

**Robert and Sarah Smith
Papers**

**Blair-Caldwell
African American Research Library
Denver Public Library
2003**

Provenance: The collection was donated to the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, The Denver Public Library by Edna and John Mosley.

Ownership: Literary and copyrights have been assigned to the Denver Public Library.

Call Number: ARL85

Processed By: Tammi E. Haddad

Date: March 2003

Biographical Information

Robert (1799 - ?) and Sarah Smith (1799 - 1889) were born into slavery on the same plantation, owned by a man named Page, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. In 1810, their owner died and they were hired out as house servants for the next twenty years. As chattel property belonging to Page's daughter, she opted to sell the slaves. The husband of Page's daughter took Robert and Sarah Smith to Alexandria and sold each to a different master. Despite being separated, Robert and Sarah continued to visit. They married in 1822.

In 1830, Robert purchased his freedom. In 1834, Sarah and their son, Jack, were freed. Subsequently, the Smith family (Robert, Sarah, and Jack) reunited. In 1835, the family became the first colored family in the city of Piqua, Ohio. Robert opened a barbershop. In 1843, the couple joined the Baptist church and helped charter the Calvary Baptist Church.

Scope and Content

The Robert and Sarah Smith Papers (1834 - 2002) include personal correspondence, emancipation papers, travel documents, a petition to stay in Virginia and obituaries. This

collection includes the emancipation papers of Robert Smith and the note promising of emancipation of Sarah and Jack Smith. The petition filed by the white friends of Robert and Sarah Smith in Virginia enabling the freed family to stay in Virginia is also included in the collection.

Container Listing

Box 1	FF1	Deed of Emancipation for Robert Smith. From Robert Raker[?]	03/12/1834
Box 1	FF2	Note promising emancipation for Robert Smith's family from John Armfield	11/05/1834
Box 1	FF3	Travel document allowing Robert Smith to take his family to the court house. John Armfield (owner of Sarah and Jack Smith), Fairfax County, Virginia	11/01/1834
Box 1	FF4	Petition to stay in Virginia as free blacks	03/30/1835
Box 1	FF5	Envelope showing manumitting papers of Sarah Smith, Jackson Smith, and Adaline Carter	11/1835
		Note for Sally Smith, Jackson and Addeline [sic?]	ca. 1835
		Photographs: Robert and Sarah Smith	n.d.
Box 1	FF6	Travel document issued by Piqua, Ohio citizens entreating safe passage for Robert Smith on his journey back to Virginia	06/27/1841
Box 1	FF7	Correspondence to Robert Smith from C.W. Smith Fort Caswell, North Carolina	10/01/1865
Box 1	FF8	Obituaries for Mrs. Robert Smith	circa 1889
Box 1	FF9	Correspondence to Robert Smith from his sister, Sarah G[?].R. Berry	03/05/1906
Box 1	FF10	Photographs of the collection (44 items)	circa 2002