William H. L. Smith papers
0614
Finding aid prepared by Melissa K. R. Hozik.

Last updated on November 09, 2018.

First edition

Historical Society of Pennsylvania
, 2010
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### Summary Information

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<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Historical Society of Pennsylvania</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Smith, William H. L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>William H. L. Smith papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call number</td>
<td>0614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date [inclusive]</td>
<td>1836-1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>2.5 linear feet (; 5 boxes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed materials [Box]</td>
<td>1-5</td>
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**Abstract**

Mr. William Henry Leland Smith was born in Vermont and received his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College, and his law degree from Harvard University. In the 1860s, he became the first mayor of Corry, Pennsylvania, shortly after oil was discovered in Pennsylvania and the oil industry grew in the commonwealth. For much of his life, he managed the Corry plant of the Downer Kerosene Oil Company. The collection is arranged into three series: incoming correspondence, miscellaneous business records, and miscellaneous legal records.

**Cite as:**

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], William H. L. Smith papers (Collection 0614), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
Biography/History

William Henry Leland Smith was born in Lowell, Vermont, on November 16, 1824, to Henry and Maria (Leland) Smith. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1845, and received his law degree from Harvard University in 1848. He practiced law in Boston from 1848 to 1860. He became the first mayor of Corry, Pennsylvania, in the mid 1860s, and died in Dorchester, Massachusetts, on December 29, 1889 at the age of 65. He was the manager of the Corry plant of the Downer Kerosene Oil Company in the 1860s.

Smith was also involved in legal matters regarding the patent of Luther Atwood for a “better processing for extracting oils” from bio and shale materials. He also managed the estates of Mary (Wright) Brown (1844) and Samuel R. Philbrick (1856-1863). Smith also entered in some copartnerships with members of the Downer Kerosene Oil Company, but these projects failed and had to be legally dissolved. The Corry plant and other companies boomed in western Pennsylvania in the 1860s, as oil was discovered in the region, and by the beginning of the next century, the United States had become the world's largest oil producer.

A book written by Mr. Smith was published posthumously, entitled The practice in proceedings in the probate courts of Massachusetts with an appendix of uniform forms and rules approved by the Supreme Judicial Court.

Scope and Contents

The Smith papers are housed in five boxes and span the years 1836 through 1869. The collection is arranged into three series.

Boxes 1 through 4 consist of incoming correspondence to William H. L. Smith from 1858 through 1869. Most of this correspondence is from Samuel Downer, owner of the Downer Kerosene Oil Company, and concerns daily business issues.

Box 4 consists of business records, including bills, receipts, accounts, the Atwood re-distillation patent, and other petroleum documents.

Box 5 consists of legal records, including land deeds, the Samuel Philbrick Estate documents, and agreement documents between individuals.
Administrative Information

Historical Society of Pennsylvania

, 2010
Finding aid prepared by Melissa K. R. Hozik.

Access Restrictions
This collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note
The provenance of this collection is unknown.

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

• Downer, Samuel, 1807-1881.
• Philbrick, Samuel R.

Subject(s)

• Decedents’ estates--Pennsylvania.
• Oil industries--Pennsylvania.
Incoming Correspondence

**Collection Inventory**

**Incoming Correspondence, 1858-1869. 1.2 Linear feet.**

Arrangement note

**Box 1, Folders 1-6:** Incoming Correspondence (1858 - June 9, 1863)

**Box 2, Folders 1-6:** Incoming Correspondence (June 10, 1863 - April 1865)

**Box 3, Folders 1-5:** Incoming Correspondence (May 1865 - December 1867)

**Box 4, Folders 1-2:** Incoming Correspondence (January 1868 - February 1869)

**Miscellaneous Business Records, 1836-1869. 0.4 Linear feet.**

Arrangement note

**Box 4, Folders 3-4:** Bills, Receipts, Accounts (1861 - 1869)

**Box 4, Folder 5:** Papers related to Atwood oil redistillation patent (1858 - 1860)

**Box 4, Folder 6:** Return of Oil Sales for Luther Atwood Oil Company and Downer Kerosene Oil Company (1860 - 1863)

**Box 4, Folder 7:** Royalties for Portland Kerosene Oil Company and Downer Kerosene Oil Company (1860)

**Box 4, Folder 8:** Pamphlets and printed materials on petroleum (undated)

**Box 4, Folder 9:** Trinidad Press Current (September 23, 1858)

**Miscellaneous Legal Records, 1842-1866. 0.4 Linear feet.**

Arrangement note

**Box 5, Folder 1:** Deeds for land in Massachusetts to Henry Smith (1843 - 1862)
Box 5, Folder 2: Papers relating to Hollen Knitting Machine patent (1868)

Box 5, Folder 3: Miscellaneous Legal Papers (1844 - 1866)

Box 5, Folder 4: Samuel Philbrick Estate, articles of Copartnership, and other legal documents (1856 - 1860)

Box 5, Folder 5: Samuel Philbrick Estate, correspondence to William Smith (1858 - 1864)

Box 5, Folder 6: Samuel Philbrick Estate, Bills, Receipts, Accounts (1858 - 1861)

Box 5, Folder 7: Samuel Philbrick Estate, Insurance Policy (1852 - 1860)

Box 5, Folder 8: Papers of payments of debts of Philbrick & Company (1859 - 1860)

Box 5, Folder 9: Agreement papers between Smith, Wate, Winthrop and White (1842 - 1854)