

Governor Cuming

RG001 Nebraska. Governor
SG003 Cuming, Thomas Barney, 1828-1858

Papers: 1818-1906
Secretary, Nebraska Territory, 1854
Acting Governor, Nebraska Territory,
1854-1855; 1857-1858
Cubic ft.: .1
Approx. No. of Items: 600 on 1 reel 35mm microfilm

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas B. Cuming was born in Genesee County, N.Y., on December 25, 1828. His father was a Protestant Episcopal minister of Grand Rapids, Michigan. After his mother died, he was raised by Rev. Penny, his uncle, at Rochester, New York. He graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor at the age of sixteen. In 1848 he became a Lieutenant in Company A, 1st Regiment, Michigan Volunteers in the Mexican War. After discharge he settled in Keokuk, Iowa where he worked as a telegraph operator and later as editor of the Dispatch, a Democrat weekly paper. He married Margaretta C. Murphy, the daughter of John C. and Maria (Tiernan) Murphy of Keokuk, Iowa, not long before he was appointed to serve as the first Secretary of the newly created Territory of Nebraska in August 1854.

Within ten days of his arrival in Omaha on October 8th, the first Territorial Governor, Francis Burt had died and the duties of the office of Governor were given to Cuming. His first official act was a proclamation on the death of Francis Burt. He was thrust into the controversy of the choice for the capitol of the new territory of Nebraska. The choices for location were Omaha or Bellevue. Bellevue had the support of the region south of the Platte and Omaha was the choice of the Iowa politicians whose influence had been a major factor in winning territorial status. The Iowa side wanted the capitol located at Omaha to provide a boost for Council Bluffs and the western border of Iowa generally. Cuming ordered a census and on the results designated counties and legislative districts, and

apportioned legislators accordingly. This created another controversy as the northern section received more representation and the southern section was for more heavily populated. Tempers rose high when the first session of the legislative council was ordered to meet at Omaha in January 1855. There was even a move to withdraw the South Platte region from the territory and annex it to Kansas. This move was not met with great enthusiasm in Kansas. The capitol controversy was not settled until 1867 when with statehood the capitol was located in Lincoln. Thomas Cuming was relieved of the duties of acting governor on the arrival in February 1855 of March Izard who had been appointed to succeed Governor Burt. Izard resigned the office in October of 1857, again making Cuming Acting Governor. Cuming remained in office until his death on March 23, 1858. His wife, Margaretta survived him and lived the remaining years of her life in Omaha with family members She died in Omaha on February 12, 1915.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of five series of records on one reel of microfilm.

Series One, incoming correspondence consists primarily of business and political letters received by Cuming while editor of the Dispatch in Keokuk, Iowa. The letters relate primarily to such matters as railroad development, bridges and ferries across the Mississippi at Keokuk, and politics.

Series Two, outgoing correspondence consists of letters sent by Cuming while Secretary and Acting Governor of Nebraska Territory. These letters relate to the death of Governor Burt, surveys, elections, territorial finances, the territorial council, public printing, and politics.

Correspondents of Series Two include: Thomas Hart Benton, Jr.; James Buchanan; Robert W. Furnas; George Manypenny; William Medill; J. D. Spaulding; and Richard M. Young.

The Personal Correspondence of Series Three is mainly incoming and outgoing correspondence of the Cuming and related families. Correspondents include Francis Tiernan (Maria's Murphy's brother); Athalia and Amanda Tiernan (Maria's sisters-in-law); Mike and Andrew Murphy; N. Grattan Murphy; Catharine L. Murphy; Caroline Sarge (Thomas Cuming's sister); and Nettie Cuming (Thomas Cuming's cousin).

Series Four contains receipts and warrants paid by Thomas B. Cuming for legislative expenses of Nebraska Territory.

Series Five, Miscellany, concern the Omaha City Company; the Santa Fe and Rio Grande Railroad; deed records; proclamations; and the Cuming family genealogy.

The bulk of the correspondence in Series One and Two is part of the Cuming-Hamilton collection at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska. The remainder of the collection is the Thomas B. Cuming papers at the State Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society. The two collection were combined for microfilming. the documents donated to the project by the Joslyn Museum are denoted by a plastic clip on the document. The collection was compiled and microfilmed in 1969.

DESCRIPTION

film
Roll #1

SERIES ONE PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1851-1858

film

SERIES TWO OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE, 1854-1858

film

SERIES THREE CUMING AND RELATED FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE

Item 1 Incoming Correspondence, Thomas B. Cuming
1850-1851

Item 2 Incoming Correspondence, Murphy family
John C. and Maria Tiernan Murphy
1833-1877

Item 3 Incoming Correspondence, Mrs. Cuming
Margaretta C. Cuming, 1859-1906

Item 4 Incoming Correspondence, Fannie Murphy
Hamilton, 1856-1893

film

SERIES THREE CUMING AND RELATED FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE

Item 5 Incoming Correspondence, Frank Murphy
1874-1893

Item 6 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1850, 1886

film

SERIES FOUR FISCAL RECORDS, 1848-1874

Item 7 Receipts and Warrants of Nebraska Territory
1854-1858

film

SERIES FIVE MISCELLANY, 1818-1881

Item 8 Proceedings, Omaha City Company, 1855

Item 9 Santa Fe & Rio Grande RR Incorporation, 1881

Item 10 Deeds and Proclamations

Item 11 Biographical information

Item 12 Genealogical data on Cuming Family

JEP/ab 2/17/1969

JEP/pmc 10/11/1971

PMC Word 2000 1/11/2007