

C Bush Family, Papers, 1819-1923  
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### INTRODUCTION

Journals, farm records, and correspondence of a Boone County, Kentucky, family who settled in southeastern Arkansas. The papers detail 1819-1820 steamboat trips up the Missouri River to Council Bluffs and 1850s farm operations.

### DONOR INFORMATION

The Bush Family Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Cornelia B. Pilgrim on 23 August 1991 (Accession No. 4986).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Craig Bush was born in 1797 in Boone County, Kentucky. His father's family were farmers, his mother's travellers. By the time he was 22, Bush had learned to pilot a steamboat, and had made four complete runs between Kentucky and New Orleans, and two between New Orleans and Natchez. In May 1819 he joined the crew of the steamboat *Expedition*, apparently as first mate, for a trip up the Missouri River to deliver U.S. Army troops and stores to the fort at Council Bluffs. In May 1820 Bush made the trip again, this time accompanied by a brother, Edward S. Bush.

Sometime before 1851 John Craig Bush moved to Lincoln County, Arkansas, and took up farming, becoming fairly successful. He married Mary W. Gaines (date and place unknown) and the couple had at least two children, Elizabeth and Vicky Elvira. He died in 1884, and is buried in the family cemetery near Star City, Lincoln County, Arkansas.

### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Bush Family Papers consist of two journals and miscellaneous papers relating to a family, which settled in Lincoln County, Arkansas, in the late 1840s. The collection is arranged chronologically.

Volume one is entitled, "John C. Bush's Book of Travels," and provides a daily account of a voyage up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers to Council Bluffs aboard the steamboat *Expedition* in 1819 and 1820. After a brief description of his travels up to that point, Bush begins his journal in Shippingsport, Kentucky, on 2 May 1819, as part of an expedition including five steamboats: *Exchange*, *Expedition*, *Jefferson*, *Johnson*, and *Independence*. From Shippingsport to St. Louis (12 May), the journal contains mostly descriptions of river conditions, settlements passed, surrounding landscape, and miles travelled each day.

At St. Louis and Bellefontaine (18 May), the *Expedition* took on supplies and stores for the military outpost at Council Bluffs. In tow by the time the boat left on 21 June, were the *Jefferson* and *Johnson*, nine keelboats, and troops of the 5th U.S. Infantry and the 6th U.S. Army regiments. While there is no formal list of crew and passengers, Bush does name and discuss several individuals in his accounts of daily life, including other crewmembers, soldiers, and

traders encountered along the way. Besides the river levels and landscape, topics include river settlements, weather conditions, Indians, plants, game, and diet, as well as miles travelled and when and where wood was taken in.

At Cow Island (29 August), the river level became too low for the steamboats to continue, and the stores were transferred to keelboats for the remaining part of the journey, with Bush being placed in charge of this convoy. Upon returning to Cow Island (2 October), Bush was ordered to return to Council Bluffs with the remaining stores.

By the time of Bush's second trip, the river had fallen so much that a return trip to St. Louis was impossible until spring. These winter entries record not only weather conditions and hunting parties in great detail, but the sickness and general uneasiness among the men caused by extended living in closes quarters in an inhospitable environment.

Volume two is "The Journal of Edward S. Bush, on board the Steamboat *Expedition*--Captain Silas Craig--bound from St. Louis to Council Bluffs on the Missouri with a freight of U.S. provisions, &c, in 1820." This journal is much shorter than that of volume one. Owing to higher water and better weather, this second trip took only two months, from May 17 to July 24. While mention is made of miles travelled, when and where the ship stopped for wood, and the surrounding landscape, Edward's entries lack the details of daily life found in John C. Bush's journal.

Folder one contains miscellaneous farm records, journal entries, and two letters. The farm records and journal entries are by John C. Bush and concern the workings of his Lincoln County, Arkansas, farm in the 1850s and 1860s, including mercantile and labor accounts, planting records, breeding records, and weather reports. Personal matters touched on are the births of grandchildren and the hiring out of slaves during the Civil War. The letters are from John C.'s grandson, J.C.B. Scull, concerning an inheritance problem, and from a cousin concerning a 1903 visit to the spas at Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Typed transcripts of all the above materials are located in folders two through four.

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