

**The New York Public Library
Stephen A. Schwarzman Building
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Guide to the
Tilden Estate and Trust records
1837-1930 (bulk 1886-1915)
MssCol 2995

Compiled by Charles Kronick, October 1986; revised by Kit Messick, 2012

Summary

Creator: Tilden Trust

Title: Tilden Estate and Trust records, 1837-1930 (bulk 1886-1915)

Size: 15.48 linear feet (14 boxes, 19 volumes, 1 other item)

Source: Received from the Tilden Estate and Trust, 1927-1930.

Abstract: The Tilden Trust was incorporated in 1887 after the death in 1886 of Samuel J. Tilden, attorney, governor of New York in 1874 and 1875, and U.S. presidential candidate in 1876. Tilden's will stipulated that the bulk of his estate was to make up the Tilden Trust for the creation of a public library and reading room in New York City. The records include correspondence, financial and legal files, graphic material, and printed matter. The bulk of the material relates to the administration of the resources of the Estate and Trust, as well as the litigation attempt to break the will.

Access: Apply to Manuscripts and Archives Division for access at <http://www.nypl.org/mssref>.

Preferred citation: Tilden Estate and Trust records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Material comprising the Tilden Estate and Trust records was originally received as part of the Samuel J. Tilden papers. At the time the papers were accessioned, the decision was made to separate material relating to the Estate and Trust from the personal papers. Additionally, material relating specifically to the creation of the New York Public Library was also separated. Researchers interested in Tilden's Trust and Estate should consult not only these records, but the Samuel J. Tilden papers, and the Tilden Trust records of the NYPL Archives.

Related collections

Samuel J. Tilden papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Tilden Trust records. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Creator history

The Tilden Trust was incorporated in 1887 after the death in 1886 of Samuel J. Tilden, attorney, governor of New York in 1874 and 1875, and U.S. presidential candidate in 1876. Tilden's will stipulated that the bulk of his estate was to make up the Tilden Trust for the creation of a public library and reading room in New York City. His heirs contested the will and the subsequent lawsuits were not settled until 1892. Funds from the estate were used for the formation of the New York Public Library in 1895 but the books of the Trust were not closed until 1930. Executors of Tilden's estate included John Bigelow, Andrew Haswell Green, George B. Smith, and later, Smith's widow, Emma B. Smith.

Scope and content note

The material in the records of the Tilden Estate and Trust consist of correspondence, financial and legal records, graphic material, and printed matter.

Arrangement

The Tilden Estate and Trust records are organized into the following series:

- I. Estate and Trust correspondence, 1886-1930
 - General correspondence
- II. Financial and legal material, 1837-1930
- III. Graphic material, 1894-1927
- IV. Printed matter, 1886-1930

Key terms

Subjects

Estates (Law)
Libraries -- History -- New York (State) -- New York
Probate law and practice

Names

Bigelow, John, 1817-1911
Carter, James C. (James Coolidge), 1827-1905
Flagg, E.C
Green, A. H. (Andrew Haswell), 1820-1903
Hazard, Laura B.
Ledyard, Lewis Cass.
Randolph, L.G.V
Smith, Emma
Smith, George W.
Tilden Trust
Tilden, Henry A.
Tilden, Samuel J. (Samuel Jones), 1814-1886 --
Estate
Tilden, Samuel J. (Samuel Jones), 1814-1886 --
Monuments
Tilden, Samuel J. (Samuel Jones), 1814-1886 --
Will

Special formats

Architectural drawings

Blueprints

Maps

Scrapbooks

Container list and series descriptions

I. Estate and Trust correspondence, 1886-1930

Correspondence, largely among the trustees and their financial and legal advisors, concerns the legal cases with Samuel J. Tilden's heirs-at-law to retain control of that portion of the estate which Tilden had hoped would be used to fund the creation of a free public library and reading room in New York City. The correspondence also concerns the management of the assets of the estate during those protracted legal battles. Other topics to be found within the correspondence are the construction of appropriate Tilden monuments and memorials, as well as the formation and construction of the New York Public Library (though this is not a large percentage of the correspondence). Correspondents include John Bigelow, James C. Carter, A. C. Flagg, Andrew Haswell Green, L. C. Ledyard, L. V. F. Randolph, and George and Emma Smith.

General correspondence

- b.1 f.1-17 1886-1923
- b.2 f.1-3 1924-1930
 - b.2 f.4 George Smith correspondence, unsorted
 - b.2 f.5 Memorials, 1886
 - b.2 f.6-10 Monument, 1908-1930
 - b.2 f.11-12 Tomb, 1894-1926
 - b.2 f.13 "Unveiling", 1926-1927
 - b.2 f.14 Centennial memorial, 1912-1914
 - b.2 f.15-16 Library material, 1892-1919
 - b.2 f.17-19 Relating to publication of Tilden's letters by John Bigelow, 1885-1907
- b.3 f.1 Acknowledgment of gift copies of published letters, 1907-1908
- b.3 f.2-6 Unsorted correspondence
 - b.4 Tilden Trust letter books, vols. 1-3, 1892-1906
 - b.4 Tilden Trust letter books, vols. 1-10, 1886-1892
 - b.5 Tilden Estate letter books, vols. 11-18, 1892-1899
 - b.6 Tilden Estate letter books, vols. 19-21, 1899-1914
 - b.6 New York Iron Mine letter book, 1893-1902
- b.7 f.1-5 Estate accounting, 1892-1917

II. Financial and legal material, 1837-1930

Financial and legal records are comprised of estate maps and inventories; material relating to mines and other investments; deeds; and depositions, briefs and arguments, along with some attached correspondence, concerning the distribution of the proceeds of the Trust funds and resources; continuing cases with particular heirs; and the eventual settlement with Mrs. Laura B. Hazard. There are also bank books, account books, and accounting records.

- b.7 f.6-10 Unsorted financial material
- b.7 f.11 Owl's Head property sale, 188-1890
- b.7 f.12 Maps relating to coal lands, undated
- b.7 f.13 Englewood, N. J. property, 1872-1905
- b.7 f.14 Gramercy Park sale and valuation, 1894-1899
- b.7 f.15 Greystone sale and valuation, 1886-1899

II. Financial and legal material, 1837-1930 (cont.)

- b.7 f.16 Estate inventories--Greystone and Gramercy Park, 1886-1899
- b.7 f.17 Hazard conveyance, deeds, etc., 1882-1891
- b.8 f.1 "Jessup suit", 1903-1917
- b.8 f.2 Michigan lands, 1857-1899
- b.8 f.3-6 Mines, 1837-1908
- b.8 f.7 Niles, William W., 1892-1897
A lawyer for Tilden who brought suit against the estate for unpaid fees
- b.8 f.8-10 L.V.F. Randolph vs. George Smith, 1913-1920
- b.8 f.11-13 Unsorted financial and legal material
- b.8 f.14 Long Island property, 1849-1893
- b.8 f.15-16 Will and related suits, 1886-1930
- b.9 Unsorted financial and legal material
- b.10 f.1 Mortgages, 1892-1895
- b.10 f.2 Memorials, 1886
- b.10 f.3 Library material, 1884-1911
- b.10 f.4 Minutes, 1992-1994
- b.10 f.5-18 Unsorted financial and legal material
- b.11 Bank books
- b.11 Estate balances, 1896-1903
- b.12 Tilden Trust account books, 1895-1900
- v.1 Minutes of the executors and trustees, 1886-1901
- v.2 Ledger (Estate), 1886-1930
- v.3 Journal (Estate), 1886-1930
- v.4 Cash book (Estate), 1886-1889
- v.5 Cash book (Estate), 1890-1895
- v.6 Cash book (Estate), 1895-1902
- v.7 Cash book (Estate), 1902-1930
- v.8 Journal (Trust), 1895-1902
- v.9 Ledger (Trust), 1892-1905
- v.10 Cashbook (Trust), 1892-1902
- v.152 Estate inventory
- v.152 Estate inventory
- v.234 Check register, 1886-1901
- v.235 Check register, 1886-1901
- v.236 Check register, 1886-1901
- v.11 3rd National Bank checks, 1886-1901
- v.12 Checks , 1886-1888

of.1 **III. Graphic material, 1894-1927**

Graphic material consists of architectural drawings of proposed monuments to Samuel J. Tilden, as well as the statue eventually erected at 112th Street and Riverside Drive in New York City, and his tomb in New Lebanon, New York.

See related material in Series I. Correspondence, in files relating to Tilden's monument and tomb.

b.13 Unsorted printed matter

b.14 Unsorted printed matter

IV. Printed matter, 1886-1930

Printed matter is composed primarily of scrapbooks and clippings compiled by the trustees, tracing the court cases and decisions regarding the Trust, and printed copies of relevant arguments, decisions, and opinions