



## Austin Seminary Archives, Stitt Library

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### THOMAS McHUTCHIN (T.M.) AND HILDA CUNNINGHAM PAPERS, 1889-2014

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#### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Thomas McHutchin (T.M.) and Hilda Cunningham papers

**Dates:** 1889-2014

**Accession Number(s):** 1996-044; 2007-004; 2008-003; 2009-004; 2014-006; 2015-002

**Extent:** 2.2 linear feet, two DVDs, five rolled oversized photographs

**Language:** Materials are written primarily in English. A small amount of scrapbook material is in Spanish.

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#### Biographical Note:

Thomas McHutchin (T.M.) Cunningham (1887-1979), Presbyterian pastor, was born March 22, 1887 in Turnersville, Texas. On February 14, 1923, he married Hilda Lydia Hugon (1889 - ?). Hilda Cunningham was born December 8, 1889. The couple had one daughter, Hilda Grace (Tinker) Cunningham Rautenberg, born in 1928. Both T.M. and Hilda were very active in the Presbyterian Church in Texas.

T.M. received a Bachelor's of Divinity degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1916, and his Doctorate of Theology from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia in 1932, where he wrote his thesis on "Hymnology and the Music of the Church." T.M. served in various capacities ranging from pastor to musician to Director of Religious Education at many Presbyterian churches in Texas, primarily in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, through the 1930s. From 1941-1947 he was a professor of Bible & History at Daniel Baker College in Brownwood, Texas. T.M. retired honorably in 1947. A musician and lover of music, T.M. studied voice at the Boston Conservatory of Music, and published a folio of music in 1969. Non-musical published works include *Hugh Wilson, a Pioneer Saint* in 1938, *Story of Eliasville* in 1958, and three others. T.M. Cunningham died February 27, 1979.

Hilda Cunningham attended North Texas State Normal School (now the University of North Texas) to obtain teacher training from 1916 until her graduation in 1918. She was very active in various clubs while a student. She later received a Bachelor's degree of Art from the University of Texas, and completed some Master's work at Boston University. In 1933, Hilda assumed the presidency of the Texas Synodical of U.S. Presbyterian women, which she held for several years. She had been the president of the Fort Worth Presbyterial previous to this appointment. She also served as secretary

of the Woman's Advisory Committee of the Presbyterian Church during this time. When the Cunninghams moved to Denton in 1936, Hilda began employment at the First Presbyterian church as "young people's worker." Hilda was very active in home missions, working through the church with African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans in Texas. She spoke Spanish and frequently engaged in missionary work with Mexican Americans.

Hilda Grace "Tinker" Cunningham also attended the University of North Texas, then known as North Texas State Teachers College. During her time at the university, Tinker helped form a vocal quartet on campus known as the North Texas Swingtet. This group would later be signed by band leader Vaughn Monroe as the Moonmaids reaching both state and national recognition.

**Scope and Contents:**

Correspondence, printed material, scrapbooks, and photographs document the involvement of Thomas McHutchin (T.M.) and Hilda Cunningham with the Presbyterian Church in Texas (1889-2006). The material was received in six separate accessions (1996, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2014 and 2015) and is organized into six series. Original folder titles, where they existed, have been retained, and in some cases supplemented with further descriptive information.

Series I, Thomas (T.M.) McHutchin Cunningham, relates to the career and activities of T.M. Cunningham (1916-1979). Doctor's degree material illuminates his struggle to finish his coursework and write his thesis, while the voluminous church bulletins and his pastor's register record a busy career in the church. Correspondence reflects T.M.'s interest in his family, politics, and genealogy. While a young pastor, T.M. regularly wrote his family members and discussed happenings in the towns he was living in as well as he and Hilda's activities (including a trip abroad) from 1918-1927. Included amongst these letters are newspaper clippings, church bulletins, and other mementos. These letters [2009-004] have been digitized and are accessible via The Portal to Texas History (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/permalink/meta-pt-24653>).

Additional correspondence, all incoming, was received from government officials such as Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn and Vice President Henry A. Wallace. Additionally, T.M. compiled and produced the "Wilson Family Letter" for which family members mailed him updates about their families, which he collated and mailed out quarterly (1938-1944), biannually (1944-1947), and yearly (1948-1956). Two volumes of his published church music and several pages of typed lyrics document his interest in music.

Series II, Hilda L. Cunningham, records the activities of Hilda Cunningham (1911-1988). The series is comprised of collected printed material relating to home mission work with African Americans, Mexican Americans, and the Alabama-Coushatta

Native American tribe. Two scrapbooks were compiled by Hilda: the first primarily documents her social life and involvement with various clubs at North Texas State Normal College, 1916-1918 (available through the Portal to Texas History here: <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth388767/>). The second spans the years 1933-1954 and further documents her missions work as well as her involvement with Presbyterian Church organizations, particularly her tenure as president of the Texas women's Synodical, through newspaper clippings, brochures, and photographs. Also documented extensively in the scrapbook is the Texas-Mexican Industrial Institute in Kingsville, Texas. Several diary entries discussing Hilda's 1923 wedding are located in the wedding subseries and entries documenting Cunningham family life are within the second scrapbook.

Series III, Hilda Grace "Tinker" Cunningham Rautenberg consists of autobiographical writing covering Tinker's life from her adolescence in Texas to her travels around the country as a Swingtet and later as a Moonmaid. An unidentified postcard is also included as part of the [2015-002] accession.

Series IV, family scrapbooks, consists of three scrapbooks that were most likely compiled by Hilda Grace. The Hilda (1914-1953) and T.M.C. (1889-1979) scrapbooks, respectively, document the lifetimes and personal interests of the subject and family members. The Hilda and Tom scrapbook (1923-1979) primarily contains photographs and materials relating to the pair as a couple and their activities together with the church, family, and travels. These scrapbooks were disassembled due to preservation concerns. The material from each page is housed in separate folders, and scans and photocopies of the original scrapbook pages are available. The digitized copies can be found here: <http://digitalarchives.austinseminary.edu/collections/show/2>

Series V, photographs, contains loose photos of T. M., Hilda, and the Cunningham family, as well as group photos from church events, and five oversized photographs, one of which shows the attendees of the 1923 Christian Endeavor Convention. The remaining four photographs are rolled.

Series VI, genealogy, consists of a letter, clippings, and a chart related to family genealogical research.

**Related Collections:**

The Portal to Texas History, Letters of Rev. Dr. Thomas McHutchin Cunningham:  
<http://texashistory.unt.edu/permalink/meta-pt-24653>

**Processing Information:**

Additional material processed by Itza Carbajal, student archives assistant, February 2016.

**Restrictions:**

Materials are available by appointment only. Contact the archivist for details. Access to the four rolled photographs is restricted due to preservation concerns.

**Index Terms:**

Cunningham, Hilda.  
Cunningham Rautenberg, Hilda Grace (Tinker).  
Cunningham, T.M. (Thomas McHutchin).  
North Texas State Normal College.  
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.--Synod of Texas.  
Texas-Mexican Industrial Institute.  
Women of the Church (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.)  
Home missions.  
Presbyterian Church--Clergy.

**Preferred Citation:** Thomas McHutchin (T.M.) and Hilda Cunningham papers, 1889-2014, Austin Seminary Archives, Stitt Library, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

**Inventory:**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Contents</u>
B090	<b>Thomas McHutchin (T.M.) Cunningham, 1911-1979:</b> Doctor's degree (Union Theological Seminary): Course notes, syllabi, correspondence, and printed material, 1925-1931 and undated Ministry: Form of licensure, 1916 Pastor's register, 1925-1949 Bulletins: Broadway Presbyterian, etc., 1928-1932 First Presbyterian Valley View and Sanger, TX, undated Minister biographical questionnaire, 1965
D023	Correspondence: Diary/personal letters [2009-004], 1918-1927 Wilson family letters, 1935-1975 Government, 1943-1946 Oldriska Palachek, 1932 Writings: <i>Hugh Wilson, A Pioneer Saint</i> , 1938: <i>The Texas Genealogist</i> , book review, 1938 Library of Congress copyright certificate, 1939

**Box**                      **Contents**

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*Musings After Midnight*, 1970

Published copy of *Musings After Midnight*, 1970

Union Theological Seminary donation letter, 1979

Musical compositions:

Typed lyrics, undated

"God So Loved the World and Other Songs," 1921-1966

**F062a**

Printed material:

*Austin College Bulletin*, 1960

Historical Foundation pamphlet, 1933

Genealogy chart, undated

Personal:

Memories of Dew Drop Inn mini-scrapbook, 1911

Passport, 1927

Pilot flight record and log book, 1949-1968

Clippings, and notes, 1920-1922, 1940,  
1964-1979

Funeral materials, 1979

**C157c**

**Hilda L. Cunningham, 1916-1988:**

Scrapbooks:

North Texas State Normal College scrapbook, 1916-1918

Note: Also available online on the Portal to Texas

History here:

<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph388767>

**D020**

Scanned images of scrapbook from the Portal to Texas

History on two DVDs, also saved to server [2014-006]

**B077**

Presbyterian women's organizations scrapbook, 1933-1954

**B090**

Personal:

Pocket notes, 1916

Wedding:

Diary entries, 1922-1923

Invitation, 1923

Department of Woman's Work certificate, 1935

Lecture on Hilda's life and church service, 1988

Clippings, 1917-1922, 1974

Printed material:

Magazine articles, 1964-1968

Grace Noll Crowell poems, undated

Italian postcards, undated

