

**SMYLIE-MONTGOMERY FAMILY PAPERS**

Mss. 5038

Inventory

Compiled by  
Luana Henderson

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections  
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library  
Louisiana State University Libraries  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2010

## CONTENTS OF INVENTORY

SUMMARY .....	3
BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE .....	4
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE .....	4
LIST OF SUB-GROUPS, SERIES, AND SUBSERIES .....	5
SERIES DESCRIPTIONS .....	6
INDEX TERMS .....	7
CONTAINER LIST .....	10

**Use of manuscript materials.** If you wish to examine items in the manuscript group, please fill out a call slip specifying the materials you wish to see. Consult the Container List for location information needed on the call slip.

**Photocopying.** Should you wish to request photocopies, please consult a staff member. Do not remove items to be photocopied. The existing order and arrangement of unbound materials must be maintained. Reproductions must be made from surrogates (microfilm, digital scan, photocopy of original held by LSU Libraries), when available.

**Publication.** Readers assume full responsibility for compliance with laws regarding copyright, literary property rights, and libel.

**Permission to examine archival materials does not constitute permission to publish. Any publication of such materials beyond the limits of fair use requires specific prior written permission. Requests for permission to publish should be addressed in writing to the Head, Public Services, Special Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA, 70803-3300. When permission to publish is granted, two copies of the publication will be requested for the LLMVC.**

Proper acknowledgement of LLMVC materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page. Copies of scholarly publications based on research in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections are welcomed.

**SUMMARY**

<b>Size</b>	1.25 linear ft.
<b>Geographic Locations</b>	Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina.
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	1807-1919
<b>Bulk Dates</b>	1807-1869
<b>Languages</b>	English.
<b>Summary</b>	Correspondence, records of the Presbyterian Church in Mississippi and personal papers of Rev. James Smylie, his daughter, Amelia, and his son-in-law, Joseph Addison Montgomery.
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	None
<b>Reproduction Note</b>	May be reproduced.
<b>Copyright</b>	Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries.
<b>Related Collections</b>	Joseph Addison Montgomery and Family Papers, Mss.1019.
<b>Citation</b>	Smylie-Montgomery Family Papers, Mss. 5038, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
<b>Stack Location</b>	C:116-117, OS:S

### **BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE**

Reverend James Smylie was one of the first Presbyterian clergymen to settle permanently in the Mississippi Territory. Sent by the Synod of the Carolinas Smylie arrived in the Territory in 1805. In 1807, he and Rev. Joseph Bullen organized the Bayou Pierre Presbyterian Church in Adams County, and he organized another church in Washington, Miss. In total, he was instrumental in establishing six Presbyterian churches in Mississippi. An opponent to abolition, he provided scriptural justification for the institution of slavery in a sermon. In 1836, he produced a pamphlet in response to a letter from the Presbytery of Chillicothe, which challenged his view.

His daughter, Amelia, married Joseph Addison Montgomery, son of Rev. William Montgomery, the pastor of Ebenezer and Union Presbyterian churches in Jefferson County, Miss. Montgomery was a Natchez merchant, a planter and a New Orleans commission merchant. In 1846, Montgomery joined the cotton factor firm of C. C. Lathrop in New Orleans, La. The next year he became an independent commission merchant. In 1859, he moved his family to Belmont Plantation near Port Gibson, Claiborne County, a plantation Amelia inherited.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Correspondence comprises the bulk of this collection. Letters of the Smylie family are predominantly those of James Smylie, and they pertain to the affairs of the Presbyterian Church, family matters, and the cotton trade. Correspondence of the Montgomery family reflects plantation life, business affairs and family matters. A series of letters written by Montgomery and Amelia discuss his business prospects and plantation problems after the Civil War. Personal papers consist of a lease agreement (Dec. 15, 1807) and a deed for property in Claiborne County (Jan. 5, 1836). There is also list of religious questions, a handwritten poem, two receipts (1812, 1831) and a list of family members (undated). Church records contain reports, notes on the meetings of the Presbytery, and a speech advocating religious instruction for the Choctaw Indians.

**Note:** There are no letters or papers during the period of 1861-1865, but some are found in the related Joseph Addison Montgomery and Family Papers, Mss. 1019.

**LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES.**

- Series I. Smylie Family Papers, 1807-1914, undated.**  
**Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1807-1914, undated.**  
**Subseries 2. Personal Papers, 1807-1836, undated.**
- Series II. Church Records, 1807-1838, undated.**
- Series III. Montgomery Family Papers, 1830-1919, undated.**

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Series I. Smylie Family Papers, 1807-1882, 1914, undated.**

#### **Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1807-1882, 1914, undated.**

This subseries is comprised of correspondence written primarily to James Smylie that reflects the life of a Presbyterian minister and planter in the Mississippi Territory. Letters concern church business, doctrine and members. They also report on cotton production and prices, health, business affairs, and the social activities of family and friends.

John Smylie writes about the loss of a ship carrying Africans (Feb. 18, 1807) and the court system in Richmond County, N.C. (Sept. 5, 1807). He also refers to the death of a slave trader (Aug. 12, 1827). John Bisland comments on the current value of "Negros" (Nov. 21, 1819). One letter gives an account of the circumstances leading to the execution of a Choctaw Indian for the murder of another Native American (May 18, 1821). Smylie mentions that his pamphlet on slavery will be printed soon (July 8, 1836). In a letter to Smylie, Joseph Addison Montgomery comments on the health of two cotton pickers (Sept. 13, 1836).

Amelia Smylie's letters to her father describe her studies and social activities while attending school in Philadelphia (1825-1826). A few years later, Smylie discusses Amelia's marriage to Joseph Addison Montgomery and his own marriage to a Mrs. Lea (Jan. 28, 1829). Smylie is told that Jefferson College may be placed under the governance of the Presbyterian Church (Feb. 22, 1838). He is also told that Oakland College would pass from the Presbytery at Rodney to the Presbyterian Synod (Sept. 27, 1839). Smylie tells of attending a Presbyterian Church convention, which presented opposing views on doctrine (May 11, 1837).

Anna Hall, writing from Byron, Ill., claims her laundry woman regrets she was set free and wishes to return to the South (Aug. 17, 1870). In a letter written from Washington, D. C., Emily Miller describes the Mississippi Congressional delegation, and she tells of her visit with President and Mrs. Hayes. She also describes a Christmas celebration (Jan. 2, 1878). The Rev. Matt Shaw, pastor of Bethany Church, Miss, writes the last letter in this group. He comments on family news, the generosity of his congregation and the poor cotton market (Nov. 22, 1914).

#### **Subseries 2. Personal Papers, 1807-1836, undated.**

This small subseries contains a lease agreement between James Smylie and Abel Miller for land in Adams County (Dec. 15, 1807) and a deed for property in Claiborne County (Jan. 5, 1836). Also found is a list of questions on religion compiled by John Bisland (undated), a handwritten poem about the marriage of a minister (undated), two receipts (1812, 1831) and a family genealogy (undated). The reverse side of Bisland's questions shows a small sketch of a lot at section 17, township 15 in "Queen County."

**Series II. Church Records, 1807- 1838, undated.**

Series consists of reports, notes on the meetings of the Presbytery, and a speech advocating religious instruction for the Choctaw Indians (Nov. 28, 1818). Annual reports provide the number of new members and baptisms performed (1827-1828), and a report on a missionary tour east of the Pearl River (Feb. 28, 1827) is also found. Notes relate to church matters and ordination of ministers (undated). A commission by the Presbytery of Louisiana appoints James Smylie to the position of bishop (March 24, 1838).

**Series III. Montgomery Family Papers, 1830-1919, undated.**

Correspondence relates to plantation life, family matters, business affairs, and the health and activities of family and friends, with some references to religious activities.

In his letters to Amelia and Joseph Montgomery, James Smylie offers business advice and discusses local news and family. He describes the damage caused by a tornado (Nov. 27, 1830) and a duel fought between local men (Aug. 30, 1833). He mentions the printing of his pamphlet, *Smylie on Slavery*, although he makes no comments on the piece itself (July 24, 1836, ca. 1836). Letters from commission merchants discuss cotton shipments and prices (1837-1839). Letters also remark on the value of the currency (May 22, 1838, Jan. 23, 1839) and financial obligations under the bankruptcy law (Jan. 16, 1843).

References to slaves occur in several antebellum letters (1838-1860). Smylie suggests that Amelia and Joseph plant cotton and purchase 12 to 15 “prime hands” in anticipation of reduced slave prices (Aug. 2, 1838). In a letter to Montgomery, the writer expresses a need to sell a house in exchange for “Negro property” (July 16, 1841). Thomas Batchelor requests payment on a note he holds so he can purchase slaves (March 19, 1839).

Amelia’s letters from Pine Grove and Belmont plantations reflect plantation life, as well as the status of slaves (1847-1859). She discusses problems with slaves, her children, planting crops, and her own health and that of others. Amelia’s correspondence also relates to problems with her son, James, while he is away at school (Dec., 1859, March 10, 1860). Amelia expresses her concern for Montgomery’s health during an outbreak of typhus in New Orleans (March 4, 1848).

From Pine Grove, she writes of a female slave who does not want to be sold (June 9, 1847). After inheriting Belmont Plantation, she complains about the difficulties she has encountered in the management of the plantation and its slaves (1859-1860). She suspects slaves of intercepting mail, and she reprimands a slave for possessing a gun (Dec. 17, 1859). In a letter in which she complains about the laziness of the slaves, she gives an account of the circumstances surrounding the escape of two slaves (March 8, 1860). After the Civil War, Amelia receives a letter from a former servant of her father who gives an update of his family members (Dec. 10, 1870). Amelia also addresses a

land dispute related to her inheritance (May 7, 1860). Correspondence also reveals the poor economic conditions of the family after the war (1866-1869). Letters concern problems with the cotton trade in New Orleans and debts.

Series also includes a lease for land at Belmont Plantation in exchange for two bales of cotton (Jan. 17, 1889). A letter to Montgomery comments on the redistricting of Congressional district along the Mississippi River (April 19, 1876). Later correspondence is of a personal nature written by Linda Watson to A. J. Montgomery (1916-1919). A 20<sup>th</sup> century letter makes mention of the World War I British naval losses and the death of Britain's Cabinet Minister Horatio Kitchener (June 8, 1916).



**INDEX TERMS**

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Series, Subseries</b>
Belmont Plantation (Miss.)	III
Choctaw Indians.	I.1, II
Clergy--Mississippi.	I.1, II, III
Commission merchants--Louisiana--New Orleans.	I.1, III
Cotton trade--United States.	I.1, III
Courts--North Carolina--Richmond County.	I.1
Currency question--United States.	III
Freedmen--Illinois.	I.1
Fugitive slaves--Mississippi.	III
Indians of North America--Mississippi.	I.1, II
Louisiana--History--19 <sup>th</sup> century.	I.1, II
Louisiana--Economic conditions--1865-1950.	III
Louisiana--Social life and customs--19 <sup>th</sup> century.	I.1, III
Merchants--Mississippi--Natchez.	III
Mississippi--Social life and customs--19 <sup>th</sup> century.	I.1, III
Montgomery, Amelia Smylie, 1829-1870.	I.1, III
Montgomery, Joseph Addison.	I.1, III
Oakland College (Miss.)	I.1
Pine Grove Plantation (Miss.)	III
Plantation owners--Mississippi.	III
Presbyterian Church--Mississippi--Clergy.	I.1, II, III
Presbyterian Church--Mississippi--History--19 <sup>th</sup> century.	I.1, II, III
Presbyterians--Louisiana.	I.1, II, III
Presbyterians--Mississippi.	I.1, II, III
Slave traders.	I.1
Slaveholders--Mississippi.	III
Slaves--Mississippi.	III
Slaves--Social conditions.	III
Smylie, James, 1780-1853.	I-III
Students--Social life and customs--19 <sup>th</sup> century.	I.1, III
Women slaves--Mississippi.	III
World War, 1914-1918--Naval operations.	III

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
C:116	1	1-9	<b>Series I. Smylie Family Papers, 1807-1914, undated.</b>
	2	1-6	<b>Subseries 1.</b> Correspondence, 1807-1830. <b>Subseries 1.</b> Correspondence, 1831-1914, undated.
OS:S	2	7	<b>Subseries 2.</b> Personal papers, 1807-1836, undated.
		1	Lease agreement, Dec. 15, 1807. Deed, Jan. 5, 1836.
C:116	2	8-10	<b>Series II. Church Records, 1807-1838, undated.</b>
			<b>Series III. Montgomery Family Papers, 1830-1919, undated.</b>
C:116	3	1-9	1830-1858.
C:117	4	1-6	1859-1919, undated.