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
Extent: 9 containers plus 3 oversize
Extent: 4.4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82049528

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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Butler, Benjamin F. (Benjamin Franklin), 1818-1893.
Washburn family.
Edward W. Washburn (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.

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.
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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Edward W. Washburn family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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>
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</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>
<tr>
<td>1921-1929</td>
<td>American commissioner, International Commission of Annual Tables for Physical and Chemical Constants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Delegate, International Chemistry Union, Lyons International Research Council, Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-1930</td>
<td>Editor, International Critical Tables (Physical Chemistry and Engineering Constants)</td>
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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

<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  
  (8 vols.) |
| BOX 1     | 1865-1872  
  (3 vols.) |
| BOX 1     | 1874-1876  
  (5 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 4</td>
<td>Chemical ledger</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td><strong>Genealogy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bible containing family records, charts of the Washburn and Wight families, history of the Washburn family, obituaries, and other family documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged by type of material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>Bible with family record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>Charts <a href="#">See also Oversize</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>Washburn family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>Wight family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>History of Washburn family</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>Obituaries of Edward W. Washburn, 1934</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6-9</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1817-1934</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged by type of material.</td>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Personal documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Indentures, agreements, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Military papers of George A. Washburn, Civil War</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Financial papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Music</td>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Playlet</td>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<td>School</td>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Compositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Invitations, calling cards, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>General</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Annotated envelopes <a href="#">See Oversize</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>Blueprint <a href="#">See Oversize</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 7</td>
<td>Photographs <a href="#">See also Oversize</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 8</td>
<td>Printed matter, clippings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(2 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9</td>
<td>Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9</td>
<td><em>An Easy Grammar of Natural and Experimental Philosophy</em> . . ., by David Blair, revised and enlarged by Benjamin Hallowell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9</td>
<td><em>A Discourse on the Character and Work, and the Death and Resurrection of the Two Witnesses</em>, by John Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9</td>
<td><em>The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge for the Year 1840</em>, published by David H. Williams (Boston)</td>
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Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba . . . in the Months of February, March, April, and May, 1828, by Abiel Abbot

Bound newspapers See Oversize

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.

Genealogy
Chart (Container 5)
Miscellany
Certificates and diplomas (Container 6)
Blueprint (Container 6)
Photographs (Container 7)
Bound newspapers (Container 7)

Portland Tribune, Portland, Maine, 1841, Apr. 24-Aug. 7
Portland Transcript, 1841, Apr. 17-1842, Jan. 22
Yankee Farmer, Boston, Mass, 1841, June 26-Dec. 9
Nebraskan Hesperian, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr., 1900, Sept. 18-1901, June 4
Daily Nebraskan, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr., 1901, June 13
Vol. 3, Orb, China, Maine, 1833, Dec. 14-1834, Nov. 29
Vol. 4, Orb, China, Maine, 1834, Dec. 6-1835, Nov. 28
Vol. 5, Eastern Democrat, 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