

Collection #
M 1543
OM 0793

**AUGUSTUS N. AND MINNIE WILLIAMS FAMILY
COLLECTION, 1828-1981**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	2 manuscript boxes, 1 half-sized manuscript box, 3 oversized folders, 1 half-sized photograph box, 1 photograph album, 1 OVC graphics folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1828-1981 (Bulk: 1865-1938)
PROVENANCE:	Lauren J. Bryant for the Bryant family
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Isaac R. Conwell Diary Transcripts, 1861-1866 (SC2753); World War I Oral Histories Collection, 1907-1919; 1980-1982 (M0992)
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2014.0250
NOTES:	

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Augustus Noah Williams (1837-1923) was born in Franklin County, Indiana on 9 December 1837 to John P. and Nancy [Morris] Williams. He was one of nine children. Augustus attended school in Brookville, including the Brookville College.

In September of 1861, he enlisted in the 2nd Indiana Cavalry for three years' service in the Union Army. He reportedly participated in the battles of Shiloh, Corinth, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge. During a scouting mission at Spring Place, Georgia, he was captured by Confederates and sent to Andersonville Prison for eight months. After regaining his freedom through a prisoner exchange, his service was up and he was discharged. However, on 30 April 1865 he re-enlisted as a substitute in the Indiana 53rd Infantry. He was mustered out on 21 July at Louisville, Kentucky.

After returning home, Augustus married Julia E. Osborne in 1866. Four ensuing children, Edwin F., Cortez (Court) W., Ethel, and Culver B., survived to adulthood. However, Julia died in 1885.

At the age of fifty Augustus married 25-year-old Minnie C. Caldwell (1863-1938) and fathered two more children: Augustus, Jr. (1889-1973) and Mary M. (1892-1938). In 1903, the family moved to a farm two miles east of Arlington in Rush County. Augustus, Jr. (called Gus) and Mary were raised on the Williams homestead and attended Rushville schools.

Mary Williams attended Butler and Indiana Universities where she was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. Afterwards she became a teacher at Rushville High School.

Gus N. Williams Jr. graduated from Rushville High School in 1909, after which he went to the Pacific Northwest. In 1914 he graduated from Whitworth College in Tacoma, Washington in a small class of only ten. He stayed in Washington after graduating, all the while keeping a close eye on the developing war in Europe. Though it caused his parents much distress, he felt a strong obligation to enlist when the United States became involved in the war. He served in the First Gas Regiment in France and saw particularly hard action at Château-Thierry.

Gus survived the war, however, and just before deployment had married Murle O. Wildman. Murle (1892-1973), an artist originally from Nebraska, worked for the Veteran's Administration in Washington, DC during the war. After the war, Gus and Murle briefly stayed in DC where Gus earned a master's degree in economics from American University. After that the pair returned to the Pacific Northwest where Gus worked for the Internal Revenue Service. Gus and Murle had two children: John A. was born in 1921 and Jannette in 1925.

Augustus Sr. passed away in 1923 at the age of 85. Minnie and her daughter Mary died five days apart in 1938. With Gus and Murle living in Portland, Oregon, the farm was sold in April of 1939 to eventual Republican nominee for president, Wendell Willkie. Willkie's wife Edith had grown up in the Rushville area.

Sources:

"Augustus Williams," *The Oregonian*, 21 August 1973

"Former teacher of Rushville expires following illness," *Rushville Republican*, 19 July 1938

Materials in the collection

"Rites conducted for Portland artist, 81," *Oregon Journal*, 13 September 1973

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of material from the Williams family of Rushville. More specifically, it contains material about Augustus N. Williams' Civil War Service, Gus Jr. and Mary's early education, and family correspondence. The bulk of the letters range from the time of Gus Jr.'s departure from Indiana in 1909 until the deaths of Minnie and Mary in 1938, though there are a few letters present from the 1950s to 1970s. The collection does not include material from Augustus' first marriage or their children, though they are sometimes mentioned in the letters.

Of special note are some letters leading up to US involvement in World War I. Augustus Sr. writes to his son about the brutality of the war (1-10-1915, 2-15-1915, and 4-27-1915) and his faith in President Wilson to guide the country through the turmoil (5-21-1915). At one point he directly asks his son not to enlist in the military (4-16-1917). In a long and heartfelt letter back to his parents, Gus Jr. explains his reasons for defying their wishes (7-15-1917).

The processor has made a distinction in describing 'correspondence' versus 'letters.' Folders labeled 'correspondence' include responses from the addressee, whereas 'letters' are without extant replies.

A printed item, *The Story of the First Gas Regiment* by James Thayer Addison and published by Houghton Mifflin in 1919 has been processed as an artifact. This personal copy of Gus Williams, Jr.'s includes inlaid annotations. These brief, handwritten notes provide insight into the book's text and photographs, particularly Chapter Five, "The First Battalion in the Château-Thierry Offensive."

The accession included a framed piece of wood cladding with five Williams family photographs mounted to it. A description of the photographs had been taped on the verso. The photos were unmounted by a conservator to be foldered and a copy of the description made by the processor for inclusion in the collection.

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Maps, Andersonville Prison, n.d.

11th Indiana Infantry memorial, Vicksburg, Miss., n.d.

Augustus Williams biographical sketch, n.d.; obituary, 1923

Life insurance policy, 1883; Fire insurance policy, 1901

Gus Jr. and Mary Williams as children, 1889-circa 1900

Other family photos, circa 1880s; 1930s

Unmounted family photos, circa 1880s-1919

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