

Collection #
M 1037
OM 0514

**WALTER QUINTIN GRESHAM (II)
PAPERS, 1864–1923**

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Processed by

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October, 2012

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Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 4 boxes, 1 oversized folder, 1 photograph

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive, 1864–1923; bulk, 1888–1895

PROVENANCE: Susan U. Spaulding, Washington, D.C., March 2012

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Walter Quintin Gresham Papers (M 0740); Noble Butler Papers (M 0009); Charles Calhoun, *Gilded Age Cato: The Life of Walter Q. Gresham* (E 664 .G82 C34 1987); Matilda Gresham, *Life of Walter Q. Gresham* (E664 .G82 G8 1919)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2012.0068

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Walter Quintin Gresham (1832–1895), a judge, politician, and soldier, was born in Lanesville, Harrison County, Indiana. After attending Indiana University for one year, he began practicing law in Corydon, Harrison County, Indiana, in 1854. In 1856 he married Matilda McGrain and they produced two children. After the collapse of the Whig and Know Nothing Parties, Gresham joined the newly formed Republican Party. In 1860 he was elected to the Indiana Legislature and served one term. While serving as a state representative he frequently clashed with Governor Morton over the system of patronage. In 1862 Gresham enlisted in the 38th Indiana Regiment and was elected captain by the men. The following year he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and later to colonel of the 53rd Indiana. Gresham served in Mississippi and Georgia and was involved in the Vicksburg and Atlanta campaigns. He was soon promoted again, this time to brigadier general of the 53rd but was injured in the leg near Atlanta in 1864. Gresham never completely recovered from his wound and returned to Indiana where he was named brevet major general in 1865. After the war, Gresham returned to legal practice in New Albany, Floyd County, Indiana. Gresham made two unsuccessful bids for the U. S. Congress in 1866 and 1868. In 1869 President Grant appointed him district judge for Indiana. Gresham briefly served as Postmaster General and Secretary of the Treasury in 1883–84 before being named circuit judge for Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana, with headquarters in Chicago.

Throughout his political career, Gresham was at odds with the leaders of the Indiana Republican Party, Oliver Morton and his successor, Benjamin Harrison. In 1884 he was mentioned as a possible presidential candidate, and in 1888 he mounted a serious campaign, finishing second on the first ballot of the convention. Gresham severed his ties with the Republican Party over his opposition to the McKinley Tariff of 1890. He was urged to run on the Populist Party ticket in the 1892 presidential campaign, but after much deliberation, he declined and supported Grover Cleveland in his successful 1892 campaign. Cleveland rewarded Gresham's support by naming him secretary of state in 1893. Gresham opposed American imperialism and the annexation of Hawaii. He died in office in 1895.

Sources:

Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 4, pp.607–609.

Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, pp. 645–646.

Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly, vol. 1, p. 154.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The majority of the items in this collection deal with two events in Gresham's life: his decision on a run for the Presidency in the 1888 and his appointment of Secretary of State in Grover Cleveland's Cabinet in 1893. The bulk of the 1888 letters were written in May and comes from a variety of individuals and businesses overwhelmingly encouraging him to seek the Republican Party Presidential Nomination. The majority of the correspondence relating to his Secretary of State comes in the form of congratulatory letters written in February, 1893. These express satisfaction with his nomination and his qualifications for the position along with a few requests for jobs. There also are letter exchanges between Gresham and U.S. Embassies and individuals throughout the world on a variety of diplomatic subjects, March, 1893–May, 1895.

Other items in the collection includes Civil War Field Orders, 1864; correspondence related to duties as circuit judge and political topics. There also are three official proclamations naming him "Agent of State" in 1867 and two naming him Circuit Court Judge for the Seventh District. The collection also contains an album of newspaper clippings relating to the published biography of Gresham written by his widow, Matilda, in 1920.

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Walter Q. Gresham carte de visite portrait, ca. 1880s	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1

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 1037).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.