Overview of the Collection
Title: G. Joseph Sills, Jr. Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1878-2000
Bulk dates: 1984-2000
Collection Number: mssSills papers
Creator: Sills, G. Joseph, Jr.
Extent: 284 items in 2 boxes.
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
Abstract: This collection contains the research materials and correspondence of G. Joseph Sills (1931-2000) concerning
the events surrounding the Battle of Little Big Horn and Custer's Last Stand. The collection revolves around not only George
A. Custer, but several of his subordinates as well (Myles Walter Keogh, Frederick William Benteen, and Marcus A. Reno).
Language: English.
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact
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Preferred Citation
Provenance
Gift of Virginia Sills, April 7, 2004.
Processing/Project Information
Additional Items included with Finding aid:
• Summary of correspondence between G. Joseph Sills, Jr., Brian Pohanka and Ronald Nichols.
Biographical Note
A member of the English Westerners Society, the Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association (CBHMA) and the
Little Big Horn Associates, G. Joseph Sills, Jr. (1931-2000) of Baltimore, Maryland, was a dedicated as well as respected
student of Custer's Last Stand. Maryland's longtime Commissioner for Workers' Compensation, Sills brought a keen mind
and impartial spirit to the study of the famous battle.
G. Joseph Sills was born in Lima, Ohio, in 1931 and graduated from Loyola College in 1952. He received his law degree from
the University of Maryland Law School in 1960. Author of an introduction to the 1995 edition of Men With Custer:
Biographies of the Seventh Cavalry, he was a frequent participant in panel discussions and lectures at the CBHMA's annual
symposiums. In the early 1990s, he actively assisted in the conservation of the Custer Battlefield Historical Monument. In
addition, Sills was also a lifelong Sherlock Holmes enthusiast. He died in 2000.
Scope and Content
This collection contains the research materials and correspondence of G. Joseph Sills (1931-2000) concerning the events
surrounding the Battle of Little Big Horn and Custer's Last Stand. The collection has been divided into two boxes: one
containing his correspondence with various historians and National Park Service personnel, one holding his research and
writings. The correspondence extends chronologically from Sills first visit to the Little Big Horn Associates annual
conference in 1984 through his death in the summer of 2000. Chief correspondents include historians Brian Pohanka,
Ronald Nichols, and Francis B. Taunton. A summary of the sixteen years of exchanges between Sills, Pohanka, and Nichols
has been compiled by Pohanka and is at the end of this finding aid.
The research Sills collected contains notes made while investigating the Battle of Little Big Horn at the National Archives and other pertinent archives. Much of his research was documented by hand on yellow legal pads and is contained herewith. The collection also contains photocopies of other manuscript materials with Sills’ annotation. Intensely focused on the events surrounding Custer’s Last Stand, the collection revolves around not only George A. Custer, but several of his subordinates as well (Myles Walter Keogh, Frederick William Benteen, and Marcus A. Reno). In addition, there are a number of articles—both published and unpublished—written by Sills’ colleagues and correspondents. Lastly, Sills’ various lectures and essays are included in this collection. These writings range from esoteric jottings on scraps of paper to final, typewritten drafts. The largely undated material in this box is arranged alphabetically and grouped into (1) notes and research, (2) secondary literature, and (3) Sills’ writings, manuscripts, and ephemera.

Arrangement
This collection is arranged in two boxes:
- Box 1: Correspondence
- Box 2: Research, Manuscripts, and Ephemera

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library’s Online Catalog.

Subjects
Benteen, Frederick William, 1834-1898.
Custer, George A. (George Armstrong), 1839-1876.
Keogh, Myles Walter, 1840-1876.
Reno, Marcus A. (Marcus Albert), 1835-1889.
Sills, G. Joseph, Jr.
Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association.
Custer Battlefield Preservation Committee.
United States. Army. Cavalry, 7th.
Historians -- United States -- Archives.
Little Bighorn, Battle of the, Mont., 1876.
Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (Mont.)

Forms/Genres
Articles -- United States -- 20th century.
Essays -- United States -- 20th century.
Lectures -- United States -- 20th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- United States -- 20th century.
Research (document genres) -- United States -- 20th century.

Additional Contributors
Nichols, Ronald H. (Ronald Hamilton), 1935-.
Pohanka, Brian C., 1955-.
Taunton, Francis B.

Box 1 Correspondence

G. Joseph Sills, Jr. Papers: Finding Aid
Folder 11  1993. Miscellaneous Correspondence. 21 items between G. Joseph Sills, Jr. and Benjamin Cardin, Lawson Stowe Warren, Michael J. Koury, and Robert M. Baker.
Box 2
Research, Manuscripts, and Ephemera
Folder 1  Sills, G. Joseph Jr. 7th Cavalry Rosters and Losses: notes [undated]. 12 items.
Folder 4  Sills, G. Joseph Jr. Little Big Horn Documents [after 1884]. 4 items.
Folder 5  Sills, G. Joseph Jr. Little Big Horn Research [after 1884]. 21 items.
Folder 8  Burst, James S. 1877 Summer Expedition [undated]: article. 1 item.
Folder 9  Burst, James, S. “With More Rapidity than Discipline:” historical essay [undated]. 1 item.
Folder 10  Ellison, Douglas W. A Mystery of the Rosebud: historical essay [undated]. 1 item.
Folder 11  Gray, John S. A Vindication of Curly: historical essay [undated]. 1 item.
Folder 12  Nichols, Ronald (Ronald Hamilton), 1935--. Custer Divides His Command: historical essay [undated]. 1 item.
Folder 13  Taunton, Francis B. The Enigma of Weir Point: historical essay [undated]. 1 item.