

Guide to the Edward Parmelee Smith Papers

MS 1136



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

June 1982

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1136

CREATOR: Smith, Edward Parmelee, 1827-1876

TITLE: Edward Parmelee Smith papers

DATES: 1849-1947

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.75 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of miscellaneous personal papers of Edward Parmelee Smith including letters to his future wife (1851-1854) and letters to his daughter (1872-1873) with an account of a sea voyage to California and his impressions once there. His years at Yale College are documented by an autograph album with messages from his teachers and classmates (1849-1855). Among the four photographs in the papers is one showing Smith with six Blacks when he served in the American Missionary Association. Clippings and correspondence describe his work as Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1873) and his death in Africa in 1876 while an envoy of the American Missionary Association.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The entire collection is available on microfilm. Patrons must use HM 109 instead of the originals.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Edward Parmelee Smith Papers (MS 1136). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Existence and Location of Copies

Entire collection also available on microfilm (314 frames on 1 reel, 35mm.) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, at cost. Order no. HM109.

Biographical / Historical

Edward Parmelee Smith, son of the Rev. Noah Smith (Dartmouth Coll. 1818) and Laura (Parmelee) Smith, was born in South Britain, a parish of Southbury, Conn., where his father was pastor, June 3, 1827. On the death of his father, in Oct., 1830, he was taken to the home of an uncle, Col. Ashbel Smith, of Hanover, N. H. He entered Dartmouth College in 1845, and this College two years later.

After graduation, he taught school for three years in Mobile, Ala., and then began the study of theology in the Yale Seminary. In March, 1853, he removed to N. Y. City, and studied in the Union Theol. Seminary, laboring also in connection with the Children's Aid Society, until the fall of 1854, when he went to Andover Seminary for the closing year of theological study. After another year spent in preaching in Rockville, Conn., and Pompey, N. Y., he was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church in Pepperell, Mass., June 11, 1856. In Jan., 1863, he offered his services to the U. S. Christian Commission, and was employed, at first as one of the General Field Agents and later as Field Secretary, until the closing of the work of the Commission, in January, 1866. He had, meantime, resigned his pastorate in 1864, and now entered the service of the American Missionary Association (devoted especially to educational work among the Freedmen) as District Secretary at Cincinnati. In 1867 he was called to N. Y. City as General Field Agent of the Association, and in that capacity performed a large share of the work of planting schools for freedmen in the South. When President Grant in 1871 invited cooperation in the work of Indian civilization, Mr. Smith resigned his position in New York, and offered his services as Indian Agent. He was appointed to the Chippewa Agency in Minnesota, and remained there until unexpectedly offered the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the U. S. Government in April, 1873.

This position he resigned in 1875, and was immediately elected President of Howard University, in Washington. He accepted the Presidency, and in the spring of 1876 sailed for Africa, on invitation of the American Missionary Association, to survey and report on the work of their missions in that country. He left Sierra Leone in May in good health, but while on board the steamship Ambric on his way from Monrovia (in Liberia) was taken with the African fever, and was too ill to land at Accra, as he had intended. He died on

shipboard, in the Gulf of Guinea, near the island of Fernando Po, on the night of June 15, and was buried on the 16th at the Presbyterian Mission Station, Old Calabar.

He was married, June 3, 1856, to Hannah C., daughter of Levi Bush, of Westfield, Mass., who survives him with one of their two children.

(Taken from *Yale Obituaries, 1871-1880*).

Scope and Contents

The papers consist of miscellaneous personal papers of Edward Parmelee Smith including letters to his future wife (1851-1854) and letters to his daughter (1872-1873) with an account of a sea voyage to California and his impressions once there. His years at Yale College are documented by an autograph album with messages from his teachers and classmates (1849-1855). Among the four photographs in the papers is one showing Edward P. Smith with six Blacks when he served in the American Missionary Association. Clippings and correspondence describe his work as Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1873) and his death in Africa in 1876 while an envoy of the American Missionary Association.

Collection Contents

b. 1reel 1U	Autograph album, Yale College	1849
b. 2, f. 1reel 1U	Three ALS to Hannah Cleveland Bush	[1851-1852?], 1854
b. 2, f. 2reel 1U	Andover Association: license to preach	1855
b. 2, f. 3reel 1U	Three ALS to Hannah Cleveland (Bush) Smith	1865
b. 2, f. 4reel 1U	Eight ALS to Gertrude Smith	1872-1873
b. 2, f. 5reel 1U	ALS to Henry M. Tenney	1875
b. 2, f. 6reel 1U	ALS to Hannah Cleveland (Bush) Smith	1876
b. 2, f. 6reel 1U	Dictated letter to G. H. White	1876
b. 2, f. 6reel 1U	Passport	1876
b. 2, f. 6reel 1U	Letter of credit	1876
b. 2, f. 6reel 1U	Lock of hair	undated
b. 2, f. 7reel 1U	Printed obituaries and illustrated description of grave	1876, undated
b. 2, f. 8reel 1U	Harry A. Stimson: ALS and clipping of speech	1882
b. 2, f. 9reel 1U	C. Crosby: ALS to Gertrude Smith	1883
b. 2, f. 10reel 1U	First Parish in Pepperrell, Massachusetts: booklet and leaflet relating to the 200th anniversary	1947
	Photographs	
b. 2, f. 11reel 1U	Edward P. Smith in Winona, Minnesota	[1872?]
b. 2, f. 11reel 1U	Edward P. Smith with six Blacks when he served in the American Missionary Association	circa 1867
b. 2, f. 11reel 1U	Memorial plaque	[1949?]
b. 2, f. 11reel 1U	Clipping relating to appointment to the presidency of Howard University	[1875]

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

African Americans
Clergy
Indians of North America
Missionaries
Missionaries -- United States

Geographic Names

California -- History -- 1850-1950

Names

Smith, Edward Parmelee, 1827-1876
Smith, Hannah Cleveland Bush

Corporate Bodies

Howard University
United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs
Yale College (1718-1887). Class of 1849