

BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
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Creator: Conant Family.
Title: Conant Family papers.
Inclusive dates: 1833-2001
Extent: 1 linear foot, 1 oversize folder.
Call number: 2008180 Aa 2; Ac; UAx

Language: Material is in English
Acquisition: The collection was donated in October 2008 by James Conant (donor number 10119).
Accruals: No additions to the collection are expected.
Access: The collection is open without restriction.
Photographs: In box 1 and UAx folder.
Copyright: Copyright is held by the Regents of the University of Michigan.
Processed By: Shelley Hayreh, November 2008

Abstract

The Conant Family papers trace several generations of the Conant family in Van Buren Township, Wayne County and Salem Township, Washtenaw County. The collection contains Civil War correspondence, general family correspondence spanning a period of 130 years, warranty deeds regarding the Conant farmstead, genealogical research, photographs and negatives.

History

In 1833, John Wesley Conant (1801-1877) left New York and settled his family in Van Buren Township, Wayne County, Michigan. The family purchased a farm on Denton Road and built a one and one-half story frame house that, as of 1989, was listed (after its relocation to Salem Township) on the State Register of Historic Places. John Wesley and wife Alice Van Pelt had three daughters and three sons. Their son John Stoughton Conant (1837-1897) became the next owner of the Conant farmstead in Van Buren Township.

On February 20, 1863, John Stoughton was drafted into Company H, Fourth Infantry and joined the regiment at Falmouth, Virginia on March 23, 1863. As a soldier during the Civil War, John Stoughton fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. He was later discharged at the expiration of term of service on November 11, 1863. Soon after, Conant married Cynthia Anne Lamkin (1845-1918) in Ypsilanti. The couple had three children, Mary (b. 1865), Ellen (b. 1868) and Eugene (b. 1880).

After the death of John Stoughton, Eugene Conant became the official owner of the family farm; however, his sisters Mary and Ellen continued to live in the family home. Along with sharing the home with his sisters, Eugene Conant and his wife Ella May Glass raised their two children Hebert Eugene (1905-1999) and Edith Belle (1907-1930) in the John Wesley Conant House.

Herbert Eugene married Olive Neubert in 1940. The couple moved into the Conant house with aunts Mary and Ellen. In 1941-1942, the Conant family received multiple offers to sell their farm to Henry Ford. The family declined to sell their land at the time; however, they were forced to move in 1942 when their land was purchased with the aim of building the Willow Run Bomber Plant. The family moved the John Wesley farmhouse and other outbuildings to its current location on the Bowers-Walker farm in Salem Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan.

Scope and Content Note

The Conant Family papers cover the period between 1833 and 2001. The collection consists primarily of correspondence, warranty deeds, land documents, financial statements, newspaper clippings, genealogical research, photographs and negatives. The collection has the following series: **Family**, **Land and Finances**, **Genealogy**, and **Visual Material**.

Family series covers 130 years of the Conant family. The collection contains correspondence from John Stoughton Conant while he served with Company H, Fourth Infantry during the Civil War. Among John Conant's Civil War correspondence is a first hand account of the Battle of Gettysburg. The series also includes general family correspondence, government documents and certificates, and newspaper clippings.

Land and Finances series documents the Conant family's financial activities, property development, and legal attempts to save their property during World War II from being used for the Willow Run Bomber Plant. The series contains abstracts of title, district maps, warranty deeds, land petitions, and financial documents.

Genealogy series contains genealogical research primarily focused on the John Wesley Conant family but also some research on other related Michigan families. The series includes personal narratives about family life, genealogical history, and a published booklet by Frederick Odell Conant about the Conant families of America.

Visual Material series includes formal family portraits, photographs of the Conant property and house, tintypes, and negatives.

Box No. Description

Box 1 Family

Abraham Lincoln Funeral Sermon by Rev. Samuel Gorman, 1865
 Army documents, 1863-1897
 Civil War Correspondence, 1863 (2 folders) (5 July 1863 letter details
 the Battle of Gettysburg)
 Correspondence, 1847-1862
 Correspondence, 1863-1898
 Correspondence, 1910-1977
 Marriage Certificates, 1864
 Newspaper Clippings, undated
 War Rations, 1945

Land and Finances

Abstracts of Title, 1942
 District Maps, undated
 Estate Documents, 1833-1881
 Land Petitions, 1942
 Legal correspondence about land titles, 1941-1948
 Mortgage certificates, 1873-1916
 Pension documents, 1903-1981
 Warranty Deeds, 1833, and 1873-1942 (include land deed, 1833, in
 oversize folder)

Genealogy

Personal narratives/memories, undated
 Conant Genealogical Published Research by Frederick Odell Conant,
 1887
 Roger Conant Family Association, 1913-1919
 John Wesley Conant House, 1990-1993
 Other Families, 1904-2001
 Genealogy Notebook, undated (2 folders)
 Family Trees, 1986, undated
 Gettysburg Hat Story, 1996

Visual Material

Portraits, ca. 1860s-1890s (3 folders)
 Family Photographs, ca. 1860s-1910s
 Family Photographs, ca. 1950s-1990s
 Family Photographs, ca. 1990s
 Buildings in Michigan including family house and churches, 1971,
 undated
 Photograph scans of early family photos, undated
 Negatives, 1940s-1990s
 Description of Negatives?, undated

UAx

John Conant and Family, ca. 1860s (daguerreotypes and tintypes)
 (include image of young man in uniform identified as "Uncle
 Billy Lamkin Brother of Cynthia Conant)