

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.

Folder List:

Folder

- 1 Appreciation, 1897-1903
- 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

Folder

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. Cortelyon, 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

Folder

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

Folder

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 Tristam 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

Folder

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

Folder

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, Mehrtens 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

Folder

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

103 Ion Simons Jr., City Electrician, 1897-1902: papers re: street lighting

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

114 H. Walters, 1899

Folder

- 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