

J. Adger Smyth Mayoral Records, 1896-1903

Descriptive Summary

Title and Dates:

James Adger Smyth Mayoral Records, 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

Location: 01-A-001, AR-OS-003

Abstract

The collection consists of the records of J. Adger Smyth, 49th mayor of Charleston from 1896-1903. The collection contains 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 records 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 records 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 records. 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:

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- 1 Appreciation, 1897-1903
- 2 Assorted Correspondence and Information, 1896-1903: records 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 (title of original folder), 1898-1900
- 4 Historical Matters, 1897: records re: City Hall portrait of George Washington, Sumter Brigade, White Point Garden
- 5 Invitations, 1896-1903: records 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: records re: Presidential visit
- 8 Requests, 1896-1903: records 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: records 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: records re: treatment of inmates
- 11 Board of Health, 1896-1901: records 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: records re: Chicora Park, Cannon Park, The Battery
- 13 Capt. F.V. Abott, Corps of Engineers, 1896-1903: records re: Charleston Harbor, Charleston Naval Dry Dock

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14 Henry P. Archer, Superintendent of Public Schools, 1897-1902: records re: Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas and Electric Co., Memminger School

15 City Assessor, 1903: records re: Life Insurance Company of Virginia

16 Hon. T.W. Bacot, State Representative, 1897: records re: Quarantine Station

17 Joseph W. Barnwell, 1897-1898: records 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: records 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: records re: Navy Yard

20 Brig. Gen. A.R. Buffington, Chief of Ordinance, 1898-1900: records re: Civil War cannons and rifles

21 Buist & Buist, Attorneys at Law, 1901-1902: records re: Seaboard Air Line Railway Company

22 E.P. Burton & Company, 1901-1903: records re: Noisette Creek, Chicora Park

23 Charleston City Railway Company, 1898: records re: Chicora Park

24 Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas and Electric Company, 1899-1902: records re: ordinance on electric wires

25 Confederate Reunion, 1899

26 Corporation Counsel, 1897-1902: records re: Navy Yard, water supply

27 George P. Cortelyon, Presidential Secretary, 1902: records re: visit of President Theodore Roosevelt, appointment of Dr. William D. Crum as Port Director, African Americans

28 James Cosgrove, State Representative, 1901: records re: Charleston Expedition – South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition

29 William A. Courtenay, 1897-1902: records 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, records re: Navy Hospital

31 Zimmerman Davis, City Alderman, 1896-1903: records re: Navy Yard, water supply, Water Works Plant, Chicago Exposition

32 Hon. Chauncey M. Depew, US Senator, 1900: records re: naval appropriations

33 Admiral George Dewey, 1899

34 James H. Dingle, City Engineer, 1898-1901: records re: Ten Mile Hill

35 F.S. Earle, Columbia, South Carolina, Mayor, 1900- 1902: records re: Columbia Fire

36 George B. Edwards, 1897-1903: records re: Charleston Railroad

37 W.H. Ellerbe, South Carolina Governor, 1898

38 W.G. Elliott, Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, 1901: records re: removal of Naval Station from Port Royal to Charleston

39 William Elliott, US Representative, 1896-1902: records 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: records 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: records re: taxation

45 C.S. Gadsden, Alderman, Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, 1896-1903: records 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: records 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: records re: Rutledge Avenue railroad tracks

50 Gordon Telephone Company, 1899-1901

51 B.A. Hagood, Asst. US Attorney, 1901: records re: Chicora Park

52 Lt. Johnson Hagood, 1899-1901: records re: Civil War cannons

53 Harbor Improvement, 1903

54 J.C. Hemphill, *News & Courier*, 1896-1903: records 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: records 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: records re: disease, contaminated water

59 Tristam T. Hyde, Young Men's Business League, 1896-1900: records re: Sumter Guard

60 Charles Inglesby, Corporation Counsel, 1896-1897: records 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: records 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: records re: Chicora Park, tidal drains, City Hall improvements

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65 Dr. Joseph S. Lawrence, Charleston Consolidated Railway, 1896-1897: records re: passenger fares

66 League of American Municipalities, 1898-1901

67 George S. Legare, Corporation Counsel, 1898-1902: records 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: records re: visit of President Theodore Roosevelt

69 Lighthouse Inspector, Sixth District, February – March 1896

70 John D. Long, Secretary of the Navy, 1900-1902: records 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: records re: enforcement of fire and building ordinances

73 J. Elmore Martin, Chief of Police, 1897: records re: Carolina Rifles Hall, License Ordinance enforcement

74 Mayoral Correspondence, 1896-1903: records re: City Seals, similarity of Charleston and Boston seals

75 John L. McLaurin, US Senator, 1899-1901: records 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: records 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: records re: Navy Yard – Chicora Park, Charleston Exposition building sale

79 L.A. & Theodore Melchers, 1896-1901: records re: complaints against railroad companies, complaint against Charleston Cotton Mills

80 P.W. Meldrim, Mayor of Savannah, 1897: records re: quarantine, yellow fever

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81 Frank P. Milburn, Architect, 1896-1903: records re: City Hall remodeling, Gibbes Museum of Art

82 George H. Moffett, Corporate Counsel, 1903: records 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: records re: Charleston Navy Yard, Hunley monument, The Civil War

84 T. Moultrie Mordecai, 1902: records re: Eliza G. Loeb, Mehrdens Hall

85 Col. Charles Morris, 1903: records re: Lieutenant General Adna Chaffee

86 Department of the Navy, 1899-1903: records re: Charleston Navy Yard – Navy Hospital

87 R. G. O’Neale, Clerk of Council, 1896-1899: records re: R. G. O’Neale assaulted by P. P. Carter

88 Palmetto Gun Club, 1898: records re: Powder Magazine

89 T. W. Passailaigue, 1896-1900: records re: Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas & Electric Co.

90 Samuel B. Paul, 1897: records re: General Roger A. Pryor, the Civil War

91 A. W. Petit, Committee on Steam Engines, 1902

92 Police Department, Miscellaneous, 1896-1903: records 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: records re: Postmaster Mowry, Post Office & Courthouse Building (83 Broad), John Henry Devereux, Architect

94 Hon. R. G. Rhett, Alderman, 1899-1903: records 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: records re: Charleston Navy Yard

97 J. N. Robson & Son, 1901: records re: Powder Magazine

98 Rear Admiral Fred Rodgers, 1900-1901: records re: Ten Mile Hill, Charleston Navy Yard water supply, quarantine

99 W. N. Royall, 1897-1903: records re: complaints against railroads, Charleston Navy Yard

100 Joseph H. Sands, South Carolina & Georgia Railroad Co., 1898-1899: records re: Charleston Navy Yard, Union Station

101 Captain J. C. Sanford, U.S. Engineer Office, 1901-1903: records re: Charleston Harbor

102 Thomas K. Scott, Georgia Railroad Company, 1897: records re: exports, Charleston Harbor

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

104 S. Lewis Simons, 1900: records re: Port Royal

105 Charles H. Simonton, Circuit Judge, 1899-1903: records 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: records re: West Point Mill

111 Benjamin R. Tillman, US Senator, 1900-1903: records 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: records re: appointment of Dr. William D. Crum as Port Director, African Americans

113 F. W. Wagener & Co., 1897

114 H. Walters, 1899

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115 War Department, Washington, D.C., 1899-1902: records re: Confederate Reunion

116 Warren-Scharf Asphalt Paving Co., 1897-1898

117 George W. Williams, Jr., Orphan House Committee, 1896-1903: records re: President Theodore Roosevelt's visit, appointment of African Americans to Federal Office

118 Thomas Wilson, 1900: records re: Sullivan's Island – Federal land acquisitions, League of American Municipalities Convention

119 Edward O. Wolcott, Colorado Senator, 1903: records re: Dr. William D. Crum, African Americans

120 Edward S. Galor, Pinkerton Detective Agency, 1899: records re: Thomas Pinckney murder

AR-OS-003 Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry certificate, 1885