

Cunningham Family Papers

The Adams County Historical Society

Accession #: 5817

Location: Room 203 – Rack 3 – Shelf B

PREFACE

The Adams County Historical Society was established to “foster interest in the history of Adams County and vicinity, conduct research, preserve records and objects, mark sites, and pursue such activities as may be related to the history of the community.” The Society’s collections are privately held, maintained, and made available to the public for research purposes at the discretion of the governing authority of the institution and its staff.

INTRODUCTION

The Cunningham Family Papers were acquired by the Adams County Historical Society in 1980 from J. J. Harper. The collection was processed by Julian N. Weiss in 2013. The collection is held in two boxes.

The Cunningham Papers are largely legal documents pertaining to sales, titles, deeds, estates, and inquiries. The range of dates is massive, going back as far as 1761 to 1876. The main player in the documents is James Cunningham, judge in Adams County from 1822 to at least 1850. However, dozens of other people from the area are listed in the documents as buyers, or signatories, or plaintiffs. This is a great source for legal history in the 18th and 19th centuries in Adams County as well as genealogy, business, criminal, property, and general history of the county.

ACCESS

This collection is open for research, and viewing access to the materials is unrestricted. However, restrictions apply concerning the use, duplication, or publication of items. Please consult research room staff for specific information regarding the Society’s policies.

PREFERRED CITATION

Cunningham Family Papers, Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, PA.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The Cunningham family is descendant from John and Elizabeth Cunningham who emigrated to America ca. 1748 from Northern Ireland. Robert Cunningham (1740-9/14/1823) was a son of John and lived near Gettysburg after moving from Lancaster in 1770. His son, James

Cunningham (2/26/1789-2/27/1867), was born and served as Justice of the Peace in Freedom Township. There is a full family history available in the archives.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection in two boxes includes hundreds or thousands of articles of agreement, estate and assorted legal papers, documents, notes, receipts, and *Questions and Answers on the New Testament* (1830) by William Paxton. Dates range as far back as 1761 to 1879. Dates and names in Series and Container descriptions are not meant to be complete, only as a guide; most of the documents are mixed thoroughly in their date of creation. Many dozens of residents of Adams County are mentioned or signatories in the documents. The documents seem to be organized in folder by person and type of document.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1 – Legal papers.

This series contains many papers from many persons in regards to Articles of Agreements, commentary on the Bible, criminal and civil cases, estate papers, last wills and testaments, guardianship papers, receipts, judgments, referee appointments, deeds and indentures ranging between 1761 to 1850.

Series 2 – Legal papers

This series consists of land draughts, estate papers, wills, vendee lists, receipted bills, papers pertaining to the separation from Hamiltonban Township to become Liberty Township, miscellaneous papers, assets, personal bills, receipts from James Cunningham, and the Freedom Township School Book from 1857. The documents range from 1764 to 1879.

CONTAINER LISTING

Box #1 (Look on right hand side of folders for marking info)

Folder 1-1 Articles of agreement between: Robert Cobean and Joseph Delaplane, Michael Trostle, Henry Melking, William F Smith and William Rex. Articles of agreement between Samuel Cobean and Robert Cobean, James Cunningham, John Hamilton, Jr., William Rex, George Thomas, D. Winter and T Bream (1831, 1834, 1851, 1853).

Folder 1-2 Articles of agreement between G. W. Rex and Joseph Wade; Abraham Scott and Bernard Devine; Frederick Smith and John Burns and Henry E Melking; Michael Trostle and J. Cunningham (1771, 1793, 1821–1838).

Folder 1-3 Two copies of *Questions and Answers on the New Testament* (1827, 1830) by William Paxton with foreword by Finley Blythe.

Folder 1-4 Will of David Blythe (d. 1831), Articles of Agreement (1806–1832) between David Agnew, David Blythe, J. Bossereman, S. Bosserman, McFadian, John Bigham, J. A. Scott, Jonah Weaver, Armor Bigham, Doughas Millman, William Ferree [4 articles]; Jonah Feree, William Finley and Eliner Hall; William Kerr and Charles Bradley; A Krice and John Hill; Alex McGahey and Thomas McClellan; Marth McGauhey and Robert Kincaid, William McCreary and Jacob Myers, Martha McCurdy and David Troxell, Jr.; B. McSherry, James Lawrence and Jacob Hobleman; John Mooney and Ellen Dougherty; Robert Rhea and Frederick Shulley Jr., Sr.; Elizabeth Rife and Israel Shanebrook; Barnabas Riley and David Reck; James & Richard Scott and Andrew White; David Sheets and Peter Keefhower and Joseph Diver; C Shulley and Sally Trinkle, Frederick Shulley and Betsy Rife; James White and Jacob Cutshall.

Folder 1-5 Commissions for Justice of the Peace for James Cunningham (1822, 1840, 1845).

Folder 1-6 Court cases - (1761, 1837–1842) Criminal and Civil cases heard before Justice of the Peace Cunningham. Threats to persons: Charlotte Fisher, Robert Fisher, Margaret Linn, Henry Hull, William McCreary, John Mooney, Mary Scallion, Christian Shully and Catherine Shingledecker. Stolen property: John Clark, Samuel Hoover, Linn, Mary McCleaf, Frederick Ohler. Letter of Attorney: Benjamin Workman. Bill of Sale: Rebecca Wilson. Child abuse: Scallion vs. Linn. Assault: Samuel Loudon, William McCreary.

Folder 1-7 Receipts in re Robert Cobean and papers pertaining to Robert Cunningham's estate, 1803–1848.

Folder 1-8 Papers regarding the estate of Thomas Douglas his will (1793), accounts against the estate, receipts for payment (1790s), vendue list, release for land title (Duncan McDonald, Joseph Haslet, Robert Taylor, William Shakley), refunding bonds, Douglas as executor, papers referring to Timothy Douglas, son of Thomas, account of Robert Cunningham.

Folder 1-9 Guardianship papers (1832) for James Douglas' children (James, Susannah, Margaret & Elisa) and his widow Betsy Douglas, receipts (1820-1833).

Folder 1-10 Judgments and Referee Appointments (1828-1843). John Bower vs. John Hohn, Daniel Dougherty vs. James Divity, Henry Heagy vs. Agnes Patterson, Joseph Hill vs. Henry Wortz, Rachel Fisher (alias Hospelhorn) vs. George Shriver, Elizabeth McClellan vs. Andrew Stewart, David Reck vs. Barnabas Riley, Elizabeth Rife vs. Andrew Stewart, Agnes Patterson vs. Henry Heagy, David Reck vs. Barnabas Riley, Abraham Rhode vs. John W. McNair, Elizabeth Rife vs. Israel Shanebrough, Edward Scallion vs. Samuel McNair, Jacob Strausbaugh vs. Charles Bradley, Ester & Elisha Zimmerman vs. Joseh Hunter.

Folder 1-11 Deeds and Indentures - (1767, 1771, 1782, 1795, 1810) Purchase Copper Vein: James McKesson, William McMullen. Land indentures – Deeds (moved to regular deeds file): David Agnew – David Blythe, William Bigham – Robert Cunningham, Valentine Fickes – Lewis Shriver, Zephariah Herbert – James McKesson, Andrew Marshall – Samuel Blythe, Doncan

McDonald – Robert Cunningham, William Stevenson – Duncan McDonald. Act of Performance: William Bigham – Robert Cunningham. Article of Agreement: Duncan McDonald – Robert Cunningham. Record of Arbitration: James Agnew – Samuel, William & Thomas Bigham. Mortgages: Moses Seabrook to David Blythe and Robert Rhea.

Box #2

Folder 1-1 Land Draughts - 1821, 1864, five from Carroll Tract, tract in Franklin Township, Freedom Township, Mills locations of William McIlhenny, locations of families and buildings. Names contained: Abraham Scott, J. Cunningham, Jacob Liedel.

Folder 1-2 Estate papers, large and string bound - 1800-1876, several dozen estate papers, bills, receipts and sales, of J. Dunwoody, Blythe Family, John Adain, Abraham Ecker, William Finley, John Mooney, James Scott and Peter Weikert, Sarah Cunningham, Samuel J.B. Morse, .

Folder 1-3 About twenty documents, 1800, 1837, 1838, Pertaining to the separation of Liberty Township from Hamiltonban Township, contains petition with signatories, also letters, miscellaneous legal documents, receipts. Names included: A. Bigham, S. J. King, John S., William Reid David, Charles Wilson, David Scott, George and John Patterson, John V. Allen, Jacon Weaver, Solomon Harris, James Murphy, Sam White, Henry H., James Clarke, Joseph S.

Folder 1-4 About thirty documents, estate Papers (1813-1825) and divorce notes (1802-1804, Martha McKinley), receipts, and miscellaneous notes of James McKinley. Names included: Dr. John H., Lewis M., large list of articles sold in 1823 with names of about seventy people, including J. Cunningham, Baughman, McKinley, Bigham, Smith, etc.

Folder 1-5 About fifty documents, 1764-1777, 1805-1854, miscellaneous letters, receipts newspaper clippings (the Inquirer, Philadelphia, 1837-1839), a short poem written on the back of a Harrison and Reform paper, “Brief of Thomas Clingan’s Title to 188 A. Situate in Hamilton Ban Township” (1764-1777). Names included: Samuel Cobean, Betsy Cobean, Sarah McKinley (daughter of James Cunningham, paper of release, 1805), David Roth, John Stewart, Jacob Myers, Levi Waugh, John Carrick, Thomas Neely, John Cunningham, William Waugh

Folder 1-6 Estate papers for Grace Pedan, assets, liabilities, about 50 documents (1831-1843). Includes receipts, letters, notes, asset lists. People including: Thomas J. Cooper, James Cunningham, Clarkson, James White, L. Armstrong,

Folder 1-7 Bills (paid and unpaid) and receipts for James Cunningham, 1806-1846, estate papers of David Blythe, about eighty documents. Includes letters, notes, receipts, of John Gibson, James McIlhenny, John Smith, A. Cobean, D. Bigham, etc.

Folder 1-8 Estate papers of Abraham Scott, articles of agreement, notes, 1817-1850, about twenty five documents. Includes Samuel McNair, J. Cunningham, Nicholas Moritys, John Myers.

Folder 1-9 Estates papers for John and William Stewart, string bound folder, 1769, 1794, 1808-1857, over one hundred documents. Includes James Cunningham as plaintiff against John Garvin, final account of James Cunningham, obligations, bankruptcy notes. People including: A. Bigham, Joseph Carter, J. Walker, Robert Smith, James McKinley, John Long, Thomas Douglas (estate papers), Margret Douglas, Robert Cunningham, Q. Armstrong, David Scott (bankruptcy), Jane Burns, Philip H. Stevenson, Michael Abbott, Sam Bigham.

Folder 1-10 Estates papers for James Thompson, Isaiah McMahan and C. E. Reed, 1802-1820, 1874-1876, about forty papers. Notes, receipts, estate accounts, an indenture (1806), including James Duncan, John Thompson, Betsy Cunningham, Robert Cunningham, Walter Smith, Mary Thompson, David W. Cunningham.

Folder 1-11 Freedom Township School Book – 1857 (mislabeled), good condition, leather bound in plastic wrap, records deaths (1867), accounts (as late as 1879).