



ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Title: James H. Cummings Papers

Dates: 1882–1979 (Bulk 1967–1972)

Creator: James H. Cummings

Summary/Abstract: The James H. Cummings Papers consist of materials created or acquired by James H. Cummings over the course of his career as a Representative in the Tennessee General Assembly or as Secretary of State of Tennessee. The papers span the years 1882 through 1979, with the period 1967-1972 most prominently represented. Significant gaps exist, most notably during the years 1930-1966, when Cummings was developing his reputation as a powerful legislator

Quantity/Physical Description: Approximately 14 linear feet

Languages(s): English

Repository: Albert Gore Research Center, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132, (615) 898-2632

Restrictions on Access: None

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Preferred Citation: (Box Number, Folder Number/Name), James H. Cummings Papers, Albert Gore Research Center, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Acquisition: Donated to Middle Tennessee State University by Tennessee State Representative John Bragg in 1980 and transferred to the Albert Gore Research Center in 1993. Miriam Hawkins donated additional materials in 1995.

Processed By: Original processor unknown

Biographical Note: James H. Cummings, the son of John Morgan and Lula Land Cummings, was born on November 8, 1890, in Cannon County, Tennessee. He attended Cannon County public schools and later matriculated at Woodbury Academy and Chattanooga Business College. In 1910, at the age of 20, while working as a clerk in the State Comptroller's Office in Nashville, Cummings enrolled in night classes at the YMCA Law School. He eventually earned his LL.B. degree in 1923 from Cumberland College.

Cummings left Tennessee in 1925 and worked in Florida for two years as a land developer. In 1927, he returned to Tennessee and launched a campaign for state legislature. Cummings won the 1928 election and served in the Tennessee General Assembly from 1929 to 1948. In 1949, Governor Gordon Browning appointed Cummings Secretary of State, a position that he held through 1952. In 1953, Cummings returned to the General Assembly and continued to serve until his retirement in 1972. During the years 1967-1969, Cummings served as Speaker of the House.

After his retirement, the Tennessee General Assembly honored him with "Jim Cummings Day" held on November 20, 1972. Among other honors bestowed upon Cummings, the executive wing of Nashville's War Memorial Building was named for him, as was a stretch of highway in Cannon County. In 1973, Middle Tennessee State University dedicated Cummings Hall, a dormitory named in his honor. James H. Cummings died on November 2, 1979, in Nashville, Tennessee.

Scope and Content: The James H. Cummings Papers consist of materials created or acquired by James H. Cummings over the course of his career as a Representative in the Tennessee General Assembly or as Secretary of State of Tennessee. The papers span the years 1882 through 1979, with the period 1967-1972 most prominently represented. Significant gaps exist, most notably during the years 1930-1966, when Cummings was developing his reputation as a powerful legislator.

Arrangement: These papers are divided into eleven series: Correspondence, Legislative Files, Legislative Documents, Legal Documents, Printed Material, Literary Productions, Photographic Material, Newspaper Clippings, Audio Recordings, Tennessee Monument at the Gettysburg National Battlefield, and Ephemera

Series 1: Correspondence, 1882-1977, bulk 1953-1973 (43 folders) Correspondence comprises the largest series in the collection. Most of it relates directly to Cummings's legislative activities. Materials in this series include requests for political support from fellow legislators and from figures of national prominence such as Estes Kefauver, Albert Gore, Sr., and John F. Kennedy. Researchers should note that information in the correspondence files may often be cross-referenced chronologically and/or by topic with information in the legislative files. This series is divided into eight types of correspondence, each arranged chronologically.

Requests (1933-77, 12 folders) include employment requests and appeals for professional or political support.

Constituent Mail (1955-72, 7 folders) is comprised of letters from individuals or organizations offering opinions on matters pending before the General Assembly or on current events.

Informational/Research (1953-76, 5 folders) correspondence provided Cummings with information on issues and events of possible interest or importance.

The remaining subjects are Acknowledgments (1932-73, 9 folders), Congratulatory (1945-73, 3 folders), Invitations (1953-77, 4 folders), Miscellaneous (unidentified, 1882 and undated, 2 folders), and Postcards (1908-73, 1 folders).

Series 2: Legislative Files, 1925-1930, 1955-1972, bulk 1967-1972 (19 folders) Materials collected by Cummings during his tenure as a state legislator. The materials consist of conference announcements, brochures, programs, agendas, memos, reports, maps, studies, election materials, petitions, directories, biographical sketches, and other items.

Series 3: Bills, 1930-1977 (4 folders) Compilations of acts, bills, resolutions, memoranda, proclamations, official minutes of various committee meetings, agendas, petitions, and sponsorship listings.

Series 4: Legal Documents, 1940-1972 (3 folders) Materials related to Cummings's career as an attorney. The items consist of correspondence, court orders, documents, notarized papers, notes, briefings, petitions, certificates, loan agreements, and receipts.

Series 5: Printed Material, 1943-1977 (15 folders) Pamphlets, directories, newsletters, programs, and one poster. Arranged by type of publication and chronologically. NOTE: Books have been incorporated into the Gore Center's reference collection. A listing of titles originally in the Cummings Collection is available.

Series 6: Literary Productions, 1945-1972 (4 folders) Speeches and other writings by Cummings and others. Arranged chronologically.

Series 7: Photographic Materials

Series 8: Newspaper Clippings, 1933-1979 (6 folders) Newspaper clippings and pages collected by Cummings or sent to him by friends, constituents, and fellow legislators. Most of the clippings either mention Cummings or pertain to issues of interest to him. In some instances, the clippings include brief correspondence from the sender.

Series 9: Audio Recordings, 1932, 1972-1973 (3 cassette tapes) Cassette #1 records the ceremony dedicating Cummings Hall at Middle Tennessee State University in 1973. Cassette #2 records the proceedings of the Tennessee Legislature on "Jim Cummings Day," November 20, 1972. Cassette #3 contains a recorded message for delegates to the Democratic National Convention from Franklin D. Roosevelt during his 1932 Presidential campaign. Roosevelt issued the paper record from which the recording was made. The original paper record and accompanying correspondence are also located in this collection.

Series 10: Tennessee Monument at the Gettysburg National Battlefield, 1970-1972, 1977 (7 folders) Correspondence, newspaper clippings, reports, constituent mail, and research notes related to the erection of a Tennessee Monument at the site of the July 1863 Battle of Gettysburg.

Series 11: Museum Objects: Plaques, wall hangings, ornaments, and other mementos collected by Cummings during his legislative career.

All Cummings Papers photographs are stored separately. All books in the Cummings Collection have been incorporated into the Gore Research Center Reference Collection.

Related Collections:

The John Bragg Collection

The Buford Ellington Collection

Subject Terms

Persons

James H. Cumming

Estes Kefauver

Albert Gore, Sr.

John F. Kennedy

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Places

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Rutherford County, Tennessee

Cannon County, Tennessee

Subjects (General)

Middle Tennessee State University

Democratic Party

Politics

Tennessee General Assembly

Tennessee legislature

Middle Tennessee State University

Cummings Hall

Battle of Gettysburg--Tennessee Monument

Material Types

Correspondence

Newspaper clippings

Conference announcements

Research notes

Brochures

Programs

Agendas

Memos
 Reports
 Maps
 Election materials
 Petitions
 Audio cassettes
 Bills
 Resolutions
 Memoranda
 Minutes

Container List:

Box	Folder	Series	Contents	Date
1	1	Correspondence	Requests	1933-1939
1	2	Correspondence	Requests	1941-1949
1	3	Correspondence	Requests	1951-1955
1	4	Correspondence	Requests	1956
1	5	Correspondence	Requests	1957-1959
1	6	Correspondence	Requests	1965-1967
1	7	Correspondence	Requests	1968
1	8	Correspondence	Requests	1969
1	9	Correspondence	Requests	1970
1	10	Correspondence	Requests	1971
1	11	Correspondence	Requests	1972
1	12	Correspondence	Requests	1973-1977
2	1	Correspondence	Constituent Mail	1955-1959
2	2	Correspondence	Constituent Mail	1966-1967
2	3	Correspondence	Constituent Mail	1968
2	4	Correspondence	Constituent Mail	1969
2	5	Correspondence	Constituent Mail	1970
2	6	Correspondence	Constituent Mail	1971
2	7	Correspondence	Constituent Mail	1972
2	1	Correspondence	Informational/Research	1882
2	2	Correspondence	Informational/Research	1953-1958
2	3	Correspondence	Informational/Research	1964-1969
2	4	Correspondence	Informational/Research	1970-1971
2	5	Correspondence	Informational/Research	1972-1976
3	1	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1932-1947
3	2	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1952-1956
3	3	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1957-1959
3	4	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1967
3	5	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1968
3	6	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1969
3	7	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1970-1971

3	8	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1972
3	9	Correspondence	Acknowledgements	1973
3	1	Correspondence	Congratulatory	1945-1969
3	2	Correspondence	Congratulatory	1970-1971
3	3	Correspondence	Congratulatory	1972-1973
3	1	Correspondence	Invitations	1953-1957
3	2	Correspondence	Invitations	1967-1969
3	3	Correspondence	Invitations	1970-1971
3	4	Correspondence	Invitations	1972-1977
3	1	Correspondence	Unidentified	N.D.
3	2	Correspondence	Unidentified	N.D.
3	1	Correspondence	Postcards	1908-1973
4	1	Legislative Files	House of Representatives	1967-1969
4	2	Legislative Files	Research materials	1955-1972
4	3	Legislative Files	Legislative Council Committee	1967-1971
	4	Legislative Files	Council for State Governments	1970
4	5	Legislative Files	Directories and bibliographical sketches of the Tennessee legislators	N.D.
4	6	Legislative Files	Redistricting	1967-1971
4	7	Legislative Files	Reports & sponsor listings from Tennessee Legislature	1968-1970
4	8	Legislative Files	Elections	1968, 1970
4	9	Legislative Files	Citizen's Conference on State Legislatures	1967
4	10	Legislative Files	State Tennessee Highway Commission	1920-1930
4	11	Legislative Files	Democratic National Convention	1968
4	12	Legislative Files	Petitions	1971
4	13	Legislative Files	Cummings Retirement	1972
4	14	Legislative Files	National Legislative Conference, San Francisco, CA	1967
4	15	Legislative Files	National Legislative Conference, San Antonio, TX	1967
4	16	Legislative Files	National Legislative Conference, Miami Beach, FL	1968
4	17	Legislative Files	National Legislative Conference, Honolulu, HI	1968
4	18	Legislative Files	National Legislative Conference, Salt Lake City, UT	1969
4	19	Legislative Files	National Legislative Conference, Minneapolis, MN	1971
5	1	Bills	Acts, Bills, Resolutions by Tennessee House of Representative	
5	2	Bills	Acts, Bills, Resolutions by Senate of the State of Tennessee	

5	3	Bills	Tennessee Governor's Proclamation, Legislative Reform	1966
5	4	Bills	United States Senate Bill S.355, Legislative Reform	1967
5	1	Legal Documents	Court orders, notarized documents, applications	1940 -1963
5	2	Legal Documents	Correspondence, notes, briefings, case files, petitions, certificates	
5	3	Legal Documents	Receipts	1950-1970
6	1	Printed Material	Pamphlets, Tennessee Legislature	1959-1972
6	2	Printed Material	Pamphlets, Tennessee State Politics	1965-1971
6	3	Printed Material	Pamphlets, Tennessee House of Representatives Rules of Order	
6	4	Printed Material	Directories, Tennessee Legislature	1967-1971
6	5	Printed Material	Newsletters, Tennessee Politics	1966-1971
6	6	Printed Material	Newsletters, Tennessee Education Association	1967-1972
6	7	Printed Material	Newsletters, National Politics	1969-1973
6	8	Printed Material	Miscellaneous Pamphlets	
7	9	Printed Material	Program, 43rd Annual Governor's Conference	1951
7	10	Printed Material	Inaugural Invitations, Truman & Johnson	1949-1965
7	11	Printed Material	Programs; Ceremonies, Memorials, Dinners	1949-1977
7	12	Printed Material	Certificates	1943-1977
7	13	Printed Material	Poster, Jim Cummings Day	1972
7	14	Printed Material	Pamphlets, Civil War in Tennessee	
7	15	Printed Material	Stationary, business cards	1945-1972
8	1	Literary Productions	Speeches by James H. Cummings	1945-1972
8	2	Literary Productions	Notes, speeches, reports, and memoranda	
8	3	Literary Productions	Introductions and poetry	
8	4	Literary Productions	Magazines and journals	1970 -1972
9		Photographic Material	2 photo albums with some loose photographs	
10	1	Newspaper Clippings		1933-1959
10	2	Newspaper Clippings		1963-1966

10	3	Newspaper Clippings		1967-1969
10	4	Newspaper Clippings		1970-1972
10	5	Newspaper Clippings		1973-1979
10	6	Newspaper Clippings		N.D.
11	1	Audio Recordings	Paper record of F.D.R. to Democratic delegates, correspondence	1932
11	2	Audio Recordings	Dedication of Cummings Hall, Jim Cummings Day in the Tennessee	
11	1	TN Monument at Gettysburg	Plans, site approval from NPS	1970
11	2	TN Monument at Gettysburg	Confederate High Command, correspondence and reports	1971-1972
11	3	TN Monument at Gettysburg	Research materials, proposal	
11	4	TN Monument at Gettysburg	Tennessee Monument Commission	1977
11	5	TN Monument at Gettysburg	Correspondence	1972
11	6	TN Monument at Gettysburg	Correspondence	1971-1972
11	7	TN Monument at Gettysburg	The Tennessee Raindrops	