



The Urbana Free Library

210 West Green Street • Urbana, Illinois 61801 • 217-367-4057 • [urbanafreelibrary.org](http://urbanafreelibrary.org)

Timothy Smith  
Manuscript Collection, 1805-1890

Collection 333

## Champaign County Historical Archives

**Compiled by:** Sarah Schwartz, 2019

**Creator/Corporate Name:** Timothy O. Smith

**Inclusive Dates:** 1805-1890, bulk 1836-1868

**Physical Description:** 1 box (0.5 linear ft.)

**Language:** English

### **Provenance:**

The Timothy O. Smith Manuscript collection was donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives by Timothy O. Smith in July 2019.

### **Access:**

These records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

### **Historical Note:**

Timothy O. Smith grew up in Urbana and was a practicing lawyer in Danville, Illinois, for many years until he retired in 2010. He became interested in Joseph Gurney “Uncle Joe” Cannon, a famous Danville resident and lawyer. The manuscripts contained within the collection are the result of many years of his research and writing.

Cannon was a protégé of Abraham Lincoln and served as state’s attorney in the 27<sup>th</sup> Illinois Judicial Circuit, which included Champaign County, from 1861-1868. He lived in Tuscola, Illinois, for many years, and relocated to Danville, Illinois, in 1876. Cannon was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served 43 years (1873-1891, 1893-1913, 1915-1923). He held the post of Speaker of the House from 1903-1911.

### **Scope and Content Note:**

This collection contains six separate manuscripts about Joe Cannon’s family history, early life, and career. They include his family background starting around 1805 in Guilford County, North Carolina, and continuing to Parke County, Indiana, around 1840. Cannon’s career includes time in Parke County, Indiana, law school in Cincinnati, Ohio, and his legal and political career in Champaign and Douglas counties.

### **Subject Terms:**

Cannon, Joseph Gurney, 1836-1926.

Legislators—United States—Biography.

Lawyers—Illinois—Biography

United States—Politics and government—1865-1933.

Champaign County (Ill.)—Politics and government



The Urbana Free Library

210 West Green Street • Urbana, Illinois 61801 • 217-367-4057 • [urbanafreelibrary.org](http://urbanafreelibrary.org)

Timothy Smith  
Manuscript Collection, 1805-1890

Collection 333

**Name Terms:**

Cannon, Joseph Gurney "Uncle Joe"  
Usher, John Palmer  
Lincoln, Abraham  
Busey, Samuel T.

**Container List:**

**Box 1**

- Folder 1: *Joseph G. Cannon, State's Attorney. 27<sup>th</sup> Illinois Judicial Circuit, 1861-1868*
- Folder 2: *Joseph G. Cannon, State's Attorney. 27<sup>th</sup> Illinois Judicial Circuit, 1861-1868*
- Folder 3: *Samuel T. Busey and "Uncle Joe" Cannon's "Perfect Storm": The 1890 Election in the Illinois Fifteenth Congressional District.*
- Folder 4: *The Tuscola Years of Joseph Gurney Cannon and his Family: With attention given to the contributions of men from Parke County, Indiana, in the establishment and development of Tuscola and Douglas County, Illinois.*
- Folder 5: *An Examination of the Estate of Horace F. Cannon and What it Reveals about His Business Dealings, His Wealth and the Inheritances of His Wife Gulielma and His Sons Elisha B. Cannon, Joseph G. Cannon, and William P. Cannon.*
- Folder 6: *Like Father Like Son: How the Prosecution of Horace Franklin Cannon in 1847 for Harboring an African American Taught His Son Joseph (John) Gurney "Uncle Joe" Cannon About Having the Courage of Your Convictions and Fighting for What is Right.*
- Folder 7: *The Slander Case that Convinced Joseph G. Cannon to Become a Lawyer—Revised. A historical fact-finding of the slander case that Cannon said led him to an interest in the law as a career.*
- Folder 8: List of Smith's published and unpublished manuscripts, 2018