



Compton Family Papers (SP0133)

Collection Number: SP0133

Collection Title: Compton Family Papers

Dates: 1925-1982

Creator: Compton family

Abstract: The Compton Family Papers contains the personal papers of the Compton family of Springfield, Greene County, Missouri, including World War II correspondence, the military papers of George Aubrey Compton, and Bush Compton's AARP/NRTA sponsored trip guidebook and journal.

Collection Size: 0.5 cubic foot
(12 folders, 1 photograph)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at springfield@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Compton Family Papers* (SP0133); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Teresa Poole on June 10, 2026 (Accession No. SPA0163).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Compton Family Papers can be found in the following collections:

O'Reilly General Hospital (R1054)
Missouri Postcard Collection (P0032)

Processed by: Processed by Elayna Eastin, July 23, 2026

Historical Note:

Arlene Beulah Compton was born December 30, 1920, in Ash Grove, Missouri to George A. and Bertha Generva "Bush" Thomas. Arlene and her family moved to Springfield, Missouri, where she attended Greenwood school. After graduating from the State Teacher's College (Missouri State University today), she worked for the Justice Department in Washington D.C. During World War II, she returned to Springfield and worked for the O'Reilly General Hospital as a medical secretary where she met hospital patient, George Frederick Donnell. Arlene and George married on April 21, 1946, and had four children. Arlene died on April 23, 2014, and is buried in the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Springfield.

George Aubrey "Aubrey" Compton was born August 30, 1925, in Springfield, Missouri to parents George and Bertha "Bush" Compton. He attended Greenwood and Springfield High School before enlisting in the United States Army. By September 9, 1943, he was sent to Camp Dodge, Iowa, and was placed in the medical department as part of the 217th General Hospital. From there, he was transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where he would stay until he was sent to England on April 12, 1944. Aubrey worked as clerk and typist, completing medical forms and records for the physicians attending to wounded soldiers. In some cases, he also sat in on autopsies, documenting the findings and procedures completed. Aubrey was later transferred to the 198th General Hospital, followed by a transfer to the 8047th General Hospital, both located in France.

The 8047th General Hospital, also referred to as the Provisional German Prisoner of War Hospital, was a medical unit activated as part of the European Theatre of Operations (ETO) at the end of World War II. The hospital was both serviced by and took care of German POWs. While stationed at the hospital, Aubrey oversaw a prisoner named Wolfgang "Wolf" Willrich, a German artist who created propaganda art for the Nazi regime. Aubrey was discharged from service in March of 1946 and returned to Springfield where he enrolled at Southwest Missouri State University (Missouri State University today). In 1948, he re-enlisted for the Korean War. In the early 1950s, he resided in Springfield with his mother, and his sister Arlene and Arlene's family. Aubrey passed June 17, 1982, in Lakewood, Colorado.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into 12 folders.

Scope and Content Note:

The Compton Family Papers contain Bertha Generva “Bush” Compton’s travel journal and a 1976 guidebook from a trip to Hawaii. The trip was sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the National Retired Teacher’s Association (NRTA). Bush’s travel journal is from another AARP and NRTA sponsored trip throughout Europe in 1973.

The majority of this collection consists of George “Aubrey” Compton’s military papers, including correspondence, a scrapbook, and personal papers. The scrapbook was originally bound by two pieces of wood tied together by a leather cord, but the papers have been removed for preservation purposes. The scrapbook includes newspaper clippings, Aubrey’s birth certificate, a photograph of Arlene, and a 1945 show program from Aubrey’s time on camp. Of particular note are the correspondence between him, his mother, and his sister Arlene. The letters are dated from February 1944 to March 1946, and detail his life in the military, comparisons of the European countryside to the Ozarks, and descriptions of his work, specifically while stationed at the 8047th General Hospital in France. The correspondence has been left in original order and arranged by sender. Folders 11-12 contain transcriptions of Aubrey’s letters, completed by Arlene. The collection also includes two editions of “The Shamrock,” a bi-weekly publication produced by O’Reilly General Hospital personnel. This series is arranged by subject and then chronologically.

Container List:

Box 001	f. 1	Bush Compton’s AARP/NRTA travel guidebook, 1976
	f. 2	Bush Compton’s travel journal entries, 1973
	f. 3	Correspondence, Arlene Donnell, 1945-1946
	f. 4-5	Correspondence, Bush Compton, 1945-1946
	f. 6-7	Correspondence, George A. Compton, 1944-1946
	f. 8	Presidential Memorial Certificate, 1982
	f. 9	Scrapbook, 1925, 1945, no date
	f. 10	“The Shamrock,” 1945-1946
	f. 11-12	Transcriptions, 1944-1946

Index:

Index Terms	Folder	Image
8047 th General Hospital (Provisional German POW Hospital)	7, 12	
AARP (Organization)	1-2	
Bar-le-Duc (France)	12	
Compton family	1-12	Yes
Compton, Bertha Generva “Bush” Thomas, 1893-1981	1-7, 11-12	
Compton, George Almer, 1891-1982	4-7, 11-12	
Compton, George Aubrey, 1925-1982	3-12	
Donnell, Arlene Beulah Compton Wessel, 1920-2014	3-8, 11-12	Yes
England	6-7, 11-12	
France	7, 12	

Index Terms	Folder	Image
Greene County (Mo.)	3-5, 9-10	
Hawaii	1	
Newsletters	10	
O'Reilly General Hospital (Springfield, Mo.)	3, 10	Yes
Presidential Memorial Certificates	8	
Prisoners of War, German	7, 12	
Springfield (Mo.)	3-5, 9-10	
United States Army, 217 th General Hospital	4-7, 11-12	
World War, 1939-1945	3-12	
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