

J. Adger Smyth Mayoral Papers, 1896-1903

Descriptive Summary

Title and Dates:

James Adger Smyth Mayoral Papers, 1896-1903

Creator:

James Adger Smyth, Mayor of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, 1896-1903

Quantity:

1 cubic ft.

Forms of Material:

Correspondence, newspaper articles, pamphlets, invoices, plats, reports

Processed by:

Rebecca Schultz, 2014

Abstract

The collection consists of the papers of J. Adger Smyth, mayor of Charleston from 1896-1903. The papers primarily contain correspondence and related material pertaining to the operation of City departments and commissions, correspondence with local, state and national political figures, as well as individuals of prominence in the Charleston community.

Biographical Sketch

Charleston's forty-ninth mayor, James Adger Smyth, was born on June 8, 1838 to Margaret Milligan (Adger) Smyth and Thomas Smyth, a prominent theologian and long-time minister of Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston. Smyth received an education at the renowned school of Searle, Miles, and Sachtleben prior to attending the College of Charleston from which he graduated in 1858.

Upon completion of his studies, Smyth entered business under the tutelage of his maternal uncles who owned the J.E. Adger & Company hardware business. Smyth worked for the family business until 1875, pausing only to volunteer with the Twenty-fifth Regiment of the South Carolina Infantry, Company A, during the Civil War.

Smyth married Annie Ransom Briggs, the daughter of a prominent planter, on March 14, 1860. The couple went on to have six children one of whom died in early childhood. Annie passed away in 1901, during Smyth's administration. In 1903 at the end of his tenure, Smyth married Ella Calvert Campbell, the granddaughter of Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court, John Archibald Campbell.

During his formative years, Smyth took an active role in Charleston's business community, becoming a member of the Commercial Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Travelers' Protective Association (the latter two of which he eventually became president). In 1875, Smyth and his cousin, Andrew Moffett Adger opened the cotton brokerage firm of Smyth & Adger. The firm achieved a great deal of success and Smyth, in due course, became president of the Charleston Cotton Exchange.

It was around this time that Smyth developed a keen interest in politics. He served on committees for both state and county branches of the Democratic Party prior to becoming an alderman on Charleston's City Council. Smyth served two terms as alderman from 1883-1891. In 1895 he ran a successful campaign for mayor, succeeding John F. Ficken, and was reelected in 1899.

Scope and Content Notes

The collection is organized alphabetically according to topic, document type, or the originating individual or department. The material found in the collection includes correspondence, newspaper articles, pamphlets, invoices, plats, and reports.

During J. Adger Smyth's administration (1896-1903) Charleston was still recovering from the economic effects of the Civil War. As mayor, Smyth took an active interest in the advancement of Charleston's shipping industry and proved instrumental to the establishment of the Charleston Naval Shipyard in 1901. Smyth's mayoral papers provide important insight into the political negotiations involved in securing support for the movement of naval operations from Port Royal, South Carolina, to Charleston, as well as specifics regarding the acquisition of Chicora Park, on which the shipyard was established.

The papers likewise provide information on the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition (also known as the Charleston Exposition) held in 1901 on what is now the grounds of modern-day Hampton Park. Designed to develop the commercial and industrial interests of the state, the exposition provided Charlestonians with a means of showcasing the city's distinct culture and history.

President Theodore Roosevelt's appointment of the first African American to hold a federal post in Charleston since Reconstruction is another topic of note found in Mayor Smyth's papers. The tumult caused by Dr. William D. Crum's appointment to the post of Collector of the Port of Charleston provides a telling glimpse into racial politics at the turn of the twentieth century.

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- 2 Assorted Correspondence and Information, 1896-1903: papers re: coffee prices, High School of Charleston building, 10 Percy Street, St. Michael's Church, *Carolina Savings Bank vs. City Council of Charleston*, lumber prices, murder investigation, Ashley Avenue lots, imports and exports, City Electrician, Spartanburg flood, telephone company bids
- 3 Duplicate Material, 1898-1900
- 4 Historical Matters, 1897: papers re: City Hall portrait of George Washington, Sumter Brigade, White Point Garden
- 5 Invitations, 1896-1903: papers re: Charleston Industrial Institute
- 6 Newspaper Clippings and Printed Material, c.1896-1903: articles re: South Carolina and Georgia Railway, Planters' Rice Mill, African Americans, racism, Police Department, City Hospital, social norms, visit of President Theodore Roosevelt, Mormon pamphlet, War Department
- 7 Regrets, 1902: papers re: Presidential visit
- 8 Requests, 1896-1903: papers re: Longshoremen's Protective Union, architect Frank P. Milburn, St. Joseph's Church, Confederate hospitals in Charleston, Jacksonville fire
- 9 Boards, Commissions and Offices of City Gov. (misc.), 1896-1903: papers re: Board of Market Commissioners; licensing of street sellers; Committee on Railroad, Committee on Lands and Public Buildings; High School of Charleston; The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina; use of trains on Sunday
- 10 Board of Commissioners of the City Alms House, 1897-1900: papers re: treatment of inmates
- 11 Board of Health, 1896-1901: papers re: tidal drains, small pox, Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, Port of Charleston quarantine officer, US Revenue Cutter Service
- 12 Board of Park Commissioners 1897-1898: papers re: Chicora Park, Cannon Park, The Battery
- 13 Capt. F.V. Abott, Corps of Engineers, 1896-1903: papers re: Charleston Harbor, Charleston Naval Dry Dock

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- 14 Henry P. Archer, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1897-1902: papers re: Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas and Electric Co., Memminger School
- 15 City Assessor, 1903: papers re: Life Insurance Company of Virginia
- 16 Hon. T.W. Bacot, State Representative, 1897: papers re: Quarantine Station
- 17 Joseph W. Barnwell, 1897-1898: papers re: complaint against the Carolina Rifles Hall, Board of Fire Masters, Concord Street fire alarm box
- 18 W.A. Boyle, Chief of Police, 1897-1903: papers re: complaints against Carolina Rifles Hall, Hibernian Hall, dangerous buildings, Charleston Cotton Mills, railroad, Dispensary Law, contraband liquor, police raids, City Hospital, African-American youth, gambling, slot machines, vagrancy
- 19 William H. Brawley, US Judge, 1901-1903: papers re: Navy Yard
- 20 Brig. Gen. A.R. Buffington, Chief of Ordinance, 1898-1900: papers re: Civil War cannons and rifles
- 21 Buist & Buist, Attorneys at Law, 1901-1902: papers re: Seaboard Air Line Railway Company
- 22 E.P. Burton & Company, 1901-1903: papers re: Noisette Creek, Chicora Park
- 23 Charleston City Railway Company, 1898: papers re: Chicora Park
- 24 Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas and Electric Company, 1899-1902: papers re: ordinance on electric wires
- 25 Confederate Reunion, 1899
- 26 Corporation Counsel, 1897-1902: papers re: Navy Yard, water supply
- 27 George P. Cortelyou, Presidential Secretary, 1902: papers re: visit of President Theodore Roosevelt, appointment of Dr. William D. Crum as Port Director, African Americans
- 28 James Cosgrove, State Representative, 1901: papers re: Charleston Expedition – South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition
- 29 William A. Courtenay, 1897-1902: papers re: Charleston history, Henry Timrod memorial statue, anti-slavery movement, Water Works Plant

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- 30 A.S. Crowninshield, Bureau of Navigation Chief, 1902, papers re: Navy Hospital
- 31 Zimmerman Davis, City Alderman, 1896-1903: papers re: Navy Yard, water supply, Water Works Plant, Chicago Exposition
- 32 Hon. Chauncey M. Depew, US Senator, 1900: papers re: naval appropriations
- 33 Admiral George Dewey, 1899
- 34 James H. Dingle, City Engineer, 1898-1901: papers re: Ten Mile Hill
- 35 F.S. Earle, Columbia, South Carolina, Mayor, 1900- 1902: papers re: Columbia Fire
- 36 George B. Edwards, 1897-1903: papers re: Charleston Railroad
- 37 W.H. Ellerbe, South Carolina Governor, 1898
- 38 W.G. Elliott, Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, 1901: papers re: removal of Naval Station from Port Royal to Charleston
- 39 William Elliott, US Representative, 1896-1902: papers re: proposed lighthouse, Charleston Harbor improvements, Rev. Charles Wood, Charleston Exposition, Naval Appropriation Bill
- 40 L.A. Emerson, South Carolina and Georgia Railroad Co., 1897-1898
- 41 Admiral Mordecai T. Endicott, Bureau of Docks and Yards Chief, 1900-1903: papers re: Naval Station removal from Port Royal to Charleston, Chicora Park
- 42 William Enston Home, 1897-1898
- 43 William F. Eve, Cement Gravel Company, 1898-1901
- 44 John F. Ficken, 1891-1899: papers re: taxation
- 45 C.S. Gadsden, Alderman, Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, 1896-1903: papers re: Charleston Railroad Company extension, City Streets Department, Chicora Park
- 46 John Gadsden, Jr., Superintendent of Sewerage, 1901
- 47 Philip H. Gadsden, Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas and Electric, 1897-1903: papers re: street lighting, Navy Yard – Chicora Park, Charleston Exposition, railway conductor shot by police officer

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- 48 Gibbes Art Gallery, 1901-1903
- 49 Bradford L. Gilbert, South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition Co., 1901: papers re: Rutledge Avenue railroad tracks
- 50 Gordon Telephone Company, 1899-1901
- 51 B.A. Hagood, Asst. US Attorney, 1901: papers re: Chicora Park
- 52 Lt. Johnson Hagood, 1899-1901: papers re: Civil War cannons
- 53 Harbor Improvement, 1903
- 54 J.C. Hemphill, *News & Courier*, 1896-1903: papers re: South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition/Charleston Exposition, death of Dr. Joseph S. Lawrence
- 55 Hon. D. C. Heyward, Governor of South Carolina, 1903: papers re: Dispensary Law, Police raids
- 56 Nicholas S. Hill, Jr., Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas and Electric Co., 1899
- 57 Morrison A. Holmes, Avery Normal Institute, 1898-1899
- 58 Dr. H. B. Horlbeck, Health Officer, 1897-1900: papers re: disease, contaminated water
- 59 Tristram T. Hyde, Young Men's Business League, 1896-1900: papers re: Sumter Guard
- 60 Charles Inglesby, Corporation Counsel, 1896-1897: papers re: Pine Street – Thomas N. Gadsden, Joseph F. Bee, Mary S. Bee; State government of Police Force, metropolitan police law; William Enston Home; business licensing – Dispensary Law
- 61 George H. Ingraham Jr., U S Army, 1899: papers re: George H. Ingraham Sr., (former Alderman) painting donated to city
- 62 Intracoastal Waterway, 1902
- 63 J. B. Keckley, Superintendent of Streets, 1897-1900
- 64 Samuel Lapham, Alderman, 1897-1903: papers re: Chicora Park, tidal drains, City Hall improvements

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- 65 Dr. Joseph S. Lawrence, Charleston Consolidated Railway, 1896-1897: papers re: passenger fares
- 66 League of American Municipalities, 1898-1901
- 67 George S. Legare, Corporation Counsel, 1898-1902: papers re: police actions, Navy Yard, Dispensary Law, Charleston Orphan House, election laws, ordinances, property ownership questions, Chicora Park, Mishaw Rifle Club, election of Aldermen at large
- 68 Capt. Henry Leonard, 1902: papers re: visit of President Theodore Roosevelt
- 69 Lighthouse Inspector, Sixth District, February – March 1896
- 70 John D. Long, Secretary of the Navy, 1900-1902: papers re: Navy Yard, visit of President Theodore Roosevelt
- 71 Captain E. Longnecker, Navy Yard Commandant, 1902-1903
- 72 O. G. Marjenhoff, Fire Department Chief, 1898-1901: papers re: enforcement of fire and building ordinances
- 73 J. Elmore Martin, Chief of Police, 1897: papers re: Carolina Rifles Hall, License Ordinance enforcement
- 74 Mayoral Correspondence, 1896-1903: papers re: City Seals, similarity of Charleston and Boston seals
- 75 John L. McLaurin, US Senator, 1899-1901: papers re: President McKinley, Confederate Reunion, Navy Yard transfer from Port Royal to Charleston
- 76 James McMillan, US Senator, 1897
- 77 M.B. McSweeney, Governor of South Carolina., 1897-1902: papers re: Dispensary Law enforcement, League of American Municipalities, Charleston Convention (1900), visit of President Theodore Roosevelt, Charleston Exposition
- 78 D.H. Means, Sinking Fund, 1900-1902: papers re: Navy Yard – Chicora Park, Charleston Exposition building sale
- 79 L.A. & Theodore Melchers, 1896-1901: papers re: complaints against railroad companies, complaint against Charleston Cotton Mills
- 80 P.W. Meldrim, Mayor of Savannah, 1897: papers re: quarantine, yellow fever

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- 81 Frank P. Milburn, Architect, 1896-1903: papers re: City Hall remodeling, Gibbes Museum of Art
- 82 George H. Moffett, Corporate Counsel, 1903: papers re: Dispensary Law violations, Chicora Park – Noisette Creek, conveyances to City, pawn brokers, Consolidated Railway, Gas & Electric Co., Committee of the Hampton Memorial, Market Hall, voter registration / elections
- 83 William H. Moody, Secretary of the Navy, 1903: papers re: Charleston Navy Yard, Hunley monument, The Civil War
- 84 T. Moultrie Mordecai, 1902: papers re: Eliza G. Loeb, Mehrrens Hall
- 85 Col. Charles Morris, 1903: papers re: Lieutenant General Adna Chaffee
- 86 Department of the Navy, 1899-1903: papers re: Charleston Navy Yard – Navy Hospital
- 87 R. G. O’Neale, Clerk of Council, 1896-1899: papers re: R. G. O’Neale assaulted by P. P. Carter
- 88 Palmetto Gun Club, 1898: papers re: Powder Magazine
- 89 T. W. Passailaigue, 1896-1900: papers re: Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas & Electric Co.
- 90 Samuel B. Paul, 1897: papers re: General Roger A. Pryor, the Civil War
- 91 A. W. Petit, Committee on Steam Engines, 1902
- 92 Police Department, Miscellaneous, 1896-1903: papers re: Dispensary Law—police raids, Blind Tigers, African Americans, Ebenezer A. M. E. Zion Church, Charleston Ministerial Union, criminal activity—gambling, assaults
- 93 Post Office, 1897-1903: papers re: Postmaster Mowry, Post Office & Courthouse Building (83 Broad), John Henry Devereux, Architect
- 94 Hon. R. G. Rhett, Alderman, 1899-1903: papers re: elections, International Association of Chief Fire Engineers Convention, Fort Sumter visit, Charleston Navy Yard, appointment of Dr. William Crum as Port Director in Charleston, African Americans
- 95 John S. Riggs, Charleston City Railway Co., 1896

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- 96 John F. Riley, October 1902: papers re: Charleston Navy Yard
- 97 J. N. Robson & Son, 1901: papers re: Powder Magazine
- 98 Rear Admiral Fred Rodgers, 1900-1901: papers re: Ten Mile Hill, Charleston Navy Yard water supply, quarantine
- 99 W. N. Royall, 1897-1903: papers re: complaints against railroads, Charleston Navy Yard
- 100 Joseph H. Sands, South Carolina & Georgia Railroad Co., 1898-1899: papers re: Charleston Navy Yard, Union Station
- 101 Captain J. C. Sanford, U.S. Engineer Office, 1901-1903: papers re: Charleston Harbor
- 102 Thomas K. Scott, Georgia Railroad Company, 1897: papers re: exports, Charleston Harbor
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- 104 S. Lewis Simons, 1900: papers re: Port Royal
- 105 Charles H. Simonton, Circuit Judge, 1899-1903: papers re: James S. Gibbes estate, Gibbes Art Gallery
- 106 J. E. Smith, 1897
- 107 S.C. & Georgia R.R. Co., 1896-1898
- 108 Southern Bell Tel. & Tel. Co., 1897-1902
- 109 Southern Railway Co., 1898-1903: police misconduct, assault on railway worker
- 110 Samuel G. Stoney, 1896-1899: papers re: West Point Mill
- 111 Benjamin R. Tillman, US Senator, 1900-1903: papers re: International Association of Chief Fire Engineers Convention, Fort Sumter, Navy Yard – Naval Appropriation Bill, Charleston Exposition, George Frederick von Kolnitz, Admiral Endicott, Voting - Primary system, Dr. William D. Crum, African Americans
- 112 Treasury Department, Washington, D.C., 1902: papers re: appointment of Dr. William D. Crum as Port Director, African Americans
- 113 F. W. Wagener & Co., 1897
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- 115 War Department, Washington, D.C., 1899-1902: papers re: Confederate Reunion
- 116 Warren-Scharf Asphalt Paving Co., 1897-1898
- 117 George W. Williams, Jr., Orphan House Committee, 1896-1903: papers re: President Theodore Roosevelt's visit, appointment of African Americans to Federal Office
- 118 Thomas Wilson, 1900: papers re: Sullivan's Island – Federal land acquisitions, League of American Municipalities Convention
- 119 Edward O. Wolcott, Colorado Senator, 1903: papers re: Dr. William D. Crum, African Americans
- 120 Edward S. Galor, Pinkerton Detective Agency, 1899: papers re: Thomas Pinckney murder