



Guide to the Washington M. Smith Papers, 1830-1916 and undated

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Summary

Collection Title:

Washington M. Smith papers, 1830-1916 and undated

Creator:

Smith, Washington M., ca. 1820-1869

Abstract:

Planter, banker, and lawyer, of Selma, Alabama Business and personal correspondence and other papers of Washington M. Smith and the Smith family, containing information on Smith's interests in banking, law, and agriculture, on economic conditions in Alabama after 1840, public schools and their establishment in Alabama, tax collection in the Confederate States, social life and customs in Selma, economic conditions during Reconstruction, Smith's successful efforts to reestablish in New York and England his former affluency, and family affairs. Includes a series of letters of Smith's daughter, Ella, and her husband, Hilary A. Herbert. Most of the items before 1850 and after 1869 are family letters and papers.

Extent:

11.4 Linear Feet

8,578 Items

Physical Location:

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Language:

English

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.01221

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/smithwashington/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Washington M. Smith Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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Background

Scope and Content

Personal, legal and financial papers of Washington M. Smith, lawyer, planter, and president of the Bank of Selma, relating to his law practice; his appointment as legal advisor for the Bank of Alabama in Tuscaloosa; his presidency of the Bank of Selma; the development of his plantation in Dallas County; exports of cotton and naval stores through brokers in Mobile; his real estate ventures in Selma and in Minnesota, and the inheritance by his wife, Susan (Parker) Smith, of property in Texas; the movement in the 1850s for public schools; his service on the school board of Selma, 1865-1868; his service as state representative in 1844 and in 1861-1863; his struggle after the Civil War to rebuild his estate; his efforts to establish a private banking house in Selma his partnership with John McGinnis in a general banking and stock and gold brokerage business in New York; attempts to restore the prosperity of his plantation, including contracts with many of his former slaves; his journey to England to establish cotton markets; his despondency over economic conditions in Alabama; and his consideration of migration to California. Arranged in the following series: **Correspondence, Legal Papers, Financial Papers, Printed Material,** and **Volumes.**

Included are personal correspondence between Smith and his wife while on his travels; records of slave purchases and sales; correspondence, bills, and receipts relating to the running of the plantation; scattered price current bulletins for Mobile, Alabama, 1848-1866, and for Liverpool, England, 1865-1869; Smith's petition for pardon to Andrew Johnson explaining his feelings about secession and his activities during the war, and other miscellaneous items pertaining to Smith's activities. After Smith's death in 1869, the papers chiefly relate to the education of their seven children at various schools and academies, including Virginia Military Institute (Lexington, Virginia), Moore's Business College (Atlanta, Georgia), the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa), and Shorter College (Rome, Georgia); to the settlement and administration of the Smith estate; to a family quarrel between Susan (Parker) Smith and her children over disposal of the property in Minnesota; and to the children's efforts at various occupations. Also included are letters of Colonel Hilary A. Herbert (1834-1919), U.S. congressman from Alabama, 1877-1893, and secretary of the navy, 1893-1897, and husband of Smith's daughter, Ella, chiefly concerning family matters; letters from Leila Herbert, daughter of Hilary A. Herbert and Ella (Smith) Herbert, Washington hostess, and author of *The First American, His Homes and Households* (1900), discussing family matters and Washington social activities; numerous account

books of Susan (Parker) Smith containing records of household expenses; course of study of the Selma Study Club, 1907-1908; catalog of the San Souci girls' school near Greenville, South Carolina, 1902-1903; the annual report of Beta Theta Pi for 1896; and other miscellaneous items.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Acquisition Information

The Washington M. Smith Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library in 1957.

Processing Information

Processed by Rubenstein Library staff

Encoded by Ted Holt and Paula Jeannet Mangiafico, August 2008

Accession 56-376 is described in this finding aid.

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Names and Subjects

- Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877) -- Alabama
- Tax collection -- Confederate States of America
- Alabama -- Economic conditions
- Selma (Ala.) -- Social life and customs
- Banks and banking -- Alabama
- Lawyers -- Alabama -- Selma
- Plantations -- Alabama
- Public Schools -- Alabama
- Agriculture -- Alabama
- Herbert, Hilary A. (Hilary Abner), 1834-1919
- Herbert, Ella Smith
- Smith family
- Smith, Washington M., ca. 1820-1869

Collection Inventory

Correspondence Series, 1841-1916

Physical Description: 15 boxes

1841-1863	Box 1
1864-1869 Feb.	Box 2
1869 Mar.-1872 May	Box 3

1872 June-1875	Box 4
1876-1879	Box 5
1880-1883	Box 6
1884-1887	Box 7
1888-1889	Box 8
1890-1893 June	Box 9
1893 July-1894	Box 10
1895-1896 Mar.	Box 11
1896 Apr.-1897 Mar.	Box 12
1897 Apr.-1898	Box 13
1899-1902 June	Box 14
1902 July-1916	Box 15

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Legal Papers Series, 1833-1869

Physical Description: 2 boxes

1833-1869	Box 15
1870-1904	Box 16

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Financial Papers Series, 1830-1913 and undated

Physical Description: 7 boxes

1830-1850s	Box 17
1850s-1860s	Box 18
1860s-1870s	Box 19
1870s	Box 20

1870s-1880s	Box 21
1890s	Box 22
1890s-1913 and undated	Box 23

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Printed Material Series

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Miscellany, Printed material	Box 24
Printed material	Box 25

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Volumes Series

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Volumes	Box 25-26
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