

Smith, Abraham Bartlett, 1926-2012. Papers of Abraham Bartlett Smith, 1922-2000 (inclusive), 1980-1998 (bulk): A Finding Aid

Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America



Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

June 1999

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Updated June 2010

Descriptive Summary

Call No.: 97-M156--2000-M128

Repository: Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute

Creator: Abraham Bartlett Smith, 1926-2012

Title: Papers of Abraham Bartlett Smith, 1922-2000 (bulk), 1980-1988 (bulk)

Quantity: 5.25 linear feet (4 cartons, 3 file boxes) plus 1 folio+ folder

Location: Collection stored off site: researchers must request access 36 hours before use.

Language of materials: Materials in English.

Abstract: Journals of Abraham Bartlett Smith, a transgender individual.

Processing Information:

Processed: June 1999; addenda processed June 2010

By: Anne Engelhart

Acquisition Information:

Accession numbers: 97-M156, 98-M15, 98-M41, 98-M47, 98-M87, 98-M139, 98-M156, 98-M182, 98-M199, 2000-M128

These papers were given to the Schlesinger Library by Abraham Bartlett Smith between November 1997 and August 2000.

TERMS OF USE :

Access. Portions of the collection are closed to protect the privacy of individuals mentioned in the journals. Researchers must sign a special permission form to use the collection.

Use Restrictions:

Copyright. Abraham B. Smith has transferred copyright in this collection to the President and Fellows of Harvard College for the Schlesinger Library. Copyright in other papers in the collection may be held by their authors, or the authors' heirs or assigns.

Copying. Open papers may be copied in accordance with the Library's usual procedures.

Preferred citation for publication:

Abraham Bartlett Smith Papers, 1922-2000; item description, dates. 97-M156--2000-M128, folder #. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

BIOGRAPHY

Abraham Bartlett Smith was born Phyliss Bartlett Smith, the elder child of Omar and Mae (Bartlett) Smith, on January 14, 1926. Smith grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, and graduated from Classical High School (1943) and earned a bachelor's degree in biology from American International College (1948). Between high school and college Smith worked as a machine operator (producing the M-1 rifle) at the Springfield Armory. Smith worked as a biological aide for the United States Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service's Marine Biological Laboratory in Milford, Connecticut (1948-1950), at a Sonotone Battery plant in Cold Spring, New York, and as a staff member at the Wassaic State School, a center for the mentally retarded, in Wassaic, New York, from 1968 until retiring in 1981.

Smith's years as a child and young adult were anguished ones. She ran away to Chicago in 1941 and during the 1950s was hospitalized at Connecticut State Hospital. She converted to Roman Catholicism in the 1950s and inalterably left the church in the early 1970s. In 1963 Smith had a son, voluntarily and deliberately; she did not continue her relationship with her son's father. In 1970 she underwent the physical and legal procedures necessary to become a man, and in 1972 officially changed her name to Abraham Bartlett Smith. In 1977 Smith married, but the couple was divorced in 1980.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Smith lived in Winsted and Norfolk, Connecticut, and East Longmeadow, Massachusetts. In October 1992 he moved to Jonesboro, and later Machias, Maine. In 1998 he moved to back to Massachusetts, to be nearer to his family. Smith is an avid reader, music lover, civil libertarian, and student of the planet's biological diversity. He writes that he is "a strongly-motivated opponent and challenger of religion's intrusion into human life and freedom, especially those of women and 'queers.'"

Smith died December 4, 2012.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists largely of manuscript journals detailing Smith's daily activities, health, reading, etc., 1980-1981, 1986-2000. He regularly enclosed or attached photographs,

letters, cards, clippings, flyers, etc. Some of these were removed if they were not pertinent to a particular entry; others remain part of the volume. The entries include meditations upon his family, past and present; his sense of "otherness"; his attitudes towards some of the social, political, and religious issues of the day; descriptions of his encounters with friends, neighbors, and others in the community; financial records; and the chronicle of a (successful) attempt to lose weight. Also included are two volumes: a copy of the childrearing manual used by Smith's mother; and a biography of a female to male transsexual, Michael Dillon (fl. 1950s).

BOX LIST

- Carton 1: 1-2, 3, 5-9, 11, 13, 15, 17-20, 22, 26-27
- Carton 2: 28-30, 32-35, 37-41, 48
- Carton 3: 51-52, 54-56, 58-61, 63, 65v-66v
- Carton 4: CLOSED (4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 21, 23-25, 31, 36, 42-44)
- Box 5: CLOSED (45-46)
- Box 6: CLOSED (47, 49-50, 53, 57, 62)
- Box 7: CLOSED (43a, 64a-64d)

INVENTORY

- 1. Journals, May 17, 1980 - August 9, 1981
- 2. Items removed from #1
- 3. Journals, January 6, 1986 - May 7, 1987
- 4. Items removed from #3.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2000.
- 5. Items removed from #3
- 6. Journals, May 18 - November 8, 1987
- 7-8. Items removed from #6
- 9. Journals, November 10, 1987 - April 28, 1988
- 10. Items removed from #9.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2030.
- 11. Items removed from #9.
- 12. Journals, May 1-July 4, 1988.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2052.
- 13. Items removed from #12
- 14. Journals, July 6, 1988 - January 3, 1989.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
- 15. Journals, January 4 - June 11, 1989
- 16. Items removed from #15.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2024.
- 17. Journals: "Paul Book," mid-March 1989
- 18. Journals, Summer 1989

- 19. Items removed from #18
- 20. Journals, June 11, 1989 - April 18, 1990
- 21. Items removed from #20.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2024.
- 22. Items removed from #20
- 23. Journals, April 18 - October 20, 1990.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2015.
- 24. Items removed from #23.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2024.
- 25. October 21, 1990 - September 7, 1991.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2052.
- 26-27. Items removed from #25
- 28. Journals, September 7 - November 6, 1991
- 29. Items removed from #28
- 30. Journals, November 6 - December 12, 1991
- 31. Journals, December 12, 1991 - April 3, 1992.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2015.
- 32. Items removed from #31
- 33. Journals, April 3 - June 14, 1992
- 34. Items removed from #33
- 35. Journals, June 14 - October 11, 1992.
See also #64f+.
- 36. Items removed from #35.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2057.
- 37. Items removed from #35
- 38. Journals, November 5, 1992 - June 6, 1993
- 39. Journals, June 6 - September 6, 1993
- 40. Journals, September 6 - November 12, 1993
- 41. Journals, November 12, 1993 - April 2, 1994
- 42. Items removed from #41.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
- 43. Journals, April 2 - September 24, 1994.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
- 43a. Journals, March 12-July 29, 1995.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
- 44. Journals, September 24, 1994 - March 12, 1995.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2054.
- 45. Journals, July 29 - October 28, 1995.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
- 46. Journals, October 28, 1995 - April 21, 1996.

- Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
See also #64f+.
- 47. Journals, April 21 - August 12, 1996.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
 - 48. Journals, August 12, 1996 - March 3, 1997
 - 49. Items removed from #48.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2062.
 - 50. Journals, March 3 - August 26, 1997.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2050.
See also #64f+.
 - 51. Journals, August 26 - December 15, 1997
 - 52. Items removed from #51
 - 53. Items removed from #51.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2062.
 - 54. Journals, December 15, 1997 - February 20, 1998
 - 55. Items removed from #54
 - 56. Journals, February 20 - October 3, 1998
 - 57. Items removed from #56.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2063.
 - 58-60. Items removed from February 20 - October 3, 1998
 - 61. Journals, October 4 - November 28, 1998
 - 62. Items removed from #61.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2033.
 - 63. Items removed from #61
 - 64f+. Items removed from #35, 46, 50. Includes PHOTOGRAPHS.
 - 64a. Journals, April 2 - July 1, 2000.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2040.
 - 64b-64d. Items removed from #64a.
Access Restrictions: CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 2040.
 - 65v. The Care and Feeding of Children by L. Emmett Holt, 1922
 - 66v. Michael, Nee Laura by Liz Hodgkinson, n.d.

Preliminary list of added entries.

The following catalog entries represent persons, organizations, and topics documented in this collection. An entry for each appears in the Harvard On Line Library Information System (HOLLIS) and other automated bibliographic databases. THIS IS NOT AN INDEX.

Biologists--United States

Budgets

Diaries

East Longmeadow (Mass.)--Social life and customs--20th century

Gay liberation movement--United States

Gender identity--United States
Grandparent and child--United States
Individuality--Social aspects--United States
Jonesboro (Me.)--Social life and customs--20th century
Machias (Me.)--Social life and customs--20th century
Norfolk (Conn.)--Social life and customs--20th century
Parent and child--United States
Reducing diets--United States
Retirees--United States--Economic conditions
Retirees--United States--Social conditions
Retirees' writings- 20th century
Sex change--United States
Transsexuals--United States
Winsted (Conn.)--Social life and customs--20th century
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