Gerrit Smith Collection

Collection Summary

Title: Gerrit Smith Collection
Call Number: MS 83-01
Size: 1.75 linear feet
Acquisition: Purchased from M & S Rare Book Company
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Note: None
Restrictions: None

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Restrictions

None

Content Note

Gerrit Smith, a New York abolitionist, believed that the anti-slavery cause could be effectively furthered by political action. Because of the political nature of Smith's fight against slavery, much of the material in this collection is politically oriented. It reflects the diversity of Smith's reform interests: temperance, women's rights, ecumenism, and abolition. The collection contains many of Smith's open letters and speeches printed on broadsides and in pamphlet form.

Biography

Gerrit Smith (1797-1874) was born at Utica, New York, and moved in 1806 to Peterboro, Madison County, New York, where he spent most of his life. His father made a fortune in land speculation, and when Smith came into control of the family property, he used his inheritance for philanthropic purposes. One of his favorite forms of charity was to give land and money to indigent women and to blacks, hoping to prove that they could support
themselves if given a chance. He was active in many reform movements, including ecumenism, Sabbath observance, temperance, and women's rights (Elizabeth Cady Stanton was his cousin), but he is best known as an abolitionist.

Smith believed that abolition could best be achieved by political action, using methods laid down by custom and by law. To achieve this end, he was one of the founders of the Liberty Party and in 1840 ran for Governor of New York on the Liberty Party ticket. In 1852, he was elected to the United States House of Representatives on an independent ticket. He resigned his seat in 1854 after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In 1858 he ran for Governor on the "People's State Ticket," advocating temperance, anti-slavery, and land reform.

He gave financial and moral support to Brown in 1858 and 1859. After the failure of Brown's Harper's Ferry raid, Smith suffered a nervous breakdown, from which he quickly recovered. Thereafter he denied any complicity in Brown's conspiracy, fearing that he might be charged as one of Brown's accomplices.

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### Series 1 – Correspondence, 1873

**Box 1 FF 1** 17 April 1873. Gerrit Smith to Dr. Ordranaux.

### Series 2 – Broadsides and Leaflets by Subject

#### Series 2.1 – Abolition - General, 1838-1859

<p>| Box 1 | FF 2 | 19 June 1838. &quot;Letter to Gerrit Smith to President Schumucker.&quot; Colonization. |
| Box 1 | FF 3 | 5 February 1844. &quot;To the Abolitionists of the County of Madison.&quot; |
| Box 1 | FF 4 | 4 May 1844. &quot;To the Public&quot; Gerrit Smith and Thomas Clarkson. |
| Box 1 | FF 5 | 1 January 1845. Letter to William H. Seward, concerning Whig Party and the defeat of Henry Clay. |
| Box 1 | FF 6 | 1 January 1845. Second copy of above. |
| Box 1 | FF 7 | 15 July 1845. &quot;To those Ministers in the County of Madison, who refuse to preach politics.&quot; |
| Box 1 | FF 8 | 13 March 1846. &quot;Gerrit Smith's reply to the Colored Citizens of Albany.&quot; |
| Box 1 | FF 9 | 10 October 1846. &quot;To the Voters of the State of New York.&quot; |
| Box 1 | FF 11 | 16 March 1847. &quot;To the People of the County of Madison.&quot; Pity for starving Irish vs. pity for slaves. |
| Box 1 | FF 12 | 15 August 1848. &quot;J. K. Ingalls, Editor of the Landmark, New York.&quot; Concerning the Presidential candidacy of Van Buren. |
| Box 1 | FF 13 | 25 August 1849. Letter to Chancellor Walworth. |
| Box 1 | FF 14 | 9 January 1851. &quot;Anti-Fugitive Slave Law Meeting.&quot; Meeting held in Syracuse, 9 January 1851. Resolutions and Address of Meeting. |
| Box 1 | FF 15 | 12 August 1852. &quot;Speech of Gerrit Smith In the Pittsburg Convention, August 12th, 1852. (Written out by himself.)&quot; |
| Box 1 | FF 16 | 5 November 1852. &quot;To the Voters of the Counties of Oswego and Madison.&quot; Concerning Smith's nomination and election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Political creed outlined. |
| Box 1 | FF 17 | 1 October 1853. &quot;Address of the Convention held in Syracuse, Oct. 1, 1853, for the purpose of Celebrating the Rescue of the Man Jerry.&quot; Unsigned. |
| Box 1 | FF 18 | 18 October 1854. Letter to Greene C. Bronson. Concerning Fugitive Slave Law. |</p>
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Box 1 FF 37 27 August 1859. Letter to John Thomas, Syracuse, Chairman of the Jerry Rescue Committee.

Box 1 FF 38 3 September 1859. "To the Religious Newspaper Reviewers of my recent Discourse."

**Series 2.2 – Abolition - Liberty Party, 1843-1852.**

Box 1 FF 39 7 March 1843. "To the Friends of the Slave."

Box 1 FF 40 13 November 1843. "Report from the County of Madison. To Abolitionists."

Box 1 FF 41 12 March 1844. "To the Friends of the Slave in the Town of Smithfield…"

Box 1 FF 42 10 April 1846. "Messrs E. S. Bailey of Brookfield, A. Raymond of Eaton, and F. Rice of Cazenovia:…"

Box 1 FF 43 7 May 1846. "To the Liberty Party."

Box 1 FF 44 15 September 1846. "To the Liberty Party of the County of Madison."

Box 1 FF 45 15 September 1846. "To the Liberty Party of the County of Madison." (second copy)

Box 1 FF 46 17 October 1846. "The Poor Man's Party."

Box 1 FF 47 23 August 1847. "To the Editors of the Emancipator, Boston."

Box 1 FF 48 10 December 1848. "To the Friends of Political Reform in the County of Madison."

Box 1 FF 49 18 March 1848. "Letter of Gerrit Smith, to the Liberty Party of New Hampshire."

Box 1 FF 50 15 July 1851. "Samuel Lewis, Cincinnati," and "Address to the voters of the United States:…"

Box 1 FF 51 17 September 1851. "Speech of Gerrit Smith, Made in the National Liberty Party Convention at Buffalo, September 17, 1851." Resolutions and Address.

Box 1 FF 52 13 August 1852. "To the Liberty Party of the County of Madison."


**Series 2.3 – Ecumenism - Church of Peterboro, 1838-1873**


Box 1 FF 55 21 August 1838. "An Address, Reported by Gerrit Smith to the 'Christian Union Convention' Held in Syracuse, August 21st, 1838."
Box 1 FF 56 19 January 1841. "Union of Christians." Resolutions passed by a meeting held in Peterboro, 19 January 1841.


Box 1 FF 58 29 November 1843. "Church of Peterboro." Creed and Resolutions passed in a meeting of 29 November 1841.

Box 1 FF 59 6 February 1844. "Circular." Resolutions of the semi-annual meeting of the Madison County Auxiliary Bible Society held 6 February 1844.

Box 1 FF 60 23 February 1846. "To the Public." Concerning a controversy between Gerrit Smith and "Mr. Rand."

Box 1 FF 61 1 June 1849. "The following Resolutions, being substantially the same as those offered at two of its previous meetings, were, with the exception of one dissenting voice in the cases of Nos. 4, 6, and 9, passed unanimously by the Church of Peterboro, June 1st, 1849."

Box 1 FF 62 7 July 1849. "At the meeting of the 'Church of Peterboro,' held July 7th, 1849, the following Resolutions were passed, without a dissenting voice."

Box 1 FF 63 20 July 1849. "To the Church of Peterboro." Unsigned.

Box 1 FF 64 9 August 1849. Letter to Hiram P. Crozier, New York.

Box 1 FF 65 27 November 1849. "Proceedings of the Church of Peterboro, at their meeting held Nov. 27, 1849."

Box 1 FF 66 14 January 1859. "Gerrit Smith has consented to deliver a Discourse in the Presbyterian Church in this village on Sunday the 23rd inst. at 11 a.m., in behalf of the religion of reason, or as it is frequently called in this community, the 'New Religion.' The following original hymns will be sung in connection with Mr. Smith's discourse."

Box 1 FF 67 1 May 1873. "Gerrit Smith on 'The Index.'" Letter to Dr. Fitzhugh, Livingston Co., N. Y.

Series 2.4 – Temperance, 1841-1874


Box 1 FF 69 13 November 1841. "To Mr. Emerson Brown and Mr. Jacob Spencer, Overseers of the Poor of the Town Smithfield:..." Begins, "I am an inhabitant of your town. I am a drunkard:..." Unsigned.

Box 1 FF 70 15 March 1843. "To the People of the Town of Smithfield."

Box 1 FF 71 1855? "Address of the 'Anti-Dramshop Party' to the Independence Electors of Oswego County:..." Undated, notation "ca. 1855" in pencil at top.

Box 1 FF 72 22 August 1855. Letter to Edward C. Devalan.
Box 1 FF 73 18 May 1857. Letter to Edward C. Devalan.

Box 1 FF 74 12 November 1858. "Letter from Gerrit Smith to Rev. Dr. John Marsh." Printed with "Letter from Gerrit Smith to Joshua R. Giddings." Photocopy.

Box 1 FF 75 5 February 1869. "Temperence. Gerrit Smith to John Stuart Mill."

Box 1 FF 76 2 March 1870. "The Dramshop. A Warm Contest."

Box 1 FF 77 29 March 1870. "Temperence. Gerrit Smith to Hon. Henry Wilson, U.S. Senate."

Box 1 FF 78 17 August 1870. "(This Paper, Reported by Gerrit Smith, was unanimously adopted by the Convention.) Address of the Convention of the New York Anti-Dramshop Party, Held in the City of Syracuse, August 17th, 1870, To the People of the State of New York."

Box 1 FF 79 17 August 1870. Second copy of above.

Box 1 FF 80 8 March 1871. "Letter from Gerrit Smith on Temperence. To the Thoughtful and Candid of the County of Madison."

Box 1 FF 81 10 August 1871. "The Anti-Dramshop Party."

Box 1 FF 82 6 November 1872. "Gerrit Smith to the Anti-Dramshop Party. A Mutual Disappointment!"

Series 2.5 – Land Reform, 1855-1874

Box 1 FF 83 24 March 1874. "Woman's War Upon the Dramshop. (By Gerrit Smith.)"

Box 1 FF 84 24 May 1844. "To the persons who derive title from myself or my late father to land in Charlotte River and Byrne's Tracts, in the Counties of Delaware, Ostego, and Schoharie."

Box 1 FF 85 18 May 1848. Resolutions of the National Convention of Colored People and letter from Gerrit Smith to Elder Charles B. Ray.

Box 1 FF 86 4 April 1849. Letter to President Green, Whitesboro.

Box 1 FF 87 1 May 1849. Unaddressed circular.


Box 1 FF 89 4 October 1854. "To Gerrit Smith Grantees. Redeem Your Lands!" signed by Chas. B. Ray and J. McCune Smith.

Series 2.6 – Women’s Rights, 1855-1874

Box 1 FF 90 1 December 1855. Letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Box 1 FF 91 18 May 1857. "To the Reform Dress Association."
Box 1 FF 92 5 February 1873. "Gerrit Smith to Susan B. Anthony."

Box 1 FF 93 15 August 1873. "Woman Suffrage Above Human Law. Letter from Gerrit Smith."

**Series 2.7 – Reconstruction - Republican Party, 1871-1874**

Box 1 FF 94 13 March 1871. "The West Point Mob. (By Gerrit Smith)" Advocates the closing of West Point.

Box 1 FF 95 22 June 1872. "Speech of Gerrit Smith (To His Neighbors). In Peterboro, N. Y., June 22nd, 1872." In support of the Republican Party and Grant.


Box 1 FF 97 1 October 1872. "Gerrit Smith to Horace Greeley." Against the Democratic Party.

Box 1 FF 98 27 June 1874. "Civil Rights Bill and West Point Academy. Letter from Gerrit Smith to Frederick Douglass."

Box 1 FF 99 12 December 1874. "Will the American People never cease to oppress and torture the helpless poor?"

**Series 2.8 – Cuba, 1870-1873**

Box 1 FF 100 22 December 1870. "Letter from Gerrit Smith to Hon. Mr. Churchill. San Domingo."

Box 1 FF 101 14 February 1873. "A Letter From the Hon. Gerrit Smith, to the Cuban Anti-Slavery Committee, New York."

Box 1 FF 102 4 July 1873. "Let Crushed Cuba Arise! Substance of the Speech of Gerrit Smith, in Syracuse, July 4th, 1873."

Box 1 FF 103 1 December 1873. "Spain - Cuba. By Gerrit Smith."

**Series 2.9 – Miscellaneous, 1839-1870**

Box 1 FF 104 8 October 1839. "Letter on 'Internal Improvements.'"

Box 1 FF 105 23 April 1851. Letter to Hon. O. Allen, Buffalo. Concerning internal improvements.

Box 1 FF 106 1 February 1845. Letter to Hon. F. Wittlesey of Rochester. Concerning the increase of toll rates on the Oswego Canal.

Box 1 FF 107 12 May 1851. "To the Editors of the Albany Atlas, Mohawk Courier, Hamilton Reflector, and numerous kindred Newspapers:..." Concerning internal improvements.

Box 1 FF 109 27 June 1854. "Speech of Gerrit Smith, on Mexican Treaty and 'Monroe Doctrine.' In Congress, June 27, 1854."

Box 1 FF 110 5 January 1855. Letter to Hon. H. C. Goodwin, M. C. Concerning a bill for the relief of sufferers from French spoliations.


Box 1 FF 112 14 January 1864. "Letter to Hon. D. C. Littlejohn from Gerrit Smith, on the Country."

Box 1 FF 113 13 April 1870. "Lake Ontario Shore Railroad. Letter from Gerrit Smith." To Messrs. Scovell, Wilson, Fowler, the Niagara Co. Directors of the L. S. O. Railroad.

Series 3 – Pamphlets and Published Speeches

Box 2 FF 1 Juvenis, to the Electors of the County of Madison. Notation in ink: "Issued in the winter of 1822-3." 39 pages.

Box 2 FF 2 Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the New York Anti-Slavery Society, Convened at Utica, October 19, 1836. Published for the Society, Utica, New York, 1836. 60 pages. Wrappers missing.


Box 2 FF 4 Abstract of the Argument, in the Public Discussion of the Question: "Are the Christians of a Given Community the Church of Such Community?" Made by Gerrit Smith, in Hamilton, N. Y. April 12th, 13th, 14th, 1847. Albany: S. W. Green, 1847. 38 pages. Wrapper title: Gerrit Smith on Sectarianism.

Box 2 FF 5 Second copy of above. Autographed by Gerrit Smith.

Box 2 FF 6 Letter of Gerrit Smith to S. P. Chase, on the Unconstitutionality of Every Part of American Slavery. Albany: S. W. Green, 1847. 12 pages.


Speech of Gerrit Smith, on the Country, Delivered at the Cooper Institute, New York, December 1862. New York: Baker & Godwin, 1862. 8 pages.


Speeches and Letters of Gerrit Smith (From January 1863 to January 1864) on the Rebellion. New York: John A. Gray & Green, 1864. 70 pages.


Series 4 – Land Sales


(Sale) of Patents of Lands, etc., to be Sold in November, 1815, for Arrears of Quit Rent. Albany: J. Buel. 20 pages, back cover missing, possibly incomplete.

No Title. (List of Lands to be Sold in [1830] for Arrears of Taxes.) Cover and title pages missing. Date inscribed in ink on first page. 240 pages. Possibly incomplete.

List of Lands to be Sold in March, 1829, 1834, for Arrears of Taxes for the Years 1827, 1828, and 1830. Albany: Croswell, Van Benthuysen and Burt, 1833. 179 pages. Covers missing, possible incomplete.

Lists of Lands to be Sold for Arrears of Taxes, for the Years 1836, 1837, 1838, and 1839. Albany: Thurlow Weed, Printer to the State, 1843. 136 pages. Covers and 83 pages missing.

Second copy of above. 219 pages. Covers missing, otherwise complete.

List of Lands to be Sold, 1846.

Lists of Lands to be Sold for Arrears of Taxes, for the Years 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843, and 1844, at the Sale to be Held at the Capital, Commencing November 20, 1848. Albany: Weed, Parsons, & Co., 1848. 364 pages, covers missing, inscribed “Gerrit Smith” on front.

List of Lands to be Sold for Arrears of Taxes for the Years 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848, at the Sale to be Held at the Capital, in the City of Albany, Commencing November 9, 1848. Albany: Weed, Parsons, & Company, 1853. 402 pages.

List of Lands to be Sold for Arrears of Taxes for the Years 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, and 1860, also Certain Lands to be Sold for Arrears of Taxes for the Years 1852, 1853, 1854, and 1855, at the Sale to be Held at the Capital, in the City of Albany, Commencing November 12, 1866. Albany: Weed, Parsons & Company, 1866. 371 pages, back covers missing.
Series 5 – Original Hymns

Box 4 FF 1 January 14, 1859. Original hymns to be sung in connection with Mr. Smith's Discourse.

Series 6 – Correspondence, 1843-1864

Box 4 FF 2 March 1, 1856 - Letter to a friend. Smith refers to his helping "The Cause in Kansas" only two months before the war.

Box 4 FF 3 June 25, 1864 - Letter to a Mr. Arthur Laffingwell referring to his religious writings.

Box 4 FF 4 April 9, 1850 - Letter to George Reddington, referring to land ownership and taxation.

Box 4 FF 5 September 30, 1843 - Letter to Miss Sally Holley concerning resolutions about her late father Myron also personal information. (Includes copy of letter to Orville Holley concerning same subject.)

Series 7 – Be Natural!: A Discourse

Box 4 FF 6 1864. Be Natural!: A Discourse. Peterboro, November 20, 1864.

For information, please contact us at:

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