

The Filson Club Historical Society

Hamilton Smith Papers

**For information regarding literary and copyright interests for these papers,
see the Curator of Manuscripts, James J. Holmberg.**

Size of Collection

.33 cubic feet

Locator Number: Mss./ A/ S649

Hamilton Smith Papers

Scope and Content Note

Louisville, Kentucky, attorney Hamilton Smith's business correspondence from 1838-1840 covers his dealings with individuals and banks from Kentucky, Indiana, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and New York. The letters primarily are concerned with debt collection. Includes 22 May 1839 letter of introduction for the chevalier de Gertsner employed by Tsar Nicholas I of Russia to study public works projects in the United States. Collection is contained in seven folders and is in one box.

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Biographical Note

Hamilton Smith, a prominent Louisville, Kentucky, lawyer, was born in Durham, New Hampshire, in 1804 and died in Washington, D.C., in 1875. A graduate of Dartmouth College, Smith then went to Washington, D.C. to study law. He moved to Louisville in 1832 where he was a pioneer in the area of commercial law in which he focused on the business of banks and large commercial houses.

Besides his legal career, Smith was also actively involved in promoting the city of Louisville. He was an early proponent of gas and water works, cotton mills and coal mines, railroads, manufacturing, and a bridge over the Ohio River. Smith led the effort to build the Cannelton cotton Mills in Cannelton, Indiana, and served as its president.

In addition to his other activities, Smith was elected to the Indiana Legislature in 1858 and served one term. He served as a delegate to the 1864 Chicago Convention which nominated George McClellan. At the 1868 New York Convention, Smith helped promote the unsuccessful nomination of his best friend, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Salmon P. Chase.

In 1832 he married Martha Hall of Vermont, who died in 1845. The couple had two children: Hamilton, and Martha. His second wife was Louise Rudd of Springfield, Kentucky. The couple had four children: Huntington, Ballard, Palmer, and Mary.

For more information and a sketch of Hamilton Smith see Memorial History of Louisville from Its First Settlement to the Year 1896, Volume 1: 379-80, edited by J. Stoddard Johnson.

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Folder List

- fl. 1: Correspondence, 1838
- fl. 2: Correspondence, January - April 1839
- fl. 3: Correspondence, May 1839
- fl. 4: Correspondence, June - September 1839
- fl. 5: Correspondence, January - April 1840
- fl. 6: Correspondence, May - August 1840
- fl. 7: Correspondence, September - December 1840