

Collection #
M 0255
OM 0243

**DELAVAN SMITH
PAPERS, 1868–1921 (BULK 1879–1913)**

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Manuscript Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library

Indiana Historical Society

450 West Ohio Street

Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 31 boxes, 1 oversize folder, 1 box of photographs, 2 boxes OVA
photographs, 1 box OVB photographs, 2 OVC graphics

COLLECTION
DATES: 1868–1921 (bulk 1879–1913)

PROVENANCE: Delavan Smith estate, Lake Forest, IL, 1922

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: William Henry Smith Papers (M 0258); Hilton U. Brown Papers (M 0031); Charles W. Fairbanks Papers (M 0100)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1922.0001

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Delavan Smith (1861–1922) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, to newspaper publisher William Henry and Emaline Reynolds Smith. He was educated at Lake Forest (Illinois) Academy and Lake Forest University. Smith also earned an engineering degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and was briefly employed as an engineer before following his father into the newspaper publishing field. Like his father, Delavan Smith was involved in several newspaper-related industries, including serving as vice-president for both the Oliver Typewriter Company and the Cox Multi-Mailer Corporation, which produced bundling machines for newspaper mailings.

In addition to his newspaper ventures, Delavan Smith was an astute businessman with an estate worth over \$2 million at the time of his death. Besides his publishing and related businesses, Smith was also involved with timber and land speculations and small manufacturing enterprises. The personnel involved often carried over from one business to another and usually revolved around a small group of wealthy Chicago residents including Cyrus McCormick, Louis Swift, and John Harlan.

Smith's main business undertaking was the ownership and publication of the *Indianapolis News*, which he ran at one time or another with his father, William Henry Smith; his brother-in-law, Charles Richard Williams; his cousin, Charles W. Fairbanks; and Major William J. Richards. Delavan Smith was involved with the ownership and publication of the *News* from 1892 until his death in 1922.

Among Smith's chief philanthropic causes was his involvement with Lake Forest University, for which he served on the board of trustees beginning in 1906; he often assumed financial responsibility for many of the college's debts. With no direct heirs at the time of his death, Smith bequeathed millions of dollars to several Indianapolis charities including the Indianapolis Foundation, Methodist Hospital, the Art of Association of Indianapolis, and the Flower Mission. His will included the donation of his and his father's papers, his father's library, and a sizeable endowment to the Indiana Historical Society for the establishment of the Society's William Henry Smith Memorial Library.

Sources: *Guide to Manuscripts of the Indiana Historical and the Indiana State Library*, p. 167; *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, p. 1270; Information in collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of Smith's personal and business papers, primarily from the period 1879–1913. Included are papers relating to the *Indianapolis News*, principally from the period 1900–13, including correspondence regarding the paper's operations and policies; its circulation and advertising reports; employee information; and financial records. Papers relating to Smith's other business interest include those for the American

Corporation for Investors, 1900–12; the Cass Cigar Manufacturing Company, 1897–1900; the Cox Multi-Mailer Company, 1905–14; the Oliver Typewriter Company, 1896–1921; the Refugio Syndicate, 1907–14; and the Securities Corporation Limited, 1906–12.

Also contained in Smith's papers are materials related to his charitable and educational endeavors, including those relating to Lake Forest University and the university's Alice Home Hospital and Ferry Hall, 1878–1912. The collection also includes Delavan Smith's personal correspondence from his father and other family members and friends such as Charles Fairbanks, Hilton U. Brown, Jacob P. Dunn, Cyrus and Medill McCormick, and Louis F. Swift. Other materials in the collection include Smith's investment notebooks, bank books, and other personal financial records. Business and personal papers of William Henry Smith include papers relating to the Western Associated Press and national Republican Party politics, 1868–91.

Visual materials include two illustrated Christmas cards from *Indianapolis News* employees to Delavan Smith; photograph portraits of Delavan Smith, William Henry Smith, and other family members and friends; Smith's home in Lake Forest, Illinois; Lake Forest University; the offices of the *Indianapolis News*; and the Davis Grove, San Fernando, California.

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0255).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.