

Collection #
M 0257,
BV 0789–0806

ROBERT B. SMITH PAPERS, 1832–1942

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Series Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Betty Alberty, Robert W. Smith, Sister Rachel West
19 May 2003

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	7 document cases, 15 bound volumes, 2 loose tintypes
COLLECTION DATES:	1832–1942
PROVENANCE:	Herbert L. Heller, Greencastle, Indiana, May 1956
RESTRICTIONS:	None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Henry County Miscellaneous Papers (M 0060); Clarence H. Smith Papers (M 0254)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1956.0706

NOTES: Originally processed by Nancy Hendershot, June, 1987.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Barclay Smith (1834–1900) was born in Loudon County, Virginia, the son of Seth and Mary Taylor-Janney Smith. The family relocated to Richmond, Wayne County, Indiana, in the mid-1850s. Robert entered the dry goods business as clerk, first living in Milton, Wayne County, then moving in 1856 to New Castle, Henry County, where he eventually opened his own store. On 3 October 1861 he married Catherine (Kate) Taylor. They had five children: Arthur, J. Harry, Lynn, Mary, and Clarence. Smith was deeply involved in Republican Party politics and, although his family was Quaker, he was active in the Presbyterian Church.

During the Civil War he was never drafted but had a brother-in-law, George O. Taylor, who was stationed in Kentucky; and his niece's husband, William L. James, was stationed at Fort Monroe, Virginia, where he was Assistant Quartermaster for Union forces.

In the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s his wife and children, Mary and Clarence, experienced poor health. They often went to Hendersonville, North Carolina, for therapy, staying there for an extended period in 1898. Smith consequently spent his time commuting between North Carolina and Indiana, where he continued his dry goods business.

Harry joined his father in dry goods but the other children scattered. Arthur, with his wife Grace and their children, worked as a clerk at the Second National Bank of Richmond. Lynn became a businessman in Alaska, while Clarence, because of chronic illness, spent time at health facilities in Chicago and North Carolina when not in New Castle. He also visited relatives in Alabama and Indiana. In 1904 Mary became the wife of Herbert Heller, of Heller Brothers floral company in New Castle. Their wedding trip included St. Louis (and the World's Fair), Virginia Beach, and New York. In subsequent years they visited health spas in Martinsville, Indiana, and Battle Creek, Michigan.

Robert Smith fell ill in the spring of 1900 and died in New Castle in July of that year.

Sources:

Information in collection.

The People's Guide : A Business, Political, and Religious Directory of Henry Co., Indiana. Knightstown, IN : The Bookmark, 1979 p. 237. General collection: F532.H6 P4 1979

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Robert B. Smith papers fall into two main, though not exclusive, categories: correspondence and diaries. The bulk of the correspondence cover the years 1849 through 1911, but there are individual letters from 1915, 1921, and 1942. Correspondents vary, but most are either relatives of Smith or his wife, or are close acquaintances. Much of the family correspondence is from Smith's sisters in Richmond, Indiana, with smaller amounts from Columbus, Ohio; Illinois; the vicinity of Leavenworth, Kansas; and Alabama. Judge E. B. Martindale, a prominent politician and Kate's brother-in-law, also wrote often, usually from Indianapolis. Early family letters concern the move from Virginia to Indiana and efforts at making a living there. Civil War letters generally reflect life at home, but there are a few army letters from Kentucky and Fort Monroe, Virginia, sent by Smith's brother-in-law, George Taylor, and nephew by marriage, Will James.

The last decades of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century are dominated by letters from Kate and Robert's children. Arthur wrote home from Richmond and correspondence flourished during the 1890s between Robert and Harry in New Castle and Kate, Mary, and Clarence in North Carolina. In 1893 Clarence wrote from a Chicago health facility, although little is said about the World's Fair held there that year. Letters from Mary's 1904 wedding trip tell of St. Louis, Virginia Beach, and New York. There are also detailed descriptions of early twentieth-century health spas in Martinsville, Indiana, and Battle Creek, Michigan.

Family letters throughout the collection generally center on family members and their health and activities, with a smattering of politics and news of both the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. Not all correspondence was directed to Kate or Robert; much was between other family members. The collection also includes letters related to Robert's dry goods business.

Smith's diaries begin in 1855 and continue through July 1900. Entries cover a wide range of topics, including weather, letters received, quotations (scriptural and literary), and miscellaneous historical, scientific, or etymological facts. Because of his strong political inclination, local and national politics come up frequently, as does his opinion of national and world events. The back pages of early volumes include a summary and evaluation of the preceding year, while those of later volumes are devoted to accounts and addresses. In all, the diaries make up 93 volumes.

Other items in the collection include Smith's cash books and ledgers, 1850–82; a Smith family home expense book, 1900–02; order books for the C. E. White Grain and Coal Company, 1931–39; and voter registration information, ca. 1900–04.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Correspondence, 1849–1942

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Correspondence, March 1849–June 1855	Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, Aug. 1855–July 1856	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, Aug. 1856–Dec. 1857	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, March–Oct. 1858	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, Dec. 1858–June 1859	Box 1, Folder 5
Correspondence, Aug.–Dec. 1859	Box 1, Folder 6
Correspondence, 1850s?	Box 1, Folder 7
Correspondence, Jan.–May 1860	Box 1, Folder 8

Correspondence, June 1860–Feb. 1861	Box 1, Folder 9
Correspondence, June 1860–Feb. 1861	Box 1, Folder 10
Correspondence, July–Dec. 1861	Box 1, Folder 11
Correspondence, Jan.–June 1862	Box 1, Folder 12
Correspondence, July–Dec. 1862	Box 1, Folder 13
Correspondence, Jan.–May 1863	Box 1, Folder 14
Correspondence, June–Nov. 1863	Box 1, Folder 15
Correspondence, Dec. 1863–Feb. 1864	Box 1, Folder 16
Correspondence, March–June 1864	Box 1, Folder 17
Correspondence, July–Dec. 1864	Box 1, Folder 18
Correspondence, Jan.–May 1865	Box 2, Folder 1
Correspondence, June–Dec. 1865	Box 2, Folder 2
Correspondence, 1861–65?	Box 2, Folder 3
Correspondence, Jan. 1866–April 1867	Box 2, Folder 4
Correspondence, May 1867–April 1868	Box 2, Folder 5
Correspondence, June 1868–Jan. 1869	Box 2, Folder 6
Correspondence, Feb.–Dec. 1869	Box 2, Folder 7
Correspondence, 1860s (1 of 3)	Box 2, Folder 8
Correspondence, 1860s (2 of 3)	Box 2, Folder 9
Correspondence, 1860s (3 of 3)	Box 2, Folder 10
Correspondence, May 1870–Nov. 1871	Box 2, Folder 11
Correspondence, Dec. 1871–Dec. 1872	Box 2, Folder 12
Correspondence, Jan.–Dec. 1873	Box 2, Folder 13
Correspondence, Jan. 1874–July 1875	Box 2, Folder 14
Correspondence, Aug. 1875–Oct. 1878	Box 2, Folder 15
Correspondence, Nov. 1878–Nov. 1879	Box 2, Folder 16
Correspondence, 1870s (1 of 2)	Box 2, Folder 17
Correspondence, 1870s (2 of 2)	Box 2, Folder 18
Correspondence, Jan. 1880–Feb. 1883	Box 2, Folder 19

Correspondence, May 1883–Jan. 1888	Box 2, Folder 20
Correspondence, Feb. 1888–1889	Box 2, Folder 21
Correspondence, 1880s	Box 2, Folder 22
Correspondence, Feb. 1890–May 1891	Box 3, Folder 1
Correspondence, June 1891–Aug. 1892	Box 3, Folder 2
Correspondence, Nov. 1892–Nov. 1896	Box 3, Folder 3
Correspondence, Feb.–April 1897	Box 3, Folder 4
Correspondence, May–June 1898	Box 3, Folder 5
Correspondence, July 1898	Box 3, Folder 6
Correspondence, Aug.–Sept. 1898	Box 3, Folder 7
Correspondence, Oct.–Nov. 1898	Box 3, Folder 8
Correspondence, Dec. 1898	Box 3, Folder 9
Correspondence, Jan. 1899	Box 3, Folder 10
Correspondence, Feb.–Oct. 1899	Box 3, Folder 11
Correspondence, 1900–03	Box 3, Folder 12
Correspondence, 1904–07	Box 3, Folder 13
Correspondence, 1908–11, 1915, 1921, 1942	Box 3, Folder 14
Correspondence, n.d.	Box 3, Folder 15
Calling Cards and Programs, n.d.	Box 3, Folder 16
Literary Album, 1849–53	BV 0799
Letterbook, 1876	BV 0794
Receipts, Certificates, Newspaper Clippings, 1861–1909	Box 3, Folder 17
General Items and Related Materials, ca. 1854, 1859, and n.d.	Box 3, Folder 18

Series 2: Robert Smith Diaries, 1855–1900

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Robert Smith Diaries, 1855–57	Box 4, Folder 1
Robert Smith Diaries, 1858–60	Box 4, Folder 2

Robert Smith Diaries, 1861–63	Box 4, Folder 3
Robert Smith Diaries, 1864–66	Box 4, Folder 4
Robert Smith Diaries, 1867–69	Box 4, Folder 5
Robert Smith Diaries, 1867	BV 0791
Robert Smith Diaries, 1870–72	Box 4, Folder 6
Robert Smith Diaries, 1873–75	Box 4, Folder 7
Robert Smith Diaries, 1876–April 1878	Box 5, Folder 1
Robert Smith Diaries, Oct. 1878–Feb. 1880	Box 5, Folder 2
Robert Smith Diaries, 1879	BV 0792
Robert Smith Diaries, Feb. 1880–July 1881	Box 5, Folder 3
Robert Smith Diaries, July 1881–June 1882	Box 5, Folder 4
Robert Smith Diaries, Oct. 1882–April 1883	Box 5, Folder 5
Robert Smith Diaries, April 1883–Feb. 1884	Box 5, Folder 6
Robert Smith Diaries, Feb. 1884–March 1885	Box 5, Folder 7
Robert Smith Diaries, April 1885–June 1886	Box 5, Folder 8
Robert Smith Diaries, June 1886–April 1887	Box 5, Folder 9
Robert Smith Diaries, May 1887–April 1888	Box 5, Folder 10
Robert Smith Diaries, April 1888–May 1889	Box 6, Folder 1
Robert Smith Diaries, May 1889–March 1890	Box 6, Folder 2
Robert Smith Diaries, March 1890–Feb. 1891	Box 6, Folder 3
Robert Smith Diaries, Feb. 1891–Feb. 1892	Box 6, Folder 4
Robert Smith Diaries, Feb. 1892–March 1893	Box 6, Folder 5
Robert Smith Diaries, March 1893–Dec. 1893	Box 6, Folder 6
Robert Smith Diaries, 1894–March 1895	Box 6, Folder 7
Robert Smith Diaries, March 1895–July 1896	Box 6, Folder 8
Robert Smith Diaries, July 1896–Aug. 1897	Box 6, Folder 9
Robert Smith Diaries, Sept. 1897–May 1898	Box 6, Folder 10
Robert Smith Diaries, May 1898–March 1899	Box 7, Folder 1

Robert Smith Diaries, June–Nov. 1899	Box 7, Folder 2
Robert Smith Diaries, Nov. 1899–March 1900	Box 7, Folder 3
Robert Smith Diaries, April–July 1900	Box 7, Folder 4

Series 3: Account Books, Personal Records, Other Diaries and Materials, 1832–1939

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Robert Smith, Account Books and Political Records, 1850–65	Box 7, Folder 5
Taylor House Accounts, 1867; Robert Smith Accounts, 1887–89; School Notebook, 1870s	Box 7, Folder 6
Clarence Smith Address Book/Genealogy Notes, ca. 1900	Box 7, Folder 7
1859 Diary (unidentified); A. Nicholson Diary, 1896	Box 7, Folder 8
Commercial Ads, 1863–1909	Box 7, Folder 9
2 tintypes of unidentified man and woman removed from 1859 diary listed above	Visual Collections: Loose Tintypes
Robert Smith, Cash Book, 1865–70	BV 0798
Robert Smith, Cash Book, 1870–74	BV 0795
Robert Smith, Cash Book, 1874–78	BV 0796
Robert Smith, Cash Book, 1878–81	BV 0789
Robert Smith, Account Ledger, 1875–82	BV 0790
Smith Family Home Expenses Book, 1900–02	BV 0793
Notebook, 1832	BV 0803
Small Diary, 1833, Cincinnati College Lecture Tickets, 1836	BV 0797
C. E. White Grain and Coal Co. Order Book, 1931–Oct. 1935	BV 0800
C. E. White Grain and Coal Co. Order Book, Nov. 1935–Dec. 1937	BV 0801
C. E. White Grain and Coal Co. Order Book, Dec. 1937–Nov. 1939	BV 0802
Voter Registration, ca. 1900	BV 0804
Voter Registration, 1904	BV 0805

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://157.91.92.2/>
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 0257).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.