

**MS 178**  
**Coues, Elliott**  
**Papers, 1864**

## **DESCRIPTION**

This small collection consists of a petition and supporting papers for a divorce for Elliott Coues to the Arizona Territorial Legislature in 1864. The petition requests the divorce from Sarah A. Richardson and claims that although they did participate in a marriage ceremony in 1863 the ceremony was not “ratified by a marriage bed.” Since no law of divorce existed in the Arizona Territory a separation could be accomplished through an act of the territorial legislature. In addition to the petition by Coues there is a separate supporting statement by him to the legislature and four additional supporting letters.

1 Box, .25 linear ft.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Elliott Coues was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on September 9, 1842. He attended Columbian College in Washington D.C. and earned a medical degree in 1863. In 1864 he was appointed surgeon in the U.S. Army and assigned to Fort Whipple, Arizona Territory. He later participated with Lieutenant George M. Wheeler in the 1871 Geographical Survey West of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian. At the conclusion of the survey Coues wrote Chapter 5 of the report titled “Reptiles and Batrachians of Arizona. He later participated in other western surveys under Francis V. Hayden and served as the party surgeon and naturalist. In 1880 he returned to Fort Whipple and resigned from the Army in 1881. After 1890 Coues wrote a series of 15 volumes on early travel in the West. He died in Maryland December 25, 1899.

## **ACQUISITION**

Unknown

## **ACCESS**

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

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## **PROCESSING**

The collection was previously processed and reviewed by Dave Tackenberg in August 20, 2008.