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, 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.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Edward W. Washburn family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881, May 10</td>
<td>Born, Beatrice, Neb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1901</td>
<td>University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>B.S., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-1908</td>
<td>Research associate in physical chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-1910</td>
<td>Associate in chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Married Sophie Wilhelmina de Veer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1913</td>
<td>Assistant professor of physical chemistry, University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-1916</td>
<td>Professor of physical chemistry, University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-1922</td>
<td>Professor of ceramic chemistry, University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-1919</td>
<td>Vice chairman and acting chairman, Division of Chemistry, National Research Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**, 1858-1899
- **Correspondence**, 1827-1934
- **Notebooks**
- **Genealogy**
- **Miscellany**, 1817-1934
- **Oversize**, 1833-1901

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**  
**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**  

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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 |
### Container | Contents
--- | ---
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 *See also Oversize*

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 *See Oversize*

BOX 6 | Certificates and diplomas *See Oversize*

BOX 6 | Blueprint *See Oversize*

BOX 7 | Photographs *See also Oversize* (3 folders)

BOX 8 | Printed matter, clippings (2 folders)

BOX 9 | Books

**An Easy Grammar of Natural and Experimental Philosophy . . ., by David Blair, revised and enlarged by Benjamin Hallowell**

**A Discourse on the Character and Work, and the Death and Resurrection of the Two Witnesses, by John Trip**

**The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1840, published by David H. Williams (Boston)**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9</td>
<td><em>Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba . . . in the Months of February, March, April, and May, 1828,</em> by Abiel Abbot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9</td>
<td>Bound newspapers <em>See Oversize</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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  | *Portland Tribune*, Portland, Maine, 1841, Apr. 24-Aug. 7                 |
| BOX OV 2  | *Portland Transcript*, 1841, Apr. 17-1842, Jan. 22                         |
| BOX OV 2  | *Yankee Farmer*, Boston, Mass, 1841, June 26-Dec. 9                        |
| BOX OV 2  | Vol. 2                                                                   |
| BOX OV 2  | *Nebraskan Hesperian*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr., 1900, Sept. 18-1901, June 4 |
| BOX OV 2  | *Daily Nebraskan*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr., 1901, June 13 |
| BOX OV 3  | Vol. 4, *Orb*, China, Maine, 1834, Dec. 6-1835, Nov. 28                    |
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
   William de Veer
     Janet
     Roger D.
     Barbara
   Wilhemina de Veer