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## Coke Family Papers (MSS 737)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
 Department of Library Special Collections  
 Western Kentucky University  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 737 COKE Family Papers**

2½ boxes. 45 folders. 502 items. 1789-2017. Originals, photocopies, photographs.

SC2022.19.1

**COLLECTION NOTE**

This collection consists of the correspondence and papers of the Coke family of Logan County, Kentucky and several related families, principally the Guthrie and McCutchen families. A genealogical chart in Box 1, Folder 1 shows relationships among persons featured most prominently in the collection, but should not be construed as a comprehensive genealogy.

Hailed as “one of Kentucky’s greatest sons,” James Guthrie was a state legislator, U.S. Senator, Secretary of the Treasury, and president of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. He led the movement to secure a charter for the University of Louisville and participated prominently in the development of the city’s transportation infrastructure. In 1840, James Guthrie’s daughter Mary Elizabeth Guthrie (1823-1901) married Richard Henry Coke (1815-1845). After his death, she married John Alexander Caperton (1817-1900).

Richard and Mary (Guthrie) Coke’s son, James Guthrie Coke (1841-1905) and his first wife, Jennie Mary Winston (1845-1870) were the parents of James Guthrie Coke, Jr. (1866-1938), who married Carrie McCutchen (1864-1938), the daughter of Cyrus D. McCutchen (1823-1874) and Amanda S. McCarley (1830-1887). Cyrus’s grandmother, Elizabeth Weir McCutchen (1756-1842), came to Logan County, Kentucky to claim land grants awarded to her late husband John McCutchen (1749-1789) for his Revolutionary War service. Elizabeth’s house (believed to have been built between 1810 and 1820) and farm, which came to be known as McCutchen Meadows, remained in the family until 1980, when it was sold by the heirs of William Gaston Coke (1895-1977), the son of James Guthrie Coke and Carrie (McCutchen) Coke.

Items of interest in the collection include the following:

- Political correspondence of James Guthrie Coke, Jr., an Auburn banker and farmer who served in the Kentucky legislature and was active in the Democratic Party. His letters to wife Carrie (Box 1, Folder 7) in early 1914 take the form of “journals” in which he describes the work of the General Assembly, his impressions of other legislators, and his dismay at the power of lobbyists. When prominent Kentucky woman suffragists Laura Clay and Madeline McDowell Breckinridge address the assembly, Coke, an opponent of woman suffrage, praises their speeches but describes them in uncomplimentary terms and doubts

- that they gained support for their cause. In the 1930s, he also addresses objections over a possible conflict as he participates in political campaigns while serving as a District Governor of Rotary International (Box 1, Folder 10).
- Letters to daughters Amanda and Jennie from their parents J. Guthrie Coke, Jr. and Carrie (McCutchen) Coke (Box 1, Folders 9, 14), while they are attending school in New York and in Charlotte, North Carolina. The letters keep the sisters up to date on activities at home, including the livestock enterprises of brother Gaston (William Gaston Coke).
  - Typescripts of letters from and regarding Benjamin Franklin McCutchen (Box 2, Folder 18), a brother of Cyrus D. McCutchen. He writes from Alabama during the Civil War as he attempts to gain a medical discharge from army service and enters into a partnership to make potash for the Confederate government; a letter from his partner describes the circumstances of his death and burial.
  - Materials regarding McCutchen Meadows (Box 2, Folder 21), including historical data, correspondence regarding the private cemetery on the property, clippings, the 1980 auction program and supporting information, a National Register of Historic Places nomination, appraisals of household items, and interior photographs.
  - Materials regarding another family property, the J. Guthrie Coke Building (also known as Caperton Block) at Fourth and Chestnut streets in Louisville, Kentucky, including clippings, a National Register of Historic Places nomination, ownership histories, exterior photographs and one interior photograph (Box 2, Folder 22).

### ***SHELF LIST***

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Coke Family Papers</b>	<b>1854-1974</b>	<b>216 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory and related items		5 items
Folder 2	James Guthrie (1792-1869) – Biographical	1904-1974, n.d.	19 items
Folder 3	James Guthrie (1792-1869) – Letters to	1854	4 items
Folder 4	James Guthrie/John Caperton passbook	1866-1870	1 item
Folder 5	James Guthrie Coke (1841-1905) – Correspondence & biographical	1871-1970	5 items
Folder 6	Jennie (Winston) Coke (1845-1870) – Letter to, obituary	1870	2 items
Folder 7	James Guthrie Coke (1866-1938 – Letters to Carrie (McCutchen) Coke	1914	19 items

Folder 8	James Guthrie Coke & Carrie (McCutchen) Coke – Marriage of	1886, 1936	4 items
Folder 9	James Guthrie Coke (1866-1938) – Letters to daughters	1915-1936, n.d.	18 items
Folder 10	James Guthrie Coke (1866-1938) – General correspondence	1886-1938	49 items
Folder 11	James Guthrie Coke (1866-1938) – Travel diaries, memo book	1927-1929, n.d.	3 items
Folder 12	James Guthrie Coke (1866-1938) – Miscellaneous papers	1892-1938	32 items
Folder 13	Carrie (McCutchen) Coke – Letters to James Guthrie Coke	1885-1886, n.d.	26 items
Folder 14	Carrie (McCutchen) Coke – Letters to daughters	1919-1934, n.d.	13 items
Folder 15	Carrie (McCutchen) Coke – Letters to; Red Cross certificate	1887-1917	7 items
Folder 16	Carrie (McCutchen) Coke – Death of	1938	9 items
<b>BOX 2</b>	<b>Coke Family Papers</b>	<b>1818-2017</b>	<b>229 items</b>
Folder 1	William Gaston Coke (1895-1977) – Correspondence & papers	1905-2013	28 items
Folder 2	Esther (Underwood) Coke (1904-1980) – Miscellaneous papers	1925-1980	6 items
Folder 3	James Guthrie Coke (1926-1980) – Biographical	1980, n.d.	3 items
Folder 4	William Gaston Coke, Jr. (b. 1932) – Correspondence & papers	1932-2011	17 items
Folder 5	Esther Coke (b. 1929) – Letters & clippings	1946-1951	9 items
Folder 6	Mary (Coke) Murdoch Bush & Benjamin J. Bush – Clippings & papers	1935-1978	16 items

Folder 7	Amanda McCutchen Coke (1897-1966) – Clippings & papers	1920-1966	12 items
Folder 8	Jennie (Coke) Sullivan & Robert E. Sullivan – Clippings & papers	1929-1966	12 items
Folder 9	Amanda “Queenie” (Blackburn) Coke – Correspondence & papers	1879-1909	6 items
Folder 10	William McCutchen (1789-1870) – Deeds, business & estate papers	1818-1870	18 items
Folder 11	William McCutchen (1789-1870) – Memo books	1844-1859	2 items
Folder 12	William M. McCarley – Account book	1866-1891	1 item
Folder 13	Amanda (McCarley) McCutchen – Papers	1873-1875, n.d.	4 items
Folder 14	Cyrus D. McCutchen – Business papers	1848-1873	
Folder 15	Volney K. McCutchen – Tax receipt; obituary	1870-1873	3 items
Folder 16	William F. McCutchen (1865-1893) – Letter of; obituary	1893	4 items
Folder 17	Volney A. McCutchen – Correspondence	1870-1871	2 items
Folder 18	Benjamin Franklin McCutchen – Letters of; death	1864-1866	4 items
Folder 19	Beatrice (Underwood) Talamon & René Talamon – Clippings & papers	1914-1953	19 items
Folder 20	Beatrice (Underwood) Talamon – Death & estate	1955-1972	11 items
Folder 21	McCutchen Meadows, Auburn, Kentucky – Historical data, clippings, photographs	1921-2017	36 items
Folder 22	J. Guthrie Coke Building, Louisville, Kentucky – Historical data, clippings, photographs	1952-1984, n.d.	16 items

<b>BOX 3</b>	<b>Coke Family Papers</b>	<b>1789-1976</b>	<b>57 items</b>
Folder 1	McCutchen-Coke Park Memorial Park, Auburn, Kentucky – Clippings, dedication	1967-1973	11 items
Folder 2	Coke genealogy notes	1931, n.d.	7 items
Folder 3	Graves family – Miscellaneous family history	1848-1976, n.d.	10 items
Folder 4	Guthrie family – Genealogy & history	n.d.	5 items
Folder 5	McCutchen & Coke families – Genealogical correspondence	1903-1965	13 items
Folder 6	McCutchen family – Miscellaneous papers	1789-1926	8 items
Folder 7	Miscellaneous obituaries	1876-1909	3 items

### ***BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD***

MSS COKE Family Papers 1789-2017  
737  
C1,D9 Correspondence and papers of the Coke family  
#3 of Logan County, Kentucky and related families, including the Guthrie and McCutchen families. Includes materials on the historic family homestead, McCutchen Meadows, near Auburn, Kentucky.  
2½ boxes. 45 folders. 502 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs.  
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