



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Records of the Robert Mills Papers Project,
[xerographic and photographic copies]

NMAH.AC.0344

Dan Dalrymple

1989

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Records of the Robert Mills Papers Project,[xerographic and photographic copies]
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0344
Date:	circa 1800-1860s, 1984-1989
Creator:	Evelyn, Douglas E. (Director)
Extent:	23.3 Cubic feet (50 boxes)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Douglas Evelyn.

Provenance

The Robert Mills Papers Project was begun in 1984 with the goal of producing a microfilm publication of historical documents by, to, from, and about Mills. This was organized by Robert Alexander, John Bryan, Douglas Evelyn, and Pamela Scott. The majority of the documents are from the National Archives; however a mass mailing to 3,000 other libraries and archives across the country resulted in the inclusion of documents from thirty other repositories as well. The project was supported primarily by grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The final publication was scheduled to be released in late 1989 consisting of approximately 3,500 documents on twelve rolls of microfilm. Typed transcriptions of the documents that are illegible (about 1/3 of those microfilmed), and a complete index, both by subject and name are available.

Alternate Form Available

Microfiche copies of the papers are available in the Smithsonian's American Art Portrait Gallery Library.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Dan Dalrymple, 1989

Preferred Citation

Records of the Robert Mills Papers Project, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Robert Mills (1781 1855) was born in August, 1781, in Charleston, South Carolina. After completing grammar school he took classes under architect James Hoban.

Hoban left in 1792 to supervise construction of the President's House in Washington (which he designed). About 1799 Mills moved to Washington and began work as a draftsman of plans for the Capitol under Hoban. For about a year, Mills presumably lived with Thomas Jefferson, studying architecture from his library.

In 1802 Mills entered his first professional design competition for the design of South Carolina College, but did not win. From 1802 1809, Mills worked (with sporadic interruptions from assorted commissions) with Benjamin Latrobe, who was at the time the acting federal engineer of the Chesapeake and Delaware region. Under Latrobe he worked as a draftsman on the design of the U.S. Capitol and the Baltimore Cathedral.

In 1814 Mills received national recognition when he won the competition for the design of Baltimore's Washington Monument. He supervised its construction until 1820, when he moved back to South Carolina to become the civil architect for the state, designing several courthouses and jails throughout the area.

Mills moved back to Washington in 1829. In 1836 he won the competition for the design of the Treasury and began a long career as an architect for the Federal Government. It was during this time that Mills designed the buildings he is most widely known for: the Post Office and the Washington National Monument. He also supervised construction of the Patent Office and submitted preliminary designs for the Capitol extension and the Smithsonian Institution. He served under seven Presidents, retiring in 1851.

Scope and Contents

This collection is composed entirely of xerographic and photographic reproductions made for the Robert Mills Papers Project. The copies include correspondence, plans, federal legislation regarding proposed government construction projects, construction records, and material regarding people with a relation to Mills or one of his projects.

The material is organized into three series. The first is information relating to Mills' various projects, such as payroll lists; it is organized by state. The second consists of subject files on 163 individuals, all of whom have some relation to Mills. The last series is composed of reference and research materials from the project, including correspondence with various libraries and archives seeking material on Mills, ten reels of microfilm, and 46 diskettes containing typed transcriptions of the illegible documents included in the microfilm publication.

The documents included in this collection relate to the construction of Mills's buildings, but do not mention him specifically. Of all the papers collected for this project, this collection consists of copies of those documents that were not selected for microfilming. They are, therefore, not included in the microfilm publication.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into four series.

Series 1: Projects by state

Series 2: Individuals

Series 3: Reference Materials

Series 4: Camera Ready Copy

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Architects -- 19th century
- Architectural drawing
- Architecture -- United States

Types of Materials:

- Construction Records
- Correspondence -- Copies -- 19th century
- Plans (drawings)

Names:

- Adams, John Quincy, 1767-1848
- Alexander, Robert L.
- Bache, A. D. (Alexander Dallas), 1806-1867
- Bryan, John
- Calhoun, John C. (John Caldwell), 1782-1850
- Clay, Henry
- Clinton, DeWitt
- Corcoran, W. W. (William Wilson), 1798-1888
- Davis, Jefferson
- Hoban, James
- Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826
- Lafayette
- Latrobe, Benjamin (architect)
- Mills, Robert, 1781-1855
- Peale, Rembrandt, 1778-1860
- Pierce, Franklin
- Renwick, James, Sr.
- Scott, Pamela
- Trumbull, John, 1756-1843