

Guide to the Alexander Griswold Cummins Papers

MS 157



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

January 1983

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview 3
Requesting Instructions 3
Administrative Information 4
 Immediate Source of Acquisition 4
 Conditions Governing Access 4
 Conditions Governing Use 4
 Preferred Citation 4
Scope and Contents 4
Collection Contents 6
 Inventory, 1865-(1913-1947) 6
Selected Search Terms 10

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
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CALL NUMBER: MS 157

CREATOR: Cummins, Alexander Griswold, 1869-1946

TITLE: Alexander Griswold Cummins papers

DATES: 1865-1947

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3 linear feet (8 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence, writings, biographical sketches, correspondence of his wife, Evelyn Atwater Cummins, clippings, photographs, and memorabilia of Alexander G. Cummins. Correspondence makes up the largest part of the papers and is largely concerned with church matters in which he took a strong low church position. The papers show advocacy of Ernest M. Stires and Herbert Shipman in church elections and his defense of Lee W. Heaton of Texas who was charged with heresy. Many of the letters refer to articles in *The Chronicle*, a newspaper founded and edited by Cummins from 1901 until his death. Notable in the correspondence are Nicholas Murray Butler, H. L. Mencken, Lowell Thomas, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0157>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0157>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Evelyn Atwater Cummins, 1937-1947.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Alexander Griswold Cummins Papers (MS 157). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Scope and Contents

These papers consist of correspondence, memoranda, printed matter, and other items relating to Alexander Griswold Cummins, a Protestant Episcopal minister of the low church, evangelical party. Cummins was the founder in 1901 of *The Chronicle* and its editor until his death. He employed this journal in often bitter attacks against the Anglo-Catholic, high church party and against any hint of reunion with the church of Rome, and in warm support of the Protestant and constitutional aspects of the Protestant Episcopal Church and in support of modernist, liberal theology. Articles for *The Chronicle* provide much of the subject matter of the correspondence, both in terms of Cummins' research and polling of churchmen for their views on various controversial issues and in terms of reader reaction to his articles. Like *The Chronicle*, his correspondence provides a highly partisan view of Protestant Episcopal Church politics from the early 1900s through the 1940s. The struggle between high and low churchmen is a recurrent theme, as are efforts of the church hierarchy to assume greater authority, proper use of church funds, and any and all practices smacking of Anglo-Catholicism.

Cummins was involved in behind-the-scenes campaigning in behalf of Ernest M. Stires as low church candidate for bishop of New York in 1919-1920 (folders 92-102), and for the election of Herbert Shipman, another low churchman, as Suffragan Bishop of New York in 1921 (folders 117-131). Cummins was also active in combatting charges of heresy brought against the modernist Lee W. Heaton by the conservative Diocese of Texas in 1923-1925 and the resultant attempt by the conservatives to redefine the Creed (folders 62-75). In another dispute between a low church minister and his high church parish, Cummins generously helped find emergency financial aid and a new, more congenial parish (folders 57-61).

Not all of Cummins' papers are devoted to controversy. Correspondence, schedules, and memorabilia from preaching engagements in Great Britain are included (folders 21-24), as are correspondence and memorabilia relating to his 38th and 40th anniversaries at Christ Church (folders 27-39), and to other social events (folders 82-86, 129). Cummins' correspondence contains letters not only from most of the Protestant Episcopal bishops of his day, but also from prominent clergymen of other denominations in America and Britain, as well as a few letters from such notables as Nicholas Murray Butler, H. L. Mencken,

Lowell Thomas, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and subject. Cummins' original folder headings have been retained wherever possible.

Several short writings and a biographical sketch of Cummins are also included among the papers, as is some correspondence of his wife, Evelyn (Atwater) Cummins. The latter consists of letters of condolence for Cummins' death, letters on the merger of *The Chronicle* (of which she became the editor after his death) with *The Southern Churchman* in 1947, several notes from Sara Delano Roosevelt, and miscellaneous letters dealing for the most part with articles she had written. Other correspondence of Evelyn Cummins may be found interfiled with the correspondence of Alexander G. Cummins in folders 8, 28-39, and 87.

Other items in the Alexander Griswold Cummins Papers are an article about Cummins by Wilbur L. Caswell, newspaper clippings about Cummins and about the Protestant Episcopal Church, programs, invitations, and other printed matter, and photographs from anniversary dinners.

These papers were donated to Yale University by Evelyn Atwater Cummins in a series of gifts between 1937 and 1947.

For related materials in Manuscripts and Archives, see the Protestant Episcopal Bishops Collection (Ms. Gr. 21) and the E. Clowes Chorley Papers (Ms. Gr. 132). A small collection of autographs of Protestant Episcopal bishops assembled in part by E. Clowes Chorley and donated as part of the Alexander Griswold Cummins Papers by Evelyn Cummins has been transferred to the E. Clowes Chorley Papers. A list of the letters transferred can be found in the register file.

Collection Contents

Inventory, 1865-(1913-1947)

3' (8 boxes)

Correspondence		
b. 1, f. 1	Abbott, H. P. Almon	1931-1936
b. 1, f. 2-3	<i>The American Missal</i>	1931 May-July
b. 1, f. 4	Anti-Moth Ball Society	undated
b. 1, f. 5-7	Bell, Bernard Iddings	1914-1926, undated
b. 1, f. 8	Butler, Nicholas Murray	1936, 1938, 1940
b. 1, f. 9	Christ Church (Reading, Pa.)	1941
b. 1, f. 10-16	Church Unity Octave Council	1928, 1935-1936, undated
b. 1, f. 17	<i>The Churchman</i>	1930
b. 1, f. 18	Committee of Twenty-Five	1933
b. 1, f. 19-20	Cook, Philip	1934-1935
Cummins, Alexander Griswold		
b. 1, f. 21-24	Preaching engagements in England	1934-1937
b. 1, f. 25-26	Sermon in Westminster Abbey	1935-1936
b. 2, f. 27	38th anniversary at Christ Church	1938
b. 2, f. 28-39	40th anniversary at Christ Church	1940-1941
b. 2, f. 40-41	"Protestant Episcopal or Anglo catholic" English	1945 February- May
b. 3, f. 42	Darlington, James H.	1921, 1929
b. 3, f. 43	Episcopal Theological School	1923-1924
b. 3, f. 44	Fish, Stuyvesant	1913
b. 3, f. 45-48	Fiske, Charles	1932-1934, undated
b. 3, f. 49	Fond du Lac, Diocese of	1923
b. 3, f. 50	Freeman, James E	1933-1935
b. 3, f. 51	Gilbert, Charles Kendall	1916-1930
b. 3, f. 52	Grammer, Carl E	1913-1914

Correspondence (continued)

b. 3, f. 53-54	Greer, David H	1911-1915
b. 3, f. 55-56	Haiti, Missionary District of	1936 May-June
b. 3, f. 57-61	Hardin, Louis T.	1921-1922
b. 3, f. 62-67	Heaton, Lee Wilbert	1923
b. 4, f. 68-75	Heaton, Lee Wilbert	1924-1925, undated
b. 4, f. 76-77	Kenyon College	1926, 1935
b. 4, f. 78	Kent, E. A. Knox, bp. of	1928-1936
b. 4, f. 79-80	Lloyd, Arthur S.	1915-1931
b. 4, f. 81	McKim, Randolph H.	1913-1914, undated
b. 4, f. 82-86	Matthews, William R.	1936 September- October
b. 4, f. 87	Mencken, Henry Louis	1933, 1935
b. 4, f. 88-91	Murray, John G.	1926 September- October
	New York, Diocese of	
b. 4, f. 92-93	Election of bishop	1919 May-July
b. 5, f. 94-102	Election of bishop	1919 August-1921, undated
b. 5, f. 103	Convention	1923
b. 5, f. 104	Standing Committee	1933
b. 5, f. 105	Parsons, Edward L	1921-1933
b. 5, f. 106	Pennsylvania, Diocese of: <i>Journal of the 139th Convention</i>	1923
b. 5, f. 107	Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting Religion and Learning in the State of New York	1914-1915
b. 5, f. 108	Reiland, Karl	1928-1934
b. 5, f. 109	Roosevelt, Franklin Delano	1939-1941
b. 5, f. 110-113	"Sad St. Alban's" English	1937
b. 6, f. 114-115	St. Luke's Hospital (Shanghai) See also: box 7, folders 141-143	1936 November- December
b. 6, f. 116	Seaman, E. Cecil	1926-1928, 1939 February

Correspondence (continued)

b. 6, f. 117-131	Shipman, Herbert	1921, 1924
b. 7, f. 132-135	Stires, Ernest Milmore	1913, 1921-1935
b. 7, f. 136	Thomas, Lowell	1940-1941
b. 7, f. 137-140	Török, John W.	1934-1936, undated
b. 7, f. 141-143	Trinity Church (New York, N.Y.) See also: box 6, folders 114-115	1936-1938
b. 7, f. 144	World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches	1916-1917
General correspondence		
b. 7, f. 145-148	B-W	1913-1940, undated
b. 7, f. 149	Unidentified	1913, 1941
Writings		
b. 7, f. 150	"The Never-ending Quest," <i>The Christian World Pulpit</i> , pp. 90-92 English	1933 August 24
b. 7, f. 150	"The Clove Valley Rod and Gun Club," Parts I and II, <i>Game Breeder and Sportsman</i> English	1934 Jan, February
b. 7, f. 151	Biographical sketch	undated
Cummins, Evelyn (Atwater): correspondence		
b. 7, f. 152	Letters of condolence	1946-1947
b. 7, f. 153	<i>The Chronicle</i>	1947 July
b. 7, f. 154	Roosevelt, Sarah D.	1939-1940
b. 7, f. 155	General correspondence, B-V See also: box 1, folder 8 See also: box 2, folders 28-39 See also: box 4, folder 87	1924-1941, undated
b. 7, f. 156	Cummins, Alexander Griswold, Sr.: ALS to Mrs. Bridgman	1900 April 23
b. 7, f. 157	Caswell, Wilbur Larremore: "Alexander V. G. Cummins, an American Gad-Fly," <i>The Churchman</i> , pp. 10-12	1930 May 3
b. 7, f. 158	Programs, invitations, and other printed matter	1865, 1914, 1933- 1947, undated
b. 7, f. 159	Newspaper clippings	[ca. 1930s-1940s]

Cummins, Evelyn (Atwater): correspondence (continued)

b. 8, f. 160

Photographs

1908, 1924, 1925

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.

Geographic Names

United States -- Politics and government

Subjects

Clergy

Names

Butler, Nicholas Murray, 1862-1947
Cummins, Alexander Griswold, 1869-1946
Cummins, Evelyn Atwater, 1891-
Heaton, Lee Wilbert
Mencken, H. L. (Henry Louis), 1880-1956
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano),
1882-1945
Shipman, Herbert, bp., 1869-1930
Stires, Ernest Milmore, 1866-1951
Thomas, Lowell, 1892-1981

Corporate Body

Episcopal Church