belgium

1921-1929	American commissioner, International Commission of Annual Tables for Physical and Chemical Constants
1922	Delegate, International Chemistry Union, Lyons International Research Council, Brussels, Belgium
1922-1930	Editor, International Critical Tables (Physical Chemistry and Engineering Constants)
1923	Delegate, International Chemistry Union, Cambridge, England
1926-1934	Chief chemist, National Bureau of Standards
1929	Chairman, International Committee on Physico-Chemical Standards Member, International Committee on Thermochemistry
1934, Feb. 6	Died

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the family of Edward Wight Washburn (1881-1934) span the years 1817-1934. The collection contains diaries, correspondence, school material, notebooks, photographs, financial and military papers, genealogical records, writings, printed matter, and miscellaneous documents pertaining to Washburn and his family, including his parents, William Gilmor and Flora Ella Wight Washburn, and grandparents, George A. and Elizabeth Gilmor Washburn. The collection is organized into six series: [Diaries](#), [Correspondence](#), [Notebooks](#), [Genealogy](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

Edward W. Washburn was a professor of chemistry at the University of Illinois who in 1926 became chief chemist at the National Bureau of Standards. Beginning in 1918, he served variously as member, commissioner, delegate, editor, and chairman of various organizations and commissions relating to international chemistry standards and physical chemistry tables. The papers, however, focus almost entirely on the Washburn family, with the bulk of material as it pertains to Edward stemming from his early or personal life rather than professional concerns. He was born in Beatrice, Nebraska, where his father moved from Maine in the 1870s and was joined by his mother, who traveled west for their wedding. Grandfather George A. Washburn owned a dry goods and grocery operation in Calais, Maine, from 1857 to 1861.

The diaries and correspondence treat the circumstances and interrelationships of family life in these and other locales, including details of their daily activities. Of particular significance are correspondence and military papers from George A. Washburn's service in the Civil War as a volunteer in the 12th Maine Infantry Regiment that shipped from Boston on the steamer *Constitution* to Ship Island, Mississippi, in November 1861. As captain in the Maine infantry, Washburn saw service under General Benjamin F. Butler in New Orleans before being discharged in May 1863 because of an illness contracted while in transport on the *Constitution*.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [Diaries, 1858-1899](#)
- [Correspondence, 1827-1934](#)
- [Notebooks](#)
- [Genealogy](#)
- [Miscellany, 1817-1934](#)
- [Oversize, 1833-1901](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX 1

Diaries, 1858-1899

Diaries of George A. Washburn, William Gilmor Washburn, and Edward W. Washburn.
Arranged by name of family member and therein chronologically.

BOX 2-3

Correspondence, 1827-1934

Letters sent and received by family members.
Arranged into family and general correspondence and therein chronologically.

BOX 4

Notebooks

Musical compositions of Japheth Coombs Washburn and notebooks of Edward W. Washburn
including school compositions, a record book, chemical journal, and chemical ledger.
Arranged by type of material.

BOX 5

Genealogy

Bible containing family records, charts of the Washburn and Wight families, history of the
Washburn family, obituaries, and other family documents.
Arranged by type of material.

BOX 6-9

Miscellany, 1817-1934

Indentures and agreements, Civil War military papers of George A. Washburn, financial
papers, sheet music, playlet, poetry, compositions, school records, invitations, photographs,
newspaper clippings, books, and other miscellany.
Arranged by type of material.

BOX OV 1-OV 3

Oversize, 1833-1901

Bound issues of newspapers, genealogical chart, blueprint, certificates and diplomas, and
photographs.
Described according to the series and containers from which the items were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Diaries, 1858-1899 Diaries of George A. Washburn, William Gilmor Washburn, and Edward W. Washburn. Arranged by name of family member and therein chronologically.
BOX 1	George A. Washburn and William Gilmor Washburn (many unidentified as to author)
BOX 1	1858
BOX 1	1865-1872 (8 vols.)
BOX 1	1874-1876 (3 vols.)
BOX 1	1878-1882 (5 vols.)
BOX 1	Edward W. Washburn, 1895-1899 (5 vols.)
BOX 2-3	Correspondence, 1827-1934 Letters sent and received by family members. Arranged into family and general correspondence and therein chronologically.
BOX 2	Family
BOX 2	1836-1851
BOX 2	1861-1862 (4 folders)
BOX 2	1864-1867
BOX 2	1870-1889 (8 folders)
BOX 3	1890-1893
BOX 3	1897-1933, undated (7 folders)
BOX 3	General
BOX 3	1827-1864
BOX 3	1875-1934, undated (3 folders)
BOX 4	Notebooks Musical compositions of Japheth Coombs Washburn and notebooks of Edward W. Washburn including school compositions, a record book, chemical journal, and chemical ledger. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 4	Musical compositions by Japheth C. Washburn
BOX 4	School compositions
BOX 4	Record book
BOX 4	Chemical journal

Notebooks

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 4	Chemical ledger
BOX 5	Genealogy Bible containing family records, charts of the Washburn and Wight families, history of the Washburn family, obituaries, and other family documents. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 5	Bible with family record
BOX 5	Charts <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 5	Washburn family
BOX 5	Wight family
BOX 5	History of Washburn family
BOX 5	Notes
BOX 5	Obituaries of Edward W. Washburn, 1934
BOX 6-9	Miscellany, 1817-1934 Indentures and agreements, Civil War military papers of George A. Washburn, financial papers, sheet music, playlet, poetry, compositions, school records, invitations, photographs, newspaper clippings, books, and other miscellany. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 6	Personal documents
BOX 6	Indentures, agreements, etc.
BOX 6	Military papers of George A. Washburn, Civil War
BOX 6	Financial papers
BOX 6	Music
BOX 6	Playlet
BOX 6	Poetry
BOX 6	School
BOX 6	Compositions
BOX 6	Records
BOX 6	Invitations, calling cards, etc.
BOX 6	General
BOX 6	Annotated envelopes
BOX 6	Certificates and diplomas <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 6	Blueprint <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 7	Photographs <i>See also Oversize</i> (3 folders)
BOX 8	Printed matter, clippings (2 folders)
BOX 9	Books
BOX 9	<i>An Easy Grammar of Natural and Experimental Philosophy . . .</i> , by David Blair, revised and enlarged by Benjamin Hallowell
BOX 9	<i>A Discourse on the Character and Work, and the Death and Resurrection of the Two Witnesses</i> , by John Trip
BOX 9	<i>The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1840</i> , published by David H. Williams (Boston)

Miscellany, 1817-1934

Container

Contents

BOX 9	<i>Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba . . . in the Months of February, March, April, and May, 1828</i> , by Abiel Abbot
BOX 9	Bound newspapers <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX OV 1-OV 3	Oversize, 1833-1901 Bound issues of newspapers, genealogical chart, blueprint, certificates and diplomas, and photographs. Described according to the series and containers from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Genealogy
BOX OV 1	Chart (Container 5)
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
BOX OV 1	Certificates and diplomas (Container 6)
BOX OV 1	Blueprint (Container 6)
BOX OV 1	Photographs (Container 7)
BOX OV 2	Bound newspapers (Container 7)
BOX OV 2	Vol. 1
BOX OV 2	<i>Portland Tribune</i> , Portland, Maine, 1841, Apr. 24-Aug. 7
BOX OV 2	<i>Portland Transcript</i> , 1841, Apr. 17-1842, Jan. 22
BOX OV 2	<i>Yankee Farmer</i> , Boston, Mass, 1841, June 26-Dec. 9
BOX OV 2	Vol. 2
BOX OV 2	<i>Nebraskan Hesperian</i> , University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr., 1900, Sept. 18-1901, June 4
BOX OV 2	<i>Daily Nebraskan</i> , University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr., 1901, June 13
BOX OV 3	Vol. 3, <i>Orb</i> , China, Maine, 1833, Dec. 14-1834, Nov. 29
BOX OV 3	Vol. 4, <i>Orb</i> , China, Maine, 1834, Dec. 6-1835, Nov. 28
BOX OV 3	Vol. 5, <i>Eastern Democrat</i> , Calais, Maine, 1840, June 17-1841, June 22

Appendix: Genealogy of the Washburn Family

1. JAPETH COOMBS

WASHBURN m. Sarah Blish

GEORGE A. m. Elizabeth Gilmor

Julia Caroline

Emily Ballard

Charles Francis

2. GEORGE A. WASHBURN m.

Elizabeth Gilmore

Emily Wendellen m. Charles H. Wilson

WILLIAM GILMOR m. Flora Ella Wight

Julia Caroline m. Horace Waite

George Alexander m. Louise E. Darling

Charles Fremont [Free] m.

1. Jessie F. Wight

2. Ludvinia Vibert

Mary Elizabeth m.

1. Walter P. Cutting

2. Albert A. Longley

3. WILLIAM GILMOR

WASHBURN m. Flora Ella Wight

EDWARD WIGHT m. Sophie Wilhemina de Veer

Jessie Beatrice

Arthur Wendell m. Harriet E. Wilkinson

Edna Gilmor

Florence Grabe m. Arthur L. Crawley

4. EDWARD WIGHT

WASHBURN m. Sophie

Wilhemina de Veer

William de Veer

Janet

Roger D.

Barbara