

Cunnington and Lee family papers

Ms. Coll. 1258

Finding aid prepared by Alexandra M. Wilder.

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 January 12

Table of Contents

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	6
Collection Inventory.....	7
Correspondence.....	7
Poetry.....	8
Financial records.....	9

Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Cunnington family
Creator	Lee family
Title	Cunnington and Lee family papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1258
Date [inclusive]	1813-1866
Extent	0.2 linear foot (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Cunnington and Lee family papers, dating from 1813 to 1866, contain the correspondence of antiquarian William H. Cunnington (1754-1810) of Heytesbury, Wiltshire, England and his daughters Anne, Elizabeth, and Mary. The collection also contains the correspondence of William P. Cunnington (1804-1871) and his wife Jane Cook (1808-1872). William P. Cunnington was born in England and immigrated to the United States sometime after 1829. He was leader of the orchestra at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. The familial connection between William H. Cunnington and William P. Cunnington is not clear from the contents of the collection. In addition to the families' letters--which are concerned with family issues such as health, the settling of estates, and travel--the collection contains poems written by, and apparently copied by, the families and a small number of financial documents including estate documents, business ledgers, and receipts for rentals and purchases.</p>

Cite as:

Cunnington and Lee family papers, 1813-1866, Ms. Coll. 1258, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

William H. Cunnington (1754-1810) was an antiquarian, born in Grafton, Northamptonshire in England. He settled as a tradesman at Heytesbury in Wiltshire about 1775. He formed a collection of British antiquities, and also of minerals and fossils, and opened a number of barrows in Wiltshire, among which were the Golden Barrow in the parish of Upton Lovel and the barrows at Corton, Boyton, and Sherrington. He is said to be the first to excavate at Stonehenge. Cunnington was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and his collection was purchased by Sir Richard Colt Hoare and was deposited at the museum at Devizes. In 1787, he married Mary, daughter of Robert Meares, with whom he had three daughters, Anne, Elizabeth, and Mary. Anne Cunnington (1790-1881) married Gregory Lee (1806-1864), of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Middlesex, in 1813. William H. Cunnington suffered ill health for twenty years before dying in 1810.

William P. Cunnington (1804-1871) was born in England. He married Jane Cook (1808-1872). He immigrated to the United States sometime after 1829 and led the orchestra at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia for twenty-six years and also had a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania, which he obtained in 1837. William and Jane Cunnington lived in the 2nd Ward of Moyamensing, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, and had three children: William H. Cunnington, Oldine A. Cunnington, and Francis H. Cunnington. William H. Cunnington (1829-1897) was their only child born in England, and he went on to become a Civil War correspondent. William P. and Jane Cunnington both died in Philadelphia; he of "debility" and she of acute bronchitis. They are both buried in Monument Cemetery.

Scope and Contents

This collection primarily contains correspondence among Anne, Elizabeth, and Mary Cunnington, daughters of the antiquarian William H. Cunnington (1754-1810) of Heytesbury, Wiltshire, England. Some of the letters are written to each other and some to other relatives, friends, or business associates. The collection also contains the correspondence of William P. Cunnington (1804-1871), who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a medical degree in 1837, and was leader of the orchestra at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. The familial connection between William H. Cunnington and William P. Cunnington is not clear from the contents of the collection.

In addition to the family letters-- which are concerned with family issues such as health, the settling of estates, and travel-- the collection contains poems written by, and apparently copied by, the families. The poems are primarily concerned with love and death. The collection also contains a small number of financial documents including estate documents, business ledgers, and receipts for rentals and purchases. The correspondence between William P. Cunnington and his wife, Jane Cook Cunnington, are from a period when William P. was working with an orchestra in Baltimore and Richmond and depict the challenges of spouses living apart. William P. Cunnington writes in one of the letters: "I must confess my dear Jane I am very much dissatisfied with your letters. They are both so very brief - &, with the exception of the all-important intelligence of your health & the children, they contain very little of the kind of writing I always wish to have from you..." At this time, William P. Cunnington was working for a man named "Marshall," most likely Ethelbert A. Marshall, a theater owner and manager who started out at the Walnut Street Theater in 1840 and owned theaters in Baltimore and New York by the mid-1840s. Marshall later opened Philadelphia's Academy of Music.

There are also a significant number of letters written to Ann Cunnington Lee (daughter of William H. Cunnington and wife of Gregory Lee), largely from family members including her sister Mary, as well as John Lee, Mary Ann Everett, and Isabella Lee. Letters discuss home matters; family issues; the legacy left to Ann Lee's son William, as well as a legacy left to Anne by her aunt, Susan Meares; and immigration to the United States. The correspondence is addressed to Anne while she and her husband were still living in England, and then afterwards addressed to her when they immigrated to Mount Pleasant, New Jersey, sometime after 1830. Anne and Gregory Lee encouraged other family members to immigrate to the United States, including Anne's sister, Mary.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 January 12

Finding aid prepared by Alexandra M. Wilder.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Source of Acquisition

Sold by Michael Brown Rare Books, 2016.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Poems

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Cunnington, Jane Cook, 1808-1872
- Cunnington, William H., 1754-1810
- Cunnington, William P.
- Lee, Anne Cunnington

SUBJECT(S)

- Families
- Women

Collection Inventory

CORRESPONDENCE.

	Box	Folder
[Cunnington, Elizabeth Keziah], letter from Henry D. Robinson, 1831 June 17.	1	1
Cunnington, Jane Cook, letter to William P. Cunnington (husband), circa 1840s.	1	2
Cunnington, William P., letters to Jane Cook Cunnington (wife), 1840, 1846-1847.	1	3
	Box	Folder
Cunnington, William P., letters to Jane Cook Cunnington (wife), 1840, 1846-1847.	55	1
	Box	Folder
Cunnington, William P., business letters from Freeman Scott and Emmeline Voeller, 1866, undated.	1	4
Cunnington, Jane and William P., letters from Cook family, 1833-1859.	1	5
	Box	Folder
Cunnington, Jane and William P., letters from Cook family, 1833-1859.	55	
	Box	Folder
Ingles, John, letter to unknown recipient, undated.	1	6
Lee, Anne Cunnington, letter to James Chapman (includes power of attorney for Chapman to handle legacy of 100 pounds from her aunt, Susan Meares),	1	7

circa 1840s.

Lee, Anne Cunnington, letters mostly from family (including John Lee, Mary Ann Everett, and Isabella Lee), 1813-1846.

1 8

Box Folder

Lee, Anne Cunnington, letters mostly from family (including John Lee, Mary Ann Everett, and Isabella Lee), 1813-1846.

55 8

Box Folder

Lee, Anne Cunnington, letters from Mary (sister), 1813-1845.

1 9

Box Folder

Lee, Anne Cunnington, letters from Mary (sister), 1813-1845.

55 1

Box Folder

Lee, Gregory, letters from William Godfrey, Samuel Wetherill, and Sam [Billmeyer], 1816, 1853, 1861.

1 10

Lee, John, letter from Henry A. Tobey, 1834 March 30.

1 11

Mera, Mrs. E. H., letter from Stafford H. Parker, Virginia State legislator, concerning help with her husband's court case, 1839 January 12.

1 12

Unidentified fragments of letters, undated.

1 13

POETRY.

Box Folder

Cunnington, William H., poetry written by him and to him, 1852, undated.

1 14

Scott, Freeman, "an Acrostick of a young lady", 1854.

1 15

Poems by unidentified authors, 1827, undated.	1	16
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FINANCIAL RECORDS.

	Box	Folder
Lee, Gregory, receipts for a clock and rent on property, 1828, undated.	1	17
Meares, Robert and/or Susan (Susan Meares was the aunt of Ann Cunnington Lee), estate of, settlement documents, undated.	1	18
Unidentified accounts, undated.	1	19
	Box	Folder
Unidentified accounts, undated.	55	