

Cushing Eells Collection, 1821-1979

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Eells, Cushing, 1810-1893
Title	Cushing Eells Collection
Dates	1821-1979 (inclusive) 1821 1979 1838-1894 (bulk) 1838 1894
Quantity	5.5 linear feet, (13 document boxes and 2 portraits)
Collection Number	HTM_WCMss33
Summary	This collection contains materials of and about Cushing Eells. Eells was a missionary and founded a seminary dedicated to Marcus Whitman, which became Whitman College. The collection contains original correspondence, the diary and the sermons of Cushing Eells, as well as current materials about his life, mission, and some materials created by his family
Repository	Whitman College and Northwest Archives Whitman College and Northwest Archives Penrose Library, Room 130 345 Boyer Avenue Walla Walla, WA 99362 Telephone: 509-527-5922 Fax: 509-526-4785 archives@whitman.edu
Access Restrictions	Collection is open for research.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for preparing this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Funding for encoding the finding aid was awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Cushing Eells was born at Blandford, Massachusetts, on February 16, 1810. He was the son of Joseph and Elizabeth (Warner) Eells. Cushing Eells graduated from Williams College in 1834. He later entered East Windsor Theological Institute in Connecticut and graduated in 1837. Rev. Cushing Eells was licensed to preach December 14, 1836, and was ordained a year later as a Congregational Missionary to the Zulus in Africa, but the planned voyage there was affected by a war between the Zulu tribes, so the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions instead sent him to the Oregon Territory.

Eells married Myra Fairbanks (daughter of Deacon Joshua and Mrs. Sally H. Fairbanks) on March 5, 1838, in Massachusetts. The Eells headed west the very next day to be missionaries to the Indians of old Oregon. Accompanying them were Elkanah and Mary (Richardson) Walker, William H. and Mary A. (Dix) Gray, and Rev. Asa B. and Sarah Gilbert (White) Smith. Two years prior, Marcus and Narcissa

(Prentiss) Whitman and Henry and Eliza (Hart) Spalding, along with several others, had made the same journey. The Eells, Walkers, and Smiths arrived at the Cayuse winter lodge site of Waiilatpu along the Walla Walla River, which became the Whitman Mission, on August 29, 1838. Soon after, each family established their own mission, with Cushing and Myra Eells settling among the Spokane Indians at Tshimakain with the Walkers. A fire destroyed this first mission at Tshimakain, yet the Eells stayed in the area.

The deaths of the Whitmans and others at Waiilatpu in 1847 and the ensuing Northwest Indian Wars signified the end of the missionary efforts of the ABCFM by 1850. The Eells and Walkers were moved from Tshimakain under military escort to Oregon, and the Eells settled in Forest Grove for the next 14 years. In that time Cushing Eells taught at various schools in the Tualatin Plains, including the Oregon Institute, now Willamette University. He also instituted the Tualatin Academy, now Pacific University, in 1849. In 1859, the “upper country” that had been closed during the Indian Wars was re-opened, and Cushing soon headed to the Walla Walla Valley.

There Eells decided to build a school in memory of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. The first classes were held in December 1859, at Waiilatpu. The actual seminary was constructed later in the nearby town of Walla Walla. During the summer of 1866, the first building of the Whitman Seminary was erected on a site purchased by Dr. Dorsey Syng Baker. The seminary opened the same year on September 14. For the first two years, Eells was the principal, though Rev. P.B. Chamberlain was first intended for the position. Eells simultaneously served as superintendent of schools for Walla Walla County. For several years, he traveled the Washington Territory, founding Congregational churches and schools and raising money for the seminary. The Washington Territorial Legislature, which had granted a charter to Whitman Seminary on December 20, 1859, issued a new charter on November 28, 1883, and changed it to Whitman College. Until an endowment allowed the college to be financially secure and survive, Eells made efforts to keep it alive, giving it 10,000 dollars during his life. He also willed a great portion of his property to Whitman College. Despite the financial and enrollment problems in the beginning, Eells’ Whitman memorial – a small, provincial seminary – transformed itself over the years into a reputable secular college.

Until his last days, Eells continued to do missionary work and was actively involved with Whitman College. He died in Tacoma, February 16, 1893, at age 83, after having served 55 of his years as a missionary.

Content Description

The most extensive part of the Cushing Eells Collection contains a series of correspondence Eells kept with his family, especially his two sons Edwin and Myron, throughout the journeys he made to organize various churches and schools. There are also many letters addressed to A.J. Anderson, the first president of the Whitman College. Eells also wrote to some of his friends and collaborators, such as S. B. Treat, Henry H. Spalding, and George H. Atkinson.

There also is a complete series of his diary together with a transcript of it. Other important series are his original lectures, family and personal papers, among which are financial reports and accounts, his diplomas, certificates, and wills as well as clippings and familial accounts about his life. The mission series includes passports (mostly copies) for crossing Indian country, and the few photographs show his family as well as more recent photographs from memorial sites in his honor. Miscellaneous items include newspaper clippings, fragments of letters and notes, legal documents and some published materials.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Researchers are responsible for using in accordance with 17 U.S.C. Copyright not transferred to Whitman College.

Preferred Citation

Cushing Eells Collection, Whitman College and Northwest Archives.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

By series and flat arrangement.

Acquisition Information

Donated to the Whitman College and Northwest Archives prior to August 2004.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1847-1895

2.6 linear feet, (7 boxes)

This series contains Cushing Eells' letters to his family, primarily to sons Myron and Edwin; letters to some of his close friends, including A.J. Anderson and Henry H. Spalding; and career-related correspondence. There are original letters, copies of letters that he saved, as well as fragments of letters. As possible, the letters have the sending location and are chronologically arranged. Researchers interested in an item-level inventory of the correspondence may contact the repository.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
1	Correspondence	1848-1874
2	Correspondence	1874-1882
3	Correspondence	1882-1884

Container(s)	Description	Dates
4	Correspondence	1884-1886
5	Correspondence	1886-1890
6	Correspondence	1865; 1890-1893; undated
Box/Folder		
7/3	Waiilatpu, Henry H. Spalding	1862
7/6	Correspondence with the American Home Missionary Society	1859-1862
7/13	A.H.M. Society Letters	1862
7/15	Letter, with list of names, from Thos. K. [Fessenden]	undated
7/16	Selections from letter from Cushing Eells, arranged by his oldest granddaughter Ida M. Eells	1876-1892
7/22	Letters by Cushing Eells	1887-1892
7/30	Correspondence/Letter Book	1875-1892
Box		
8	Selections from letters	1876-1892
Box/Folder		
10/1	Stylograph – Letter Book	1881-1893
10/9	Estate of Cushing Eells - Correspondence	1884-1898
13/4	First Congregational Church of Cheney – note regarding Rev. F. V. Floyt	undated
13/5	Note on first Congregational Church of Cheney	undated
13/6	Note on first Congregational Church of Medical Lake	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
13/17	Note to Rev. Griffin – editor of the Oregon American	undated
13/23	Tshimakain, near Fort Colville – Rev. David Greene (on the massacre)	1842, 1847
13/25	Salem, Willamette River – Rev. David Greene	1848
13/27	Tualatin, OR – S.B. Treat	1859
13/31	Walla Walla – Myron Eells	1869
13/32	Myron Eells	1871
13/39	Medical Lake – Stanley Hallett	1886
13/40	Medical Lake – first Congregational Church of Medical Lake – Stanley Hallett	1886
13/41	Medical Lake – Myron Eells (incomplete)	1887
13/52	Letters (Russell, Henry B. and Stephen B.L. Penrose) regarding Blandford	1935-1936
13/55	Letters unsorted	1880-1885
13/61	Seventh Annual Meeting of Whitman College, Ellensburg – concerns memorial funds for Myra and Cushing Eells	1895, 1920

Series 2: Diary, 1859-1893

0.8 linear feet, (2 boxes)

This series contains the original and transcribed copies of Cushing Eells' diary.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
8	Transcript (typescript) of diaries	1859-1893
9	Original diary pages	1859-1893

Series 3: Sermons, speeches, and writings, 1854-1894, (bulk 1854-1888)

0.8 linear feet, (2 boxes)

Most of this series contains the chronologically arranged and delivered sermons of Cushing Eells. There are also Sunday school lessons and various theological writings.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
11	Sermons	1854-1888
12	Sunday school lessons	1856, 1887
Box/Folder		
7/1	Fourth of July address, Colville, WA	1876
7/24	<i>Father Eells, Apostle to Washington</i> – 2 copies of booklet (1810 - 1893)	undated
Box		
12	Miscellaneous theological writings	1880-1891
12	<i>Thoughts of Heaven</i> , a gift from Myron Eells	circa 1894

Series 4: Family and personal documents, writings, and clippings, 1836-1991, (bulk 1883-1894)

1.2 linear feet, (approximately 3 boxes)

This series contains legal documents, accounts, and estate-related documents of Cushing Eells, his reminiscences and family accounts about him, his last will and testament, and clippings about his life and accomplishments.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Mapcase		
MC1.2, 6	Reverend Diploma	1834
Box/Folder		
7/2	Eells Estate documents	1895
7/4	"Memoirs of Mrs. Painter"	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
7/7	Clippings about Cushing Eells, his mission, and relation to Whitman College	1934-1980
7/8	Walla Walla Union clipping concerning Whitman and Injury of Cushing Eells	1991
7/10	Notices of Cushing Eells' death and eulogies	1893
7/19	Recollections of Cushing Eells (manuscript, Tacoma)	1891
7/20	<i>La Blau</i> , story of Cushing Eells' horse, told by Ida Eells	1950
7/23	<i>Father Arrived to Live with Us</i> , an account of the four and a half years that Cushing Eells lived in the home of his son, Edwin, as remembered by his granddaughter Ida M. Eells (Original manuscript and transcript)	undated
7/24	Reminiscences by Cushing Eells	undated
7/26	Information and speeches about Cushing Eells	undated
10/2	<i>Reminiscences</i> , typed copy by Clifford Drury	undated
10/4	<i>Cushing Eells Reminiscences</i>	undated
10/7	Last Will and Testament	1883
10/8	Last Will and Testament	1884
10/10	Estate of Cushing Eells – Legal Documents	1884-1898
10/11	Estate of Cushing Eells – Financial Statements	1884-1898
10/12	Estate of Cushing Eells – library lists and miscellaneous	1883-1892
Box		
12	Books of accounts of Cushing Eells	1874-1893
Box/Folder		
13/10	Certificate of completion of courses at the Theological Institute of Connecticut	1837

Container(s)	Description	Dates
13/11	Certificate of his membership in the Church of Christ in the Theological Institute of Connecticut	1837
13/12	Appointment to South Eastern African Missionary Field, by the A.B.C.F.M.	1837
13/13	C. Eells' honorary membership to the A.B.C.F.M.	1837
13/14	A letter and certificate from the American Education Society, releasing him from his pecuniary obligations to the society	1838
13/15	Certificate – commission granted by A.B.C.F.M.	1838
13/16	Instruction of the prudential committee of the A.B.C.F.M. to Eells, Walker, Smith, and Gray	1838
13/18	License for gospel ministry by North Association of Hartford County	1836
13/26	Certificate of Membership of Northwest Association of Congregational Ministers	1848
13/49	"Rev. Cushing Eells: A Tale of his humble Heroic Life" – <i>Garden City Gazette</i> , Walla Walla	1894
13/56	Recollections about Blandford	undated

Series 5: Mission, 1838-1974, (bulk 1838-1885)

0.4 linear feet, (1 box)

This series contains documents and clippings related to Cushing Eells' missionary work.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
<i>Box/Folder</i>		
7/5	Receipt from A.B.C.F.M. for \$100, Cushing Eells' payment for Waiilatpu Mission land	1862
7/11	Clippings about Indian tribe	1883
7/14	Passport to cross Indian Country, as issued by the War Department	1838

Container(s)	Description	Dates
7/17	Statements of Rev. Cushing Eells relative to the object of Whitman's journey of 1842-1843 (manuscript)	undated
7/18	"To Whom it may concern the subjoined statement is respectfully submitted." A history of Cushing Eells' missionary work with the proposition to the people of Colville to contribute \$1,000 for the construction of a church	1885
7/29	<i>Pacific Northwest Quarterly</i> – The Spokane Indian Mission at Tshimakain 1838 - 1848	1979
10/3	"Early History"	undated
10/5	"Memorial to Dr. Whitman"	undated
10/6	Copy – Permission to travel across Indian Country	1838
13/20	Passport to cross Indian Country, as issued by the War Department	1838
13/21	Commission and Passport	1838
13/24	Notes on the massacre and related events	undated
13/50	Program of commemorative exercises at Tshimakain	1908
13/51	Program of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the first Christian mission in the Spokane Country - Tshimakain	1913

Series 6: Images, 1909-1914

1.5 linear feet, (3 folders and 2 portraits)

This series contains photographs and portraits of Cushing Eells, his family, and of places commemorating him.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
<i>Box/Folder</i>		
7/21	Photographs of Cushing Eells and brothers and children	undated
7/28	Tshimakain Commemorating Stone Photographs	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
13/52	Photographs of Tshimakain Commemorating Stone – Cushing Eells and Elkanah Walker 1838 - 1908	undated
13/52	Photographs of Blandford Congregational Church	undated
Vertical-oversize		
U6.1	Portrait of Cushing Eells, by W.H. Gilstrap, framed, 12 inches by 14.5 inches, copy.	circa 1909
U6.1	“The Spirit of the Fathers” by W.H. Gilstrap and (first name unknown) Marks, framed, 21 inches by 27 inches, copy.	circa 1909-1914

Series 7: Miscellaneous, 1821-1973, (bulk 1838-1894)

0.4 linear feet, (approximately 1 document box)

This series contains fragments of miscellaneous correspondence, quit claim deeds, and clippings.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
7/9	“The Founder of Whitman College” poem by L.L. West	1894
7/12	Invitation to wedding of Edith Clara Cowley to Dr. Lorenzo Nelson Grosvenor	1892
7/25	Miscellaneous clippings, Cushing Eells – faculty file	1888-1953; undated
13/1	Church bell memorial (Information and Correspondence regarding)	1973
13/2	Eells Academy: first annual Commencement Program, Colville, WA	1900
13/3	Eells Academy: Reunion of Eells Academy classmates, Colville (Clipping and letter)	1973
13/7	Blandford: Early history of the town and church (birthplace of Cushing Eells) – Reverend John Keep	1821

Container(s)	Description	Dates
13/8	Sermon case used by Cushing Eells	undated
13/9	Ida Eells' account of Cushing's horse, La Blau	1950
13/19	Stage ticket (Philadelphia to Pittsburg) and steamer ticket (S.B. Norfolk – Pittsburg to St. Louis)	1838
13/22	Accounts of expenditures of trip with Rev. David Greene on Wind River, Rocky Mountains	1838
13/28	Receipt for "Mother's Magazine"	1858
13/29	Quit Claim Deed to Wailatpu, drawn up by A.B.C.F.M., yielding it to Cushing Eells (draft unsigned)	1876
13/30	School report by Mrs. N. A. Semons of school in District No. 3	1867
13/33	Indenture of Joseph D. Bates, A.J. Anderson, George H. Collier – Cushing and Myra Eells	1873
13/34	Handwritten note on a Bagster Bible	1875
13/35	Quit Claim Deed to Calvin Adams for land in Washington County, Oregon	1876
13/36	"Paper Read at the Association and Published in their Minutes"	1885
13/37	Quit Claim Deed to Joseph Bates, A.J. Anderson, George H. Collier – land in Forest Grove	1873
13/38	Chattel Mortgage from Joseph and Sarah Jane Hall	1886
13/42	Ministerial Alliance of Tacoma – Birthday Greeting, 81st birthday	1891
13/43	"Occidental Congregationalist" – tribute to Cushing Eells	1893
13/44	2 copies of pamphlets published by American Home Missionary Society – <i>Multiplication of Churches on home Missionary ground. Too Many Home Missionary Churches: Whose Fault?</i>	circa 1893
13/45	Tacoma - historical manuscript	1891

Container(s)	Description	Dates
13/46	Condolences, obituaries	1893
13/47	Clippings	1894-1938; undated
13/48	Tacoma, WA – Flyer from friends of Cushing Eells who had decided to publish an autobiography of him, asking those interested to sign and return.	1894
13/53	Clippings – “Founder of Whitman College Came to Old Oregon in 1883”	1953
13/54	Presentation to American Mail Line Limited of picture of Cushing Eells (address made by James Alger Fee)	1943
13/57	Clippings about Cushing Eells	undated
13/58	Letter	undated
13/59	<i>A strange snare</i> , manuscript by Cushing Eells	undated
13/60	"Cheney Has Historic House," a typescript of article, unidentified source	circa 1921
13/62	Miscellaneous letter fragments	undated

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Authors--Washington (state)
 Colleges--Washington (state)
 Indians of North America--Northwest, Pacific
 Missionaries--Northwest, Pacific--Congregational
 Pioneers--Northwest, Pacific--Biography

Personal Names :

Eells, Cushing, 1810-1893--Archives
 Eells, Cushing, 1810-1893--Diaries
 Eells, Cushing, 1810-1893--Sermons

Corporate Names :

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions--Missionaries
 Congregational Church--Missionaries
 Eells Academy--Archives
 Whitman College--Founders
 Whitman Seminary--Archives

Geographical Names :

Blandford, Massachusetts--History--19th century

Forest Grove, Oregon--History--19th century

Oregon Territory--History--19th century

Tshimakain Mission--History--Spokane, Washington--19th century

Waiilatpu Mission--History--Walla Walla, Washington--19th century

Walla Walla (Wash)--History--19th century

Washington Territory--History--19th century

Finding aid prepared by Andreea Coca and Janet Mallen in March 2006
2006



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Creative Commons Licenses in Archives West:
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/cc-attr.shtml>