

Collection #:
SC 1359

CALEB B. SMITH PAPERS

1849–1862

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Processed by:
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Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1849-1862

PROVENANCE: Walter R. Benjamin, New York, NY, 16 June 1941 (1849 letter, 1941.0603); King Hostick May 1952 (1856 letter, 1952.0502); Louis J. Bailey, Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica, NY, January 1950 (1861 letter, 1950.0105); The Book Nook, Louisville, KY, March 1955 (1862 letter, 1955.0302)

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMAT: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: Address by Caleb B. Smith at installation of Morning Star Lodge, 1840 (Ip 815 S644a); Congressional Speeches assembled by C. Smith, 1839-1844 (I 328.73 U 58c)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1941.0603, 1952.0502, 1950.0105, 1955.0302

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Born in Boston, Massachusetts on April 16, 1808, **Caleb Blood Smith** spent his youth in Cincinnati Ohio, arriving with his family in 1814. After studying at Miami University, Oxford, he came to Connersville, Indiana in 1827 to enter the law office of Oliver H. Smith. Four years later, Smith married Elizabeth Walton, the daughter of one of the town's pioneers.

Smith's political career began in 1834 when he won election to the Indiana House of Representatives. A Whig, Smith was reelected each year until 1837 and then again in 1840. In 1842, he entered the United States House of Representatives where he served three consecutive terms. After leaving Congress in 1848, Smith sat on the board of commissioners to adjust claims against Mexico. He left that position in 1851 to serve briefly as president of the Cincinnati and Chicago Railroad Company.

In 1859, Smith, a leader of the Indiana delegation to the Chicago Republican Convention, fought for Lincoln's nomination. A personal friendship existed between the two from the time they were members in Congress. For his efforts in the Lincoln campaign, Smith was appointed Secretary of the Interior, making him the first Hoosier to hold a cabinet office. He resigned, however, in December 1862 for health reasons. Relocated in Indianapolis, Smith was appointed Judge of the United States Court for the District of Indiana. Here, he lived out the remainder of his life dying on January 7, 1864. In his honor, President Lincoln ordered all government executive buildings in Washington draped in mourning for fourteen days after his death.

Source:

Indiana Biography Series v. 18

Malone, Dumas, ed. *Dictionary of American Biography* v. 9
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of four letters written by Smith in the mid nineteenth century. The earliest letter, dated July 1849, is a request to William B. Preston, Secretary of the Navy, to appoint a Hoosier midshipman. A letter dated September 24, 1856, is an apology to an unidentified colonel for Smith's absence at various Republican Indiana meetings. The third letter, written to the Commissioner of the General Land Office and dated April 20, 1861, is Smith's oath of loyalty to the United States Government. The final letter, dated October 1862, regards the issue of soldiers unnecessarily burning trees at Camp Sullivan in Indianapolis.

FOLDER AND CONTENTS LISTING

FOLDER CONTENTS

- 1 Correspondence, 1849-1862

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 1359).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.