Cosby Family Papers (MSS 242)

1-4-2010

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid
Part of the Military History Commons, and the United States History Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_mss_fin_aid/1051

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in MSS Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Dudley Cosby was born in 1820 in Amelia County, Virginia, the son of Henry Cosby (1794-1874) and Elizabeth B. “Betsy” Cosby (1794-1879). In 1841, John D. Cosby married Mary L. Bellamy (1821-1849), and in 1842 they became the parents of a daughter, Cilicia Sarah Cosby. Within a few years thereafter, and to the apparent consternation of his family, John moved to Rumsey, Kentucky (now in McLean County, but at the time a part of Muhlenberg County), and then to Bremen (Muhlenberg County) to pursue his trade as a carpenter. After his wife Mary’s death in 1849, John D. Cosby married Martha Jane Hinkle (1831-1906) in 1850. The oldest of their four children, Mary Elizabeth “Bettie” Cosby (1851-1928), married James Taylor Woodburn, Jr. (1848-1914). The Woodburns became the parents of Martha Verna Woodburn (1888-1985), who married James Albert Smith (1882-1950).

COLLECTION NOTE

Most of the collection consists of letters to John Dudley Cosby and his family from other family members living in Virginia, Kentucky, Arkansas and Mississippi. Because the family was so widely dispersed and letters relatively infrequent, most correspondents took the opportunity to relay news not only of their own households – births, deaths, marriages, and changes of residence – but those of other relatives and friends, as well as local news of interest.

Best represented in the correspondence (Folder 4) is John Dudley Cosby’s father, Henry Cosby, who writes to his son from Amelia County, Virginia. He regularly expresses concern about John’s fortunes in Kentucky and urges him to return to Virginia. Henry Cosby also writes of local and family news, crop and commodity prices, and the general economic and labor situation in Virginia both before and after the Civil War. Another major correspondent (Folder 10) is John Dudley Cosby’s sister Harriet E. (Cosby) Robertson. She, too, wishes for John’s return to Virginia, referring to him in one letter as a “stray sheep.” Harriet also writes of family news, the disposition of their father’s estate following his death in 1874, and of her own relocation to Richmond, Virginia. Other correspondents include John Dudley Cosby’s sister
Louisa (Cosby) Isaacs (Folder 8), his sister Mary Jane (Cosby) Meador (Folder 9), and his brother William H. Cosby (Folder 6).

Relatives of John Dudley Cosby’s second wife, Martha Jane (Hinkle) Cosby, are also represented in the collection. Martha’s brother Benjamin Hinkle (Folder 7) writes from Bowling Green, Kentucky, where he is encamped during the Civil War. Martha’s sister Mariah (Hinkle) Shocklee and her husband John T. Shocklee (Folder 11) write from their new home in Randolph County, Arkansas, to which John Dudley Cosby himself once considered moving. Of particular interest are letters from Richard Shocklee, the husband of another of Martha’s sisters, Ellen (Hinkle) Shocklee. Serving in the Union army during the Civil War, Shocklee, a strong supporter of the cause, writes from camp in Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, a month after the Battle of Shiloh; from Corinth, Mississippi; and from Russellville and Bowling Green, Kentucky (Folder 12).

Second-generation correspondents in the collection include John Dudley Cosby’s daughter Mary Elizabeth “Bettie” Cosby (Folder 5) who married James Taylor Woodburn, Jr.; a niece, Annie R. Smith (Folder 13); nephews Sidney R. Cosby and Millard C. Robertson (Folder 17); and another nephew, John H. Traylor, who was involved in the settlement of Henry Cosby’s estate (Folder 17).

Each folder of letters in this collection includes a list of the letters, their correspondents and dates, as well as a very brief note of each letter’s contents. While the collection contains no letters of John Dudley Cosby himself, some miscellaneous business papers, as well as the inventory of his estate, are included (Folder 16). Genealogical data on the Cosby family (Folder 1), on John Dudley Cosby’s granddaughter Martha Verna (Woodburn) Smith, and on the family of her husband James Albert Smith, are also included (Folders 2, 3). Only one photograph, of John Dudley Cosby’s daughter, Mary Elizabeth (Cosby) Woodburn, is in the collection (Folder 18).

Variantspellings and phonetic spellings are frequent in this collection, and the processor was forced to make difficult decisions regarding which form of a name to use for this finding aid. This frustration will be shared by anyone using this collection for research purposes.

**SHELF LIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 1</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>203 items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Inventory and genealogical information</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Martha Verna (Woodburn) Smith – biographical and genealogical data sheet</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>James A. Smith, Sr. and Martha V. Smith – Family record book; clippings</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Henry Cosby – Letters to John Dudley Cosby</td>
<td>1846-1874</td>
<td>37 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Mary Elizabeth Cosby – Letters to John D. Cosby</td>
<td>1866-1874; n.d.</td>
<td>5 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>William H. Cosby and Elizabeth B. Cosby – Letters to John Dudley Cosby</td>
<td>1846-1871</td>
<td>5 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Benjamin Hinkle – Letters to John Dudley Cosby, Martha Cosby and Mary E. Cosby</td>
<td>1863; 1905</td>
<td>5 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Louisa F. (Cosby) Isaacs and John F. Isaacs – Letters to Cosby family</td>
<td>1856; 1875-1878; 1917</td>
<td>7 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mary Jane (Cosby) Meador – Letters to John D. Cosby and Martha D. Belymy</td>
<td>1848-1852</td>
<td>6 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Harriet E. Robertson – Letters to John Dudley Cosby, Nancy Cosby, and nephew</td>
<td>1847; 1850-1899; n.d.</td>
<td>29 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>John T. Shocklee and Mariah S. Shocklee – Letters to John D. Cosby</td>
<td>1858-1860</td>
<td>11 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Richard Shocklee and Ellen Shocklee – Letters to John D. Cosby and wife</td>
<td>1862-1863; 1870; 1878; n.d.</td>
<td>17 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Annie Smith – Letters to Cilicia S. Cosby and John D. Cosby</td>
<td>1855-1860; n.d.</td>
<td>7 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Martha/Matt Bellom, Martha Thomas – Letters to John Dudley Cosby, niece and parents</td>
<td>1849; 1854; 1858; 1859; 1868; n.d.</td>
<td>8 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>J. T. Woodburn – Masonic receipts and registry receipt</td>
<td>1881; 1886</td>
<td>3 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>John D. Cosby – Business and tax receipts, notes, estate inventory</td>
<td>1847-1884</td>
<td>35 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Miscellaneous family correspondence</td>
<td>1846-1938</td>
<td>17 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Miscellaneous clippings; photo of Mary Elizabeth Cosby</td>
<td>1872; [ca. 1930]; n.d.</td>
<td>6 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Poem, “In Memory of Martha Hardy,” by Cosby A. Perry</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS  COSBY Family Papers  1846-1938
242
Letters to John Dudley Cosby, Muhlenberg
County, and his family, from other family members
in Virginia, Kentucky, Arkansas and Mississippi.
Includes genealogical data, some of Cosby’s
personal papers, and his estate inventory.
1 box. 19 folders. 203 items. Originals,
photocopies, photograph.
1987.177.1

SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Abolitionism – Comments about, 1850s, 1863  B1,F4,12
African Americans – Comments about, 1866-1873  B1,F4,6,14,17
Arkansas – Comments about, 1858-1878  B1,F11,12
Barden, James E.  B1,F17
Bellamy family – Relating to  B1,F13
Bellom, Matt  B1,F14
Belymy, Martha D. – Letter to  B1,F9
Bills and notes  B1,F16
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Bowling Green, 1863  B1,F7,12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Campaigns, battles, military actions – Shiloh, 1862 – Comments about ,
1862  B1,F12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Campaigns, battles, military actions – Mississippi, 1862  B1,F12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Campaigns, battles, military actions – Virginia – Comments about, 1866
B1,F4
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Comments about, 1861-1863  B1,F11,12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Conscription – Comments about  B1,F12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Guerrilla activities – Kentucky, 1863  B1,F12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Guerrilla activities – Tennessee, 1862  B1,F12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Letters, 1862-1863  B1,F12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Military life, 1862-1863  B1,F7,12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Russellville, 1863  B1,F12
Civil War, 1861-1865 – Tennessee, 1862  B1,F12
Confederate States of America – Comments about, 1862-1863  B1,F12
Consolation  B1,F19
Corn – Arkansas – Prices, 1858-1860  B1,F11
Corn – Virginia – Prices, 1846-1873  B1,F4,6,8,10,17
Cosby, Benjamin Henry, b. 1857 – Letters to  B1,F5,10,17
Cosby, Benjamin Henry, b. 1857 – Relating to  B1,F5
Cosby, Elizabeth B., 1794-1879  B1,F6
Cosby, Elizabeth B., 1794-1879 – Relating to  B1,F4,8,10,17
Cosby family – Genealogy   B1,F1
Cosby, Henry, 1794-1874   B1,F4
Cosby, Henry, 1794-1874 – Relating to   B1,F6,8,10,17
Cosby, James B., b. 1838   B1,F17
Cosby, John Dudley, 1820-1884 – Letters to   B1,F4-14,17
Cosby, John Dudley, 1820-1884 – Relating to   B1,F14,16,17
Cosby, Junious Sidney, 1872-1882 – Relating to   B1,F10,17
Cosby, Martha Jane (Hinkle), 1831-1906 – Letters to   B1,F7,11,12
Cosby, Mary L. (Bellamy), 1821-1849 – Letter to   B1,F6
Cosby, Mary L. (Bellamy), 1821-1849 – Relating to   B1,F16
Cosby, Nancy Jane, b. 1860 – Correspondence   B1,F10,17
Cosby, Sidney R.   B1,F17
Cosby, William H., 1817-1888   B1,F6
Cosby, William H., 1817-1888 – Relating to   B1,F4
Cousins family – Relating to   B1,F17
Cousins, Rosa A. (Traylor), b. 1853?   B1,F17
Dennis, Mahala – Relating to   B1,F19
Episcopal Church – Comments about   B1,F5
Estates – Muhlenberg County, 1884   B1,F16
Farms and farming – Virginia, 1846-1874   B1,F4,6,8
Gross, William – Relating to   B1,F11
Hardy, Martha – Relating to   B1,F19
Hinkle, Benjamin   B1,F7
Hinkle, Benjamin – Relating to   B1,F12
Holt, Bessie (Woodburn), 1886-1974 – Relating to   B1,F3
Immigrants – Virginia, 1868 – Comments about   B1,F4
Isaacs, John F.   B1,F8
Isaacs, Louisa F. (Cosby), b. 1835   B1,F8
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865 – Comments about, 1863   B1,F12
Masons (Fraternal organization) – Relating to   B1,F15
Meador, Mary Jane (Cosby), d. 1866   B1,F9
Meador, Mary Jane (Cosby), d. 1866 – Relating to   B1,F4
Medicine – Prescriptions and remedies, 1848   B1,F4
Mines – Accidents and disasters – Clover Hill, Virginia, 1867 – Comments about   B1,F4
Monroe, James, Pres. U.S., 1758-1831 – Burial, 1858 – Comments about   B1,F4
Morgan, John Hunt, 1825-1864 – Relating to   B1,F12
New Year, 1866 – Comments about   B1,F5
Perry, Cosby A.   B1,F19
Poetry   B1,F19
Prices – Arkansas, 1858-1878   B1,F11,12
Prices – Virginia, 1846-1891   B1,F4,6,8,9,10,17
Richmond, Virginia – Comments about, 1850s   B1,F4
Robertson, Albert – Relating to   B1,F10
Robertson family – Relating to   B1,F10
Robertson, Harriet E. (Cosby), b. 1823?   B1,F10
Robertson, Harriet E. (Cosby), b. 1823? – Relating to   B1,F4,17
Robertson, John L.  B1,F10
Robertson, John L. – Relating to  B1,F10
Robertson, Millard C.  B1,F17
Robertson, Millard C. – Relating to  B1,F10
Shocklee, Ellen (Hinkle), b. 1836?  B1,F12
Shocklee, Francis Marion, 1859-1940 – Relating to  B1,F11
Shocklee, John T., b.1833?  B1,F11
Shocklee, Mariah Susan (Hinkle), b. 1834  B1,F11
Shocklee, Mariah Susan (Hinkle), b. 1834 – Relating to  B1,F12
Shocklee, Richard Syrl, 1831?-1883  B1,F12
Shocklee, William B., b. 1857 – Relating to  B1,F11
Slavery – Comments about, 1863  B1,F12
Slavery – Virginia – Relating to  B1,F4
Smallpox – Virginia, 1856 – Comments about  B1,F4
Smith, Annie R.  B1,F13
Smith, Annie R. – Relating to  B1,F14
Smith, Charles Mason, b. 1954 – Relating to  B1,F1,3
Smith family – Genealogy  B1,F1,3
Smith, James Albert, 1882-1950 – Relating to  B1,F3
Smith, James Albert, Jr., 1911-1976 – Relating to  B1,F3
Smith, Jesse  B1,F17
Smith, Martha Verna (Woodburn), 1888-1985 – Relating to  B1,F2
Thomas, Martha D. (Bellamy?), b. 1826?  B1,F14
Tobacco – Prices, 1850-1871  B1,F4,12
Traylor, John Henry  B1,F17
Traylor, John Henry – Relating to  B1,F8
Traylor, Sallie (Cosby) – Relating to  B1,F17
Union Church – Amelia, Virginia – Relating to  B1,F4
White, Lucy (Robertson) – Relating to  B1,F10
Woodburn, Cilicia Sarah (Cosby), 1842-1919 – Letters to  B1,F5,8,13,14
Woodburn, Cilicia Sarah (Cosby), 1842-1919 – Relating to  B1,F4,9,10,12,17
Woodburn family – Genealogy  B1,F1-3
Woodburn, James Taylor, 1771-1872 – Relating to  B1,F1,3
Woodburn, James Taylor, 1848-1914 – Relating to  B1,F1,3,15
Woodburn, Mary Elizabeth (Cosby), 1851-1928 – Correspondence  B1,F5,7
Woodburn, Mary Elizabeth (Cosby), 1851-1928 – Photo  B1,F18

Niedermeier/Jeffrey  01/04/2010