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Archival Collection Finding Aid

Name/Title:	Senator William Alden Smith Collection
Subject(s)	personal papers
Archival Collection #:	174
Accession #:	180451, 180600-180627
Source:	Mrs. John C, Cary
Date Acquired:	7/27/1977
Span Dates:	1908 - 1962
Processor(s):	Stacey Burns, Paul Christians

Abstract:

This collection contains a number of newspaper clippings, and a few personal papers of Senator William Alden Smith. From newspapers around the country—both national and local, the former almost exclusively relate to the senator's career in the United States legislature. A significant minority of the clippings also tracks news about his possible run for president in 1915-1916. Finally, a few constituent letters and a copy of Smith's guest book are also present.

History:

William Alden Smith was born on May 12, 1859, in Dowagiac, Michigan. He and his parents moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1872. He studied law, and began practice in Grand Rapids in 1883. He was elected six times to the United States House of Representatives, serving from 1895-1907. He was then elected to the Senate, serving in that capacity from 1907 to 1919. Elected as a Republican from Michigan, he was an especially vocal critic of the Wilson administration. Smith owned several businesses in Grand Rapids and western Michigan, including the Lowell-Hastings Railroad and the Grand Rapids Herald newspaper. He was also heavily involved in banking and the Chicago steamboat business. Senator Smith died on October 11, 1932, at Grand Rapids; he is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Scope and Content:

This collection is most useful as a chronicle of several major political issues of the early 1900s, particularly in relation to Smith's senatorial career and the Woodrow Wilson presidential administration. Among these are major debates over Mexico and Nicaragua, trade and treaty relations, ship and other tariff negotiations, etceteras. Also of significant use are several newspaper clippings outlining Senator Smith's influence and involvement in choosing a Republican presidential candidate for the 1916 presidential election. Finally, the guest book may provide or confirm links to contacts, associates, and friends during William Alden Smith's senatorial years

Series Descriptions:

No.	Series Name	Description
I.	Personal Papers, 1908-1962	Personal papers of and related to Senator William Alden Smith. Included are a copy of the senator's guest book containing entries from 1908-1919; a 1962 letter accompanying the copy; an envelope addressed to Mr. W. R. Dorsey; and a 1916 invitation to a dinner where Smith spoke.

II. Newspaper Clippings,
1909-1916

Newspaper clippings pertaining to W. A. Smith. Included are a number of loose articles from national and local papers, as well as a scrapbook of newspaper clippings and letters dating between 1909 and 1915. Almost all of the articles relate to politics, and Smith as United States Senator from Michigan.

Container List:

Container	Folder	Series	Description of Contents	Dates	Count
1	1	I.	Personal papers	1908-1962	4
1	2	II.	Newspaper clippings	1915-1916	26
1	-	II.	Scrapbook	1909-1915	1