

William Robert "W.R." Smith, Sr.
Inclusive: 1890-1953, undated, Bulk: 1904-1909
Baylor Collections of Political Material, W. R. Poage Legislative Library

Summary Information

Creator	William Robert "W.R." Smith, Sr., 1863 - 1924 (Creator)
Extent (quantity/size)	2 document boxes
Language	English
Abstract	The William R. Smith papers represent the personal affairs of William R. Smith, spanning from his time practicing law in 1890 through his time as a federal judge and congressman, ending around 1912. Records are almost exclusively personal correspondence.

Subjects

Legislators -- United States. / Smith, William R. (William Robert), 1863-1924 -- Archives -- Indexes.

Administrative Information

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Preferred Citation When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:

William R. Smith papers, Accession #89, Box #, Folder #, Baylor Collections of Political Materials, W. R. Poage Legislative Library, Baylor University.

Processing Information Described by Mikah Sauskojus.

Scope and Content

The William R. Smith papers range from 1890-1953, and cover a portion of Smith's personal life as well as the lives of various members of the Smith family. Included are letters between Smith and his wife Frances over the course of their courtship and marriage, discussing primarily details of their personal lives with some references to Smith's work. Included also are a number of letters either to or from extended family members, such as Frances' parents. There are two letters from outside sources extending congratulations on Smith's appointment to the district court in 1897. The General series contains an investment check made out for Frances Smith (likely a daughter of W.R. and Frances) and a newspaper clipping pertaining to the 1912 Democratic Convention and the nomination of Woodrow Wilson over James Beauchamp Clark.

The papers are arranged first by primary correspondents and then chronologically. There are two series: I. Correspondence, II. General. Series I, Correspondence, has two subseries: I. Frances and W.R., II. General.

Administrative/Biographical History

William R. Smith was born August 18, 1863, near Tyler, Texas. After an education in public schools, he graduated from Sam Houston Normal Institute in 1883 and was admitted to the bar in 1885.

Smith practiced law in Tyler until he moved to Colorado, TX in 1888, where he practiced law until he was appointed judge of the 32nd Judicial District in 1897. He served in this position until 1903, when the Democratic Party nominated him to represent the 16th District in the 58th Congress. He won the election convincingly and served in Congress from 1903-1916. In Congress, Smith served on several committees, including the Committee on Elections #3 and the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee (1910-1912). He became chairman of the Committee on Irrigation of Arid Lands in 1911, and held that position until 1917. He lost his reelection bid to Thomas Blanton in the 1916 primary but was appointed US district judge for the Western District of Texas by Woodrow Wilson in 1917. As part of this appointment, Smith and his family moved to El Paso, where he served in his position until his death.

Smith married Frances Lipscomb Breedlove in 1890, and the couple had five children. He died in El Paso on August 16, 1924.

Related Resources

Related citations

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress. "Smith, William Robert (1863-1924)." Accessed August 31, 2018.

Hooker, Ann W. "Smith, William Robert." *Handbook of Texas Online.* Accessed August 31, 2018.

William R. Smith papers, Accession #89, Baylor Collections of Political Materials, W. R. Poage Legislative Library, Baylor University.

Archival Arrangement

The William R. Smith papers were originally processed in 2002 by Thomas Bonura. They were previously arranged in three series: Biography, Correspondence, and Miscellaneous.

The papers are currently arranged in two series by type, and then by correspondent and date within those series. They are the following: I. Correspondence, II. General.

Series 1: Correspondence. 1890-1953, undated

Administrative/Biographical History

The Correspondence series contains primarily letters sent or received by W.R. Smith between 1890 and 1912. The letters are almost exclusively of a personal nature, the bulk being letters between Smith and his wife Frances grouped in an eponymous subseries. Letters between Smith and other members of his family, as well as general correspondence within the Smith family, has been grouped together under the General subseries. The series is in average condition.

Subseries 1. Frances and W.R. 1890-1912, undated

- Box 1. Folder 1. 1890, August-December
- Box 1. Folder 2. 1891, October
- Box 1. Folder 3. 1892, July-December
- Box 1. Folder 4. 1893, January-December
- Box 1. Folder 5. 1895, November
- Box 1. Folder 6. 1896, October-November
- Box 1. Folder 7. 1897, February and October
- Box 1. Folder 8. 1898, February-April
- Box 1. Folder 9. 1899, October-November
- Box 1. Folder 10. 1900, March-June
- Box 1. Folder 11. 1901, September-December
- Box 1. Folder 12. 1902, January-July
- Box 1. Folder 13. 1903, November
- Box 1. Folder 14. 1904, January-December
- Box 1. Folder 15. 1905, January-February
- Box 1. Folder 16. 1906, November
- Box 1. Folder 17. 1907, August-December
- Box 1. Folder 18. 1908, January-October
- Box 2. Folder 1. 1909, January-July
- Box 2. Folder 2. 1910, June
- Box 2. Folder 3. 1912, July
- Box 2. Folder 4. Undated, circa 1890s-1910s

Subseries 2. General. 1890-1953

- Box 2. Folder 5. Frances, 1890-1919
- Box 2. Folder 6. W.R., 1890-1905
- Box 2. Folder 7. Breedlove Smith, 1894-1910
- Box 2. Folder 8. Additional Friends and Family, 1894-1953

Series 2: General. 1905-1912

Administrative/Biographical History

The General series contains two non-correspondence items that accompanied the collection. One is an investment check made out to Frances Smith (believed to be the daughter, not the wife), and the other is a newspaper clipping discussing the Democratic Convention of 1912 and the failed attempt to nominate James Beauchamp Clark for the presidency. The series is in average condition.

- Box 2. Folder 9. General, 1905-1912