



Smith Family Letters, 1865-1930

Special Collections Department/Long Island Studies Institute

Contact Information:
Special Collections Department
Axinn Library, Room 032
123 Hofstra University
Hempstead, NY 11549
Phone: (516) 463-6411, or 463-6404
Fax: (516) 463-6442
E-mail: LISI@hofstra.edu

<http://www.hofstra.edu/Libraries/SpecialCollections>

Compiled by:	[M. O'Connor]
Date Completed:	[January 26, 2012]

Smith Family Letters, 1866-1930.
0.2 cubic ft.

Thomas E. Smith (1846-c.1888) of Northport, New York, served in the United States Navy from c.1865-1868, achieving the rank of lieutenant. He was married to Sarah E. Smith, and they had a daughter, Mary. In 1865, Smith was serving on the U.S.S. Dawn, which operated in the Atlantic Ocean. By 1868, he was aboard the U.S.S. Independence at the Navy yard in Mare Island, California. He was still stationed in California when he was mustered out of the Navy in late 1868. At this point, Smith was in dire financial straits and did not have enough money for the trip home to Long Island.

In April 1869, without having returned home, Smith decided to make one last attempt at making his fortune. He joined the Felix O'Neil Prospecting Company and went off to find gold in the White Pines District in Nevada. He was apparently enjoying some success, but when the banks failed he again fell on hard times. In late 1869, Smith sailed to San Francisco where he hoped to earn enough money to be able to afford a trip home. He apparently made it back east at some point, but exactly when is unknown.

In 1874, Smith was on a schooner making its way across the Mediterranean to Leghorn (Livorno) Italy. In 1887, Smith and his wife Sarah were living Philadelphia, PA, and it appears that their financial circumstances had taken a turn for the better. Smith died c.1888, and Sarah remained living in Philadelphia until returning to Northport sometime around 1893.

The collection is comprised mainly of letters (handwritten and typed transcriptions) written by Thomas Smith to his wife, Sarah, between 1865 and 1869. In his letters, he describes how unhappy and lonely he was while in the U.S. Navy. He also discussed the financial difficulties he encountered after he left the Navy. His letters from the White Pines District of Nevada describe mining operations and the financial woes that befell him. Also included are letters to his daughter, Mary; two letters between himself and his sister, Anna A. Smith; two form letters concerning Thomas' Navy pension; and, typescript correspondence, written in 1929 and 1930, between Mary Smith and officials and lawyers in Nevada concerning the Felix O'Neil Prospecting and Mining Company.

SUBJECTS

Names:

Smith, Mary

Smith, Sarah E.

Smith, Thomas E., 1846-c.1888.

Felix O'Neil Prospecting and Mining Company (Nevada).

United States. Navy.

Subjects:

Mining.

Places:

Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

Northport (N.Y.)

United States --History, Naval.

White Pines District (Nev.)

Form and Genre Terms:

Letters.

Smith Family Letters, 1866-1930.

Box and Folder Listing

Letters

<u>Box / Folder</u>	<u>Inclusive dates</u>
1-1	1865-1868
1-2	1869-1874 (includes typescript transcriptions made in 1956)
1-3	1887-1930