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Guide to the William Osborn Stoddard Collection 1897-1902



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.STODDARDWO
Title	Stoddard, William Osborn. Collection
Date	1897-1902
Size	0.25 linear feet (1 box)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract William Osborn Stoddard (1835-1925) author, inventor, and assistant secretary to President Abraham Lincoln during his first term. The collection contains four letters, three addressed to author James Carleton Young.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Stoddard, William Osborn. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

William Osborn Stoddard was born on September 24, 1835, in Homer, New York, to Samuel Prentice Stoddard, a businessman, and Sarah Osborn. Stoddard worked in his father's bookshop while growing up, cultivating a love of literature and becoming familiar with Northern politics of the time. Stoddard attended the University of Rochester in 1854. Upon graduation, he held an editorial position at the Daily Ledger in Chicago. By 1858, he was the editor and proprietor of the Central Illinois Gazette, in Champaign, Illinois. While there, he wrote an editorial endorsing Abraham Lincoln for the presidency. This endorsement from a newspaper was thought to be the first of its kind. Stoddard continued campaigning for Lincoln, and after his successful election, Stoddard secured the position of a clerk in the Interior Department in 1861. Stoddard soon rose to the position of Assistant private secretary to Lincoln and fulfilled much of the clerical duties required of the White House in addition to accompanying Lincoln to important meetings in order to observe him at work. Stoddard also personally made the first copy of the draft Emancipation Proclamation in 1862.

After a bout of sickness, Stoddard left the White House in 1864, but maintained positions in government elsewhere. He was appointed United States Marshal for Arkansas, but resigned in 1865, citing his health. He moved to New York City and attempted to enter the financial business, but returned to government from 1871-1873 as a clerk for the Department of Docks.

In the later 1860s, Stoddard began publishing his own works, initially memoirs of his time in the White House and of Lincoln. After his time as a clerk in New York City, Stoddard moved to Hempstead, Long Island, where he began a series of books on the lives of the American presidents. In 1894 he relocated again, this time to Madison, New Jersey. He continued writing and giving interviews of his time in the Civil War era White House until he was nearing the age of ninety. He died on August 29, 1925.

Scope Note

The William Stoddard Collection contains a single folder of correspondence sent by Stoddard between 1897 and 1902. There are four handwritten, autographed letters in the collection. Arranged in chronological order, the first letter is addressed to “Mr. Jenks,” and sent from Madison, New Jersey, where Stoddard had relocated after his long life in government. The letter to Jenks concerns juvenile art. The final three letters are all addressed to James Carleton Young (1836-1918), a contemporary author.

Subject Headings

- Stoddard, William Osborn, 1835-1925
- Young, James Carleton, 1836-1918
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INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder 1

Correspondence, 1897-1902

- Letter from William Osborn Stoddard to Mr. Jenks, September 30, 1897
- Letter from William Osborn Stoddard to James Carleton Young, October 1, 1900
- Letter from William Osborn Stoddard to James Carleton Young, October 12, 1900
- Letter from William Osborn Stoddard to James Carleton Young, October 4, 1902