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B. WILSON SMITH COLLECTION

CONTENTS NOTES

The B. Wilson Smith (19 January 1830 to 13 October 1921) Collection contains primarily correspondence of BWS and his daughters.

Smith, B. Wilson—Benjamin Wilson Smith (1830-1921) was born January 19, 1830 in Harrison County, Virginia. He graduated from Indiana Asbury, now DePauw University, in 1855 and married Ruth Anne Rankin that same year. He moved to White County, Indiana in 1846 where he worked as a teacher, college professor and merchant. He was a professor of ancient languages at Cornell College in Iowa 1855-1857. He worked at public schools in Manchester, Aurora, Valparaiso, Knightstown, and Porter County. He was a Delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1872. He served in the Indiana House of Representatives from 1883-1887. He was the Lafayette, Tippecanoe County Postmaster 1889-1893 and the State examiner of Public Schools in 1909. Smith died October 13, 1921.

The bulk of Mr. Smith's correspondence dates ca. 1890 to 1900 and covers the period 1890 to 1893 when BWS served as Lafayette Postmaster appointed by President Benjamin Harrison.

Included in the collection are research notes on various topics (see inventory, Box 2, Folder 6-11 for topics). Besides the Battle of Tippecanoe, other topics include the Pidgeon Roost Massacre, Battle of Mississinewa, and the National Road.

A two-volume journal written by B. Wilson Smith contains entries during his college years at Indiana Asbury University (date of entries: 1851-54).

The B. Wilson Smith papers were donated to TCHA by the Nelly Colfax Smith estate, probably in 1955. The entry for the accession in Accession Book #6 was recorded by Alameda McCollough; a copy of the entry for the collection is attached. Only a portion of those papers has been located and inventoried at this time.

Certain groups of papers and other items were transferred from TCHA to DePauw University Archives in 1955. (See Box 1, Folder 1a for inventories of Papers of Benjamin Wilson Smith located in DePauw Archives.)

For biographical sketches of B. Wilson Smith, see Box 1, Folder 1a.

As additional items of this collection are located and processed, they will be added to the inventory or separation list attached.

CONTAINER LIST

B. WILSON SMITH: BUSINESS AND PERSONAL

BOX 1

FOLDER

1a. Biographical items. Inventory of Benjamin Wilson Smith Papers at DePauw University Archives.

1b. Letters mostly to B. Wilson Smith. 1854...1877.

2. Letters mostly to B. Wilson Smith. 1877...1889. Includes 2 letters to BWS from his son (BGS), and also letters re appointment of Lafayette Postmaster.

3. Letters. J. B. Cheadle to BWS. 17 August 1888 to 21 January 1890.

4. Letters. Louis T. Michener, Indiana Attorney General, to BWS. 24 April 1888 to 9 October 1900.

5. Letters. Harvey M. La Follette, Superintendent of Indiana Department of Public Instruction to BWS. 3 January 1889 to 1 March 1890.

6. Congratulatory notes to BWS re his appointment as Postmaster of Lafayette. 1890.

7. Miscellaneous correspondence and business items. 1890.

8. Miscellaneous correspondence and business items. 1891.

9. Miscellaneous correspondence, business and political items. 1892.

10. Letters to BWS mostly re building of Lafayette Post Office, southwest corner of Ferry and Fourth Streets. 1891; 1892.

11. Letters. E. M. Halford, private secretary to President Benjamin Harrison to BWS. 11 July 1889 to 10 February 1893.

12. Miscellaneous letters and business items. 1893.

13. Letters. W. H. Hart, auditor of U.S. Treasury Dept. to BWS. 27 May 1891 to 2 June 1894.

14. Letters (drafts). BWS to Col. D. N. Foster, Trustee Soldiers' Home, Fort Wayne, Indiana. 1897.

15. Miscellaneous letters mostly to BWS. 1894...1898.

16. Letters (drafts). BWS to W. E. Stone, State Library Board re position of State Librarian. 1 September 1906.
 17. Miscellaneous letters mostly to BWS. 1901...1912.
 18. Personal letters to BWS. 1914...1917.
 19. Letters (drafts). BWS to various persons. 1884...1918.
 20. Letters. BWS mostly to Eva Wilson Smith. 1869; 1882...1899.
 21. Letters. BWS to Eva Wilson Smith. 1900-02.
 22. Letters. BWS to Eva Wilson Smith. 1903-05; 1912.
 23. Program: Inauguration of the President (William McKinley) and Vice-President (Theodore Roosevelt) of the United States. 4 March 1901.
- Booklet: Memorial meeting of the Bar of Indiana upon the occasion of the death of Benjamin Harrison. 16 March 1901.

B. WILSON SMITH: PERSONAL AND FAMILY

BOX 2

FOLDER

1. Diary. Written by BWS. 1911. Subject: Journey from Virginia to Indiana. 17 October 1846 to 25 November 1846.
2. Journal. 2 vols. Written by BWS. 1851-54. Includes entries written while a student at Asbury University, Greencastle, Indiana.
3. Journal. (Photocopy of above.)
4. Diary. Written by BWS. Entries: 1 January 1870 to 17 April 1870.
5. Pamphlet (2). Sketch of the Battle of Tippecanoe, written by BWS.
6. Notes by BWS re Battle of Tippecanoe.
7. Notes by BWS re Battle of Tippecanoe.
8. Notes by BWS re Tecumseh.

9. Notes by BWS re William Henry Harrison.

10. Notes by BWS. Includes the following topics: Pidgeon Roost Massacre; Battle of Mississinewa; Owen County-Spencer County; Fort Harrison; National Road; White County; The Campaign in the South.

11. Notes by BWS for addresses (?).

12. Publications:

“A Postal Dictionary.” 1891.

“A Free...Coinage...Catechism.” (n.d.) (2)

“Directory of Indiana School Officials,” 1903-04.

“An Ex-President on the currency question: Hon. Benjamin Harrison on the issues of the campaign.” 27 August 1896. (2)

“The Depository Law.” 1907. Written by BWS.

13. Copyrights issued to BWS. 1877...1897.

14. Indiana State Teacher’s License for Mattie Ellis, Delphi, Carroll County, Indiana. 1888.

15. Miscellaneous items.

16. Letters from Wilson and Smith relatives. 1891...1895; 1915...1919.

17. Wilson and Smith family items.

18. Guest book. Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary of BWS and wife. 1905. (Book was designed and illustrated by Edna Browning Ruby.)

19. Guest book. 1908-20.

20. Greeting cards.

B. WILSON SMITH: FAMILY

BOX 3

FOLDER

1. Letters. Benaldine Smith Cadmus (mostly), many to family (?). (n.d.), unsorted. Includes letter: Guy Smith to “Dear Sister.” 24 November 1929.

2. Letters. Many to Benaldine Smith Noble Cadmus. ca. 1880 to early 1900s. unsorted.

3. Letters. Mostly to Eva Smith. (n.d.), unsorted. ca. 1890s to 1900s.
4. Letters. Mostly to Eva Smith. (n.d.), unsorted. ca. 1890s to 1900s.
5. Letters. Mostly to Eva Smith. (n.d.), unsorted. ca. 1890s to 1900s.
6. Letters. Mostly to Ida Virginia Smith. ca. 1890s to 1900s. Includes 2 letters from IVS to BWS and letter from BWS to IVS.
7. Letters. Mostly to Lillian Gray Smith and Nellie Colfax Smith. ca. 1890s to 1930s. unsorted. Includes employment reference letters to Lillian Gray Smith.
8. Consignment of goods lists. Nellie Smith. 1929-31.
9. Programs. Musical concerts, recitals. Mostly local. 1890s to 1900s.
10. Programs. Ladies' matinee musicale, Lafayette, Indiana. ca. 1900.
11. Programs. Miscellaneous. Mostly concerts, recitals. Not local.
12. Miscellaneous items. Includes card: For State Senator: B. Wilson Smith. Also several portions of letters written by BWS.

BOX 4

Contains papers located after initial inventory was compiled. Included are letters, addresses, sermons. The letters are personal and family-related or business-related. A letter copy book has letters referring to the building of the Lafayette Post Office.

BOX 5 (1 document box 2.5 inch)

FOLDER

1. Invitation to Reverend and Mrs. B Wilson Smith's 50th wedding anniversary, 1905
2. Seven diaries by Nelly Colfax Smith, 1931-1942

SEPARATION LIST

1. Scrapbook. Wrapped and shelved with collection.

Contains illustrations, poems, stories, etc. Some date ca. 1860s, 1870s. Items are pasted in an account book for the year 1851 from a Green Castle, Indiana, general store.

2. Notepads. Transferred to Curator of Collections 21 December 1982.

Three (3) 6" x 8" lined notepads: ½", ¾" and 1" thick; mostly unused with cover sheets illustrated and labeled "Cowboy," "Scholar's Companion," and "La France," respectively. Prices for the items by lot are written in pencil on the back of the notepads. Accession #6577 on each.

3. Photographs. Image File—B. Wilson Smith Collection.

PEOPLE

Smith, B. Wilson
Cheadle, J. B.
Smith, Eva Wilson
Ruby, Edna Browning
Ellis, Mattie
Cadmus, Benaldine Smith
Smith, Guy
Smith, Ida Virginia
Smith, Lillian Gray (1857-1942)
Smith, Nellie Colfax (1869-1951)
Tecumseh

CLASSIFICATION

Correspondence, Business
Correspondence, Personal
Indians
Postal System
Public Property / Post Office
Roads & Highways
Wars / Battle of Tippecanoe

SUBJECTS

Architecture – Local – Post Office
Counties, Indiana
Diary
Local History
Postal System
Wars- War of 1812- Battle of Tippecanoe

SEARCH TERMS

Battle of Tippecanoe