

C Smith, Henry Ackerman (1837-1907), Papers, 1861-1907
431 2 rolls of microfilm

MICROFILM

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INTRODUCTION

Papers of a teacher and Methodist minister who lived in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Indiana, and Missouri. Includes letters written to his wife, 1861-1862, while in the Union army; autobiography, genealogical information; record of marriages performed, 1884-1905; diary, 1882-1907; a newspaper article; and photographs.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were loaned for copying to the University of Missouri by Mrs. R.A. Jewell on 8 September 1959 (Accession No3414). An addition was loaned for copying by Mrs. R.A. Jewell on 25 January 1960 (Accession No. 3425).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Henry Ackerman Smith was born on January 30, 1837, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. As a youth, he worked as an indentured clerk in a general store in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, and as a farm laborer in what is now West Virginia. He taught school in Youngstown, Pennsylvania, and in his home district. In 1858 he was permanently certified as a school teacher.

While attending Allegheny College, a Methodist institution in Meadville, Pennsylvania, he converted to Methodism. In the summer of 1860, after moving to Kentucky, he was licensed to preach by the Quarterly Conference of Lancaster Circuit, Kentucky Conference.

Smith married Almira Clay Potts, one of his former students, April 2, 1861, and the following children were born: Eugene Herbert, Jessamine, May, Blanche, Maggie Zue, and Roy Hiner. Smith taught in Kentucky until the outbreak of the Civil War. He enlisted in the Union Army in 1861 and served until late 1862 in Company D, 21st Regiment, Mitchell's Division, of Ohio. He saw action (sometimes as a scout) in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama. Hoping to return to Kentucky where his wife and family lived, he gained a transfer to a Kentucky regiment. While en route to his new assignment, he was captured by Confederates and paroled at Lexington, Kentucky.

After the war and until his death, Smith combined a career of teaching and itinerant preaching. For three years after the war, he lived in southern Indiana, where he taught school and preached in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He returned to Kentucky and in July 1870 was ordained as a deacon and in July 1874 as an elder in the Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Church. He served in the following charges in the Kentucky Conference: Mackville, Chaplin, Texas Academy, and the Bradfordville Home College.

Smith moved to Missouri in 1880 and continued his work. In the St. Louis Conference he served in these charges: Cape Girardeau, Benton, Oak Ridge, Jackson, West Plains District, Poplar Bluff, Caledonia, Bellvue Collegiate Institute, and Bertrand.

Several churches and parsonages were built under his pastorates. He died, active to the end of his life, in November 1907. Almira Clay Potts Smith died in 1931.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Roll 1 contains approximately fifty-six letters written by Smith to his wife, Almira, from October 16, 1861, to August 1, 1862. Arranged chronologically, these well-written and revealing letters document Smith's activities as an enlisted soldier during the Civil War; the activities of his regiment (Ohio 21st), which saw action in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama; camp conditions; Smith's feelings about the war; his longings for home and peace; and attitudes held by the Southerners whom he encountered. The letters also contain extensive descriptions of the places where he lived and fought while in the service. This section should be useful to those interested in the Civil War generally, even though no major battles are described. Specifically, the view of the war from the common soldier's perspective is presented.

Roll 2 contains information about the life and career of Henry Ackerman Smith and his family. It includes his autobiography; genealogical material on the Smith and Potts families; a record of marriages performed by Smith; his diary; and photographs of J.W. Kirkpatrick, James N. Lee, John Mathews, James M. Thoburn, and George William Bailey.

Comprising the major portion of roll 2, Smith's diary is a daily account of his life, but on the whole, the one line per day entries do not provide much more than a thumbnail sketch of his career as an itinerant Methodist minister. Entries state the day's weather, where and with whom he took his meals and lodged, and brief descriptions of daily activities.

MICROFILM LIST

- Roll 1 Civil War letters from Smith to his wife, 16 October 1861-1 August 1862.
- Roll 2 Diary and genealogy. Pages 3-22: "Autobiography and Sketches in the Life of Henry Ackerman Smith." Pages 40-54 and pages 151-397: Diary, "The daily account of a busy life," 3 December 1882-1 November 1907. Pages 126-146: Genealogies of Smith and Potts families. Pages 148-151: Record of marriages performed by Smith in southeast Missouri, 1884-1905.

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