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TODD, JOHN BLAIR SMITH, 1814-1872

PAPERS, 1902-1939
(bulk dates, 1939)
Quantity .25 linear feet

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History

John Blair Smith Todd was born to Doctor and Mrs. John Todd in Lexington, Kentucky on April 4, 1814. In 1827, Todd's family moved to Springfield, Illinois. He attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York from 1832-1837. Todd became a commissioned second Lieutenant in the sixth Infantry on July 1, 1837. After graduating from West Point, Todd fought in the Seminole War (1837-1842) and the Mexican-American War (1846-1848).

On March 25, 1845 Todd married Catherine S. Hoffman, the daughter of Colonel William Hoffman. They had nine children, two who died in infancy.

After the wars, he served at several frontier posts such as Jefferson's Barracks, Missouri, Fort Snelling and Fort Gaines, Minnesota. (Fort Gaines was later renamed Fort Ripley.) In 1855, Todd served under General Selby Harney in an expedition against the Dakotas. Todd resigned from the military in 1856 and became Post Sutler, a military licensed trader, for Fort Randall, Dakota Territory. After gaining much experience in trade along the Missouri river, Todd and Daniel March Frost, a fur trader from Sioux City, Iowa, formed the trading firm of Frost, Todd and Company in 1857. The company was involved in creating many trading posts along the Missouri River. Some of these posts developed into the towns of Bon Homme, Yankton and Vermillion. Todd was also involved with bringing about the Treaty of 1858, in which the Yankton Sioux Tribe gave up their rights to Eastern Dakota. This Treaty opened Dakota up for settlement. In 1861 Todd was elected to the United State Congress as a Delegate for Dakota Territory. He served in Congress until 1865 when his second bid for election was defeated. After his defeat, he ran for the Territorial House of Representatives. That election was successful and he also became Speaker of the House from 1866-1867. In 1868, he ran again for United States Congress but was defeated. Todd died in Yankton, SD on January 6, 1872. Counties in Minnesota and South Dakota are named for J.S.B. Todd.

Scope and Content Note

The J.B.S. Todd Collection contains five series: **Correspondence, Miscellaneous, Photograph, Printed Materials and Typescripts.**

The **Correspondence** series contains two letters referring to items within the Todd Collection. There is no correspondence from Todd himself.

The **Miscellaneous** series contains two copies of a list of J.B.S. Todd's children. The list gives dates and locations of their births. One copy is a handwritten by Josephine Todd Moore and the other copy is a typescript version. Also included is a map of an unidentified township in Lawrence County, SD.

The **Photograph** series contains one photograph of J.B.S. Todd in a military uniform circa 1850. The photograph is available electronically.

The **Printed Materials** contain two newspaper clippings about J.B.S. Todd. One article is a Todd biography, which was printed in the Argus Leader, and the other is Todd's obituary.

The **Typescripts** series contains several biographies of J.B.S. Todd. The typescript by Norman Thomas, a History Professor from Black Hills State Teachers College, is available in three versions: a final draft and two editing copies. This article was published in *South Dakota Historical Collections* v. 24 under the title, "John Blair Smith Todd, First Dakota Delegate to Congress". In addition, to this article are the essays *Obituary General John B.S. Todd* and *Personal Reminiscences*. The author for both of these essays is unknown. Josephine Todd Moore, who was the youngest daughter of J.B.S. Todd, wrote "A Sketch". Included with this typescript is a condensed version of it that may have been the source for the *Argus Leader* article.

Additional Resources

John Todd Diaries 1849, 1855. Minnesota Historical Society.

Jack D. Welsh, M.D. Collection, Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries.

Davis, Robert D.

Captain John Todd Minnesota Historical Society.

Todd, John Blair Smith

The Harney expedition against the Sioux: the journal of Captain John B.S. Todd.
Lincoln, Neb., Nebraska State Historical Society, 1962.

Wilson, Wesley C.

“General John B.S. Todd, First Delegate, Dakota Territory.” *North Dakota History* 31 (July 1964): 189-94.

Box No. Description

Box 1

CORRESPONDENCE

From Taylor, Franklin to Robinson, Doane 1902, Dec. 10

From Moore, Josephine Todd to Fox, Lawrence K. 1939, Oct. 31

MISCELLANEOUS

J.B.S. Todd Genealogy (1 handwritten and 1 typescript)

Township Map of Lawrence County, SD

PHOTOGRAPH

J.B.S. Todd circa 1850

PRINTED MATERIALS

Newspaper Clippings

“Cousin of Mrs. Lincoln Territorial Statesman” Argus Leader 1939,
Oct. 30

John B. S. Todd Obituary

TYPESCRIPTS

Norman Thomas article on J.S.B. Todd

Final Draft

Variant I

Variant II

Obituary General John B.S. Todd

Personal Reminiscences

“A Sketch” By Josephine Todd Moore