

# Guide to the Cushman Family Papers

MS 161



compiled by Steven Hensen

July 1974

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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
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
Collection Contents .....	6
Series I: Correspondence .....	6
Series II: Family Papers .....	7
Series III: Business Papers .....	8
Selected Search Terms .....	9

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 161

**CREATOR:** Cushman family

**TITLE:** Cushman family papers

**DATES:** 1832-1868

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.5 linear feet (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Letters, diaries, writings, sermons, letter books, business papers, and memorabilia of David Cushman (1795-) of West Exeter, Otsego County, New York and members of his family. The papers relate primarily to personal, family, and business matters, although there is some material on the anti-slavery movement and some Civil War papers of George C. Cushman. Other material of interest includes some papers relating to the Poughkeepsie Collegiate School and a series of business letters written from the Midwest, 1855-1868.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0161>

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## 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.0161>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](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

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mary and Helen Kilborne, 1965.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

Cushman Family Papers (MS 161). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

David Cushman was born on February 17, 1795 in West Exeter, Otsego County, New York. He married his first wife, Hetta Curtiss, daughter of Deacon Amos Curtiss, on January 26, 1819. They had one daughter Diantha (1819-) and a son Floyd Smith (1821-1825). Hetta (Curtiss) Cushman died on February 21, 1824; two years later, on September 11, 1826 David Cushman married Julia Maria Curtiss, her sister. They had five sons and six daughters.

David Cushman was an active abolitionist and in a letter of December 12, 1850 he stated: "Our sympathies are with the oppressed having attended every National Convention since 1835 for anti-slavery objects."

Cushman's death date is unknown.

For a chart outlining the genealogical relations of the Cushman family, please consult the [Genealogical Chart](#).

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## Scope and Contents

The Cushman Family Papers consist primarily of letters, diaries, writings, sermons, letter books, business papers, and memorabilia of David Cushman (1795-) of West Exeter, Otsego County, New York and members of his family. The papers relate to personal, family, and business matters and have been arranged into three series: (I) Correspondence, (II) Family Papers, and (III) Business Papers.

Series I, CORRESPONDENCE, is arranged chronologically and spans the years 1832 and 1868 with the bulk of the material falling into the period 1861-1868. It consists primarily of letters exchanged among members of David Cushman's family. Of interest in this series are a group of letters between David Cushman and Gerrit Smith on anti-slavery subjects; also, on this same topic, there is an interesting exchange of letters (1839 February and March) between Cushman and a slave owning friend in Virginia. Other letters of interest include a series of letters from Edward, George, and James Cushman to members of their family while they

were attending the Collegiate School of Charles Bartlett in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1847; a letter dated 1864 December 20 to George Cushman from a friend describing Sherman's march through Georgia; and an eight-page letter from Augustine Hale (1861 December 30) to David Cushman regarding life in Nevada Territory and a great flood in California, Washington, and Oregon.

Series II, FAMILY PAPERS, consist of school boy papers from the Poughkeepsie Collegiate School, diaries, two political papers written by David Cushman, and other miscellaneous family papers. Also included in this series is a group of sermons by the Reverend Job Cushman\* (1797-) who was an 1819 graduate of Brown University where he studied theology under Calvin Park.

Series III, BUSINESS PAPERS, consist primarily of letter-press copy books, 1855-1868 of David Cushman. The letters were written from various places in the Midwest and East as he was trying to collect on various accounts while apparently working for his newphew, Alonzo Ritter Cushman (1818-) who was a commission merchant in New York City. Also included are two account books and miscellaneous other business and financial papers.

The papers were given by the Misses Mary and Helen Kilborne in June 1965.

\* Job Cushman was a distant cousin of David Cushman, David's father, Minerva Cushman and Job Cushman being 5th generation descendants of Thomas Cushman, the Elder (1608-1691) as [this](#) chart shows.

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## Arrangement

Arranged in three series: I. Correspondence. II. Family Papers. III. Business Papers.

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**Collection Contents**  
**Series I: Correspondence**

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1832, 1839
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1847, 1849
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1853, 1855-1857, 1859
b. 1, f. 4 - 6	Correspondence	1861-1868
b. 1, f. 7	Fragments	undated

**Series II: Family Papers**

b. 1, f. 1	School papers, Poughkeepsie Collegiate School	Circa 1847-1850
b. 1, f. 2	Political essays -David Cushman	undated
b. 1, f. 3	Military Papers -George C. Cushman	1862-1867
b. 1, f. 4	Diaries -George C. Cushman	1867-1868
b. 1, f. 5	Sermons -Job Cushman	1828-1866
b. 1, f. 6	Miscellaneous and memorabilia	undated

**Series III: Business Papers**

b. 1, f. 1 - 7	Letter-press copy book	1855 October - 1862 October
b. 1, f. 8	Account books -David Cushman	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Miscellaneous business papers	1855-1868



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## 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.

### Subjects

Business  
Clergy  
Education  
Families  
Slavery -- United States

### Geographic Names

New York (State) -- History -- 1775-1865  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865  
West (U.S.)  
West Exeter (New York) -- History

### Genres / Formats

Account books  
Diaries  
Sermons

### Names

Cushman, Edward Lansing, 1833-  
Cushman, George Canning, 1830-  
Cushman, James Vila, 1833-1861  
Cushman, Job, 1797-  
Ritter, Alonzo, 1818-  
Smith, Gerrit, 1797-1874

### Families

Cushman family