

The Filson Club Historical Society
James Breckinridge Speed 1844-1912
Papers, 1864-1991

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Special Collections, James J. Holmberg.

Size of Collection:
.33 cubic feet

Locator Number:
Mss./A/S742c

**James Breckinridge Speed 1844-1912
Papers. 1864-1991**

Biographical Note

James Breckinridge Speed was born in Boonville, Missouri on 4 January, 1844 to William P. and Mary Ellen (Shallcross) Speed. His mother died when he was young and he was raised by his aunt Lucy Breckinridge in Louisville. He was educated at Louisville high school and started work for the banking firm of A. D. Hunt & Co. as a clerk at the age of sixteen. He then became a clerk for the firm Badger & Company of Chicago until the beginning of the war.

Upon the start of the Civil War he enlisted as a private in the First Ohio Battery but was shortly made an adjutant of the 27th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. He served in this position until the end of the war. His unit was mustered out on 29 March, 1865. He then returned to his position in Chicago.

Speed soon returned to Louisville and became the Superintendent of the Louisville Cement Company. He married Cora Coffin, daughter of George W. Coffin of Cincinnati in 1868. He soon became an important investor in the city with interest in Louisville Cement Company, the Ohio Valley Telephone Company, the Louisville Railroad Company, the North Jellico Coal Company, the Taylor Coal Company (Beaver Dam Coal Company) and J. B. Speed & Company. He also served as director for several banks and other companies.

J. B. and Cora Speed had two children: Olive Speed Sackett and William Shallcross Speed. Cora Speed died on 10 March 1905. James married Hattie Bishop on 3 July 1906. Speed died on 7 July 1912.

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Scope and Content Note

Collection of personal and business papers, newspaper clippings and other material from J.B. Speed and the Speed Memorial Church in Speed, Indiana. Subjects of interest include his business interest in coal, salt, brick and telephone industries as well as his belief in spiritualism. Letter of 27 April 1866 discusses the 1860 election of Lincoln.

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Folder List

Folder 1: Personal Correspondence 1865 - 1866.

Folder 2: Personal Correspondence 1873 - 1905.

Folder 3: Business Papers 1864 - 1894.

Folder 4: Business Papers 1895 - 1899.

Folder 5: Business Papers 1900 - 1913.

Folder 6: Funeral invitations and resolutions.

Folder 7: Newspaper Clippings.

Folder 8: Miscellaneous papers.