

NEW HAVEN COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LIBRARY

Manuscripts

No. 90

Date processed: September, 1978.

I. Title Smyth, Ralph Dunning (1804 - 1874). Papers (1840 - 1889).

II. The papers of
deposited in the Library on _____, by
In _____ converted the deposit to a gift.

III. Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 3 feet 2 inches.
Approximate number of items: 925 (incl. 19 volumes.)

IV. Restrictions: None

V. Literary rights of the unpublished writings of
in these papers, and in other collections of papers in the custody of
the New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, have been dedicated
to the New Haven Colony Historical Society.

VI. Press release was issued on -----

VII. Biographical note:

See page 2.

VIII. Analysis: This material consists of four boxes.

The papers are organized as follows:

1. Manuscripts relating to the history of Guilford, Ct.
2. Smyth general lists and notes on genealogical and other matters.
3. Genealogy of various early Guilford families and related letters, arranged alphabetically.

Note: The final Smyth correspondence is dated 1873, the year before his death. There are, however, notes in the Smyth papers written in 1889 by an unknown person.

RALPH DUNNING SMYTH

Ralph Dunning Smyth (1804 - 1874), son of Richard and Lowine (Herbert) Smith was born on October 28, 1804 in Southbury, Connecticut. He grew up as a "Smith" but graduated from Yale College in 1827 as a "Smyth" and towards the end of his busy life was often addressed as "Smythe." For most of his adult life he was most often addressed as "Smyth."

After college graduation, Smyth apprenticed himself to lawyers in Southbury and Brookfield, then attended Yale Law School. Upon completion of his law studies, he moved to Guilford and was admitted to the bar in 1831. In 1837 he married Rachel Stone Seward of Guilford. They had four children, only one of whom survived him.

Smyth built up a flourishing law practise in Guilford and in 1844 was appointed Judge of the Probate Court. Probate records were a source of information supporting his later interest in geneology.

Beginning in 1859 he was elected to the state legislature for several terms, representing Guilford. Between 1848 and 1854 he played a leading role in the development of the New Haven - New London and Stonington - New London railroads.

For fifty years Smyth avidly pursued his avocations of history, biology and geneology. He read widely. He wrote complete and accurate biographies of his Yale classmates, and sketch biographies of every Yale alumnus from the first graduate down thru the class of 1767. But he devoted much of his avocational time to the history of Guilford, the geneology of its early families and the lore of the local indians. It has been said that if his written material were to be printed, 200 pages or two volumes would be required. These papers contain most of this material. A large percentage of the papers consists of laboriously made copies of selected portions of church and civil records, lists of officials, marriages and deaths copied from church and town records, and many untitled and undated notes, particularly on geneology.

Smyth's interest in the geneology of Guilford's founding families led to correspondence with those interested in helping him, and with those seeking help or information. He was often able to help the latter. These papers contain voluminous correspondence pertaining to Guilford geneological matters.

Judge Smyth's history of Guilford and its founding families' geneologies were not published during his lifetime. With the blessing of his heirs, his writings and related documents were sympathetically edited by Louis Henry Steiner (1827 - 1892) and published after Smyth's death on July 1, 1877 under the name of Ralph D. Smith as the "History of Guilford, Connecticut."

Fortunately, these papers include both the original manuscript of a portion of Smyth's 'History of Guilford,' and the original manuscript as copied and edited by Louis Henry Steiner, and as published in 1877.

RALPH DUNNING SMYTH (cont'd.)

Ralph Dunning Smyth died on September 11, 1874 at the age of sixty-nine.

Content Guide

Smyth, Ralph Dunning (1804 - 1874). Papers (1840 - 1889).

Box 1

- Folder A - Ralph Dunning Smyth "History of Guilford", original manuscript. (1 vol.)
- B - Copy of (A) above with original comments by Louis H. Steiner, editor, made in 1877. (1 vol.)
- C - Manuscript notes on the history of Guilford. (1 vol.)
- D - History of Sachems Head. (8)
 Leete's Island in the Revolution.
 List of Guilford Representatives to the legislature
 and list of Chief Magistrates
 Texts for talks (1 vol.)
- E - Copy of selected early Guilford town records, 1649 - 1676. (1 vol.)
 List of deaths in early Guilford, 1746 - 1842.
- F - 1st (Congregational) Church. Abstracts from the minutes of church meetings, 1694 - 1869. (1 vol.)
 Rev. Dutton trial, 1840 (14)
 Rev. E. Edwin Hall trial, 1868.
- G - 1st (Congregational), North Bristol, North Guilford, West Guilford and the Guilford Episcopal churches, abstracts and lists taken from church records, 1649 - 1842. (3 vols.)

Box II

- Folder A - Early Guilford legal documents, 1668 - 1816. (35)
- B - Copies of Guilford Family records. (4 vols.)
- C - Misc. Smyth records and abstracts, Guilford. (50)
 Notes dated 1880 - 1888 (Author unknown).
 Civil War memorial list, Guilford.
- D - New Haven Colony and Guilford town record abstracts, 1661 - 1672. (3 vols.)
 (50)
- E - Geometrical Definitions. (2 vols.)
 An Alfabet for Killingworth.
- F - Probate records, Guilford and Killingworth. (4 vols.)
 (5)

Content Guide
Smyth, Ralph Dunning (1804 - 1874). Papers (1840 - 1889)

Box II (cont'd.)

- Folder G - Probate and court abstracts, 1666 - 1864. (5 vols.)
- H - Abstracts from the papers of the Rev. Samuel Johnson, D.D. (1 vol.)
- I - Southbury and Woodbury, abstracts from church and town records, 1704 - 1732. (3 vols.)

Box III

- Folder A - Early settlers in Fairfield County. (1 vol.)
- B - Branford and Woodbury. (1 vol.)
(12)
- C - Colchester, Clinton, Killingworth and Hammonasset, abstracts of the records of real estate transactions, 1663 - 1849. (19)
- D - List of ministers giving election sermons, modern typescript. (18)
Copies of Revolutionary War letters, modern typescripts.
- E - R. D. Smyth, personal correspondence, 1840 - 1873 (25)
- F - R. D. Smyth, miscellaneous geneology notes. (23)
- G - R. D. Smyth, miscellaneous notes. (9)
- H - R. D. Smyth, miscellaneous manuscript notes (26)
- I - Whalley and Goffe (6)
Copy, horoscope of King Charles I.
- J - History of the local indians. (39)

Folders concerning family geneology

- K - Bound volume containing geneologies of Bushnell, Hubbard, Lee, Norton, Seward and Smith families. (1 vol.)
- L - Surname beginning with A (2)
- M " B (62)
- N " C (34)
- O " D (44)
- P " E (9)
- Q " F (29)

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Box IV Folders concerning family genealogy.

Folder A - Surname beginning with G	(6)
B " H	(56)
C " I	(3)
D " J	(4)
E " K	(6)
F " L	(15)
G " M	(23)
H " N	(19)
I " O	(3)
J " P	(23)
K " R	(48)
L " S	(70)
M Spencer family	(150)
N " T	(24)
O " V - Z	(16)

Addendum, November, 1979.

Box V

Folder A - Mss., capsule biographies, graduates of Yale College. 1702 - 1766.	(175)
B - Biographical notes, various early Yale graduates, raw data and notes.	(45)
C - Same. Yale class lists, early years.	(35)
D - Blank lists of early Yale College graduates for the entry of capsule biographies, 2 sets.	(300)
E - Early Guilford families, genealogical notes and misc. data.	(35)

- 7 -
Mss. 90

Smyth, Ralph Dunning, (1804 - 1874). Papers (1840 - 1889)
Addendum, November, 1979.

Box VI

Folders A - E - Class of 1827, Yale College. Biographical
stories of the members of the class
collected by Ralph D. Smith (Smyth) for
the fortieth reunion of the class, 1867.

(174)