

Collection #
M 1244
BV 5212-5213

**OTTO AND WALTER Q. GRESHAM
COLLECTION ADDITION, 1876-1960**

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Processed by

Morgan Lee Wilson
November 30, 2016

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 3 manuscript boxes, 1 photograph box, 3 printed books, 2 artifacts, 2 bound volumes

COLLECTION DATES: 1876-1960

PROVENANCE: Susan K.G. Spaulding for the Estate of Susan U. Spaulding, Washington, D.C., April 2015

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Walter Quintin Gresham Papers (M 0740 and M 1037); *The Life of Walter Q. Gresham* (E 664 .G82 C34 1987); Matilda Gresham, *Life of Walter Q. Gresham* (E664 .G82 G8 1919)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2015.0129 and 2015.0162

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Walter Quintin Gresham (1832–1895), a judge, politician, and soldier, was born in Lanesville, Harrison County, Indiana. After attending Indiana University for one year, he began practicing law in Corydon, Harrison County, Indiana, in 1854. In 1856 he married Matilda McGrain and they produced two children. In 1860 he was elected to the Indiana Legislature and served one term. In 1862 Gresham enlisted in the 38th Indiana Regiment and was elected captain by the men. The following year he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and later to colonel of the 53rd Indiana. Gresham served in Mississippi and Georgia and was involved in the Vicksburg and Atlanta campaigns. He was soon promoted again, this time to brigadier general of the 53rd but was injured in the leg near Atlanta in 1864. Gresham never completely recovered from his wound and returned to Indiana where he was named brevet major general in 1865. After the war, Gresham returned to legal practice in New Albany, Floyd County, Indiana. In 1869 President Grant appointed him district judge for Indiana. Gresham briefly served as Postmaster General and Secretary of the Treasury in 1883–84 before being named circuit judge for Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana, with headquarters in Chicago. He was urged to run on the Populist Party ticket in the 1892 presidential campaign, but after much deliberation, he declined and supported Grover Cleveland in his successful 1892 campaign. Cleveland rewarded Gresham's support by naming him secretary of state in 1893. Gresham opposed American imperialism and the annexation of Hawaii. He died in office in 1895.

Otto Gresham (1859-1946), the son of Walter Q. Gresham, was born in Corydon, Harrison County, Indiana. He was a Wabash College graduate and practiced law for fifty years in Illinois and Indiana, specializing in patent law. His marriage to Lefa Nida was a tumultuous one leading to their decades long separation and her exclusion from his will.

Sources:

Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 4, pp.607–609.

Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, pp. 645–646.

Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly, vol. 1, p. 154.

Ancestry Library

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of this collection is correspondence between Otto Gresham and his niece, Harriet Urban Andrews, also called Carleton. Another large part is the documents that detail the estate Otto leaves after his death and the letters between Harriet, her husband W.G. Andrews, and various lawyers.

The collection begins with items kept by Matilda Gresham from her time living with Walter in Washington, D.C. as he worked as the Secretary of State from 1893 till his death while in office in 1895. These items include calling cards, menus, RSVP's, and seating charts. Also, there are books of addresses, recipes, and "The Housekeeper's Help" which covers taking care of laundry to making hot chocolate. Other items in the collection include copies of clippings of Otto's newspaper submissions, which he sent to his niece, the wills and indentures of Matilda, Lefa, and Otto, stock receipts, pictures of family members, and Otto's membership cards at the time of his death. The collection also contains three printed books; two volumes of the published biography of Walter Gresham written by his widow, Matilda, in 1920 and "The Greenbacks" written by Otto that discusses the money that won the Civil and World Wars.

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The Greenbacks, Chicago, 1927

Printed Collections

Life of Walter Quintin Gresham, 1832-1895,
Chicago, 1919, 2 vols.

Printed Collections

Ladies National Peace Jubilee medal 1898

Artifacts

2016.0186 and 2016.0098

Walter Gresham's Commission Tube

Artifacts

2016.0186 and 2016.0098