

# South Caroliniana Library Report of Acquisitions

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## Autograph Book, 1890-1897, of Robert Smalls

South Caroliniana Library

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**Autograph book**, 1890–1897, according to outside provenance owned by Robert Smalls (1839–1915), contains signatures collected by Smalls while serving as Collector of Customs for the Port of Beaufort. Signees include Presidents Benjamin Harrison and William McKinley, First Lady Caroline Scott Harrison, Secretaries of State James G. Blaine and Richard Olney, Secretaries of the Treasury William Windom and John G. Carlisle, Secretaries of War Redfield Proctor and Daniel S. Lamont, Attorneys General William Henry Harrison Miller and Judson Harmon, Secretaries of the Interior John W. Noble and David R. Francis, Secretaries of the Navy Benjamin F. Tracy and Hilary A. Herbert, Postmasters General John Wannamaker and William L. Wilson, Chief Justice of the United States Melville Fuller, Associate Justices Samuel F. Miller, Stephen J. Field, Joseph P. Bradley, John Marshall Harlan, Horace Gray, Samuel Blatchford, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, and David J. Brewer, and Secretary of Agriculture J. Sterling Morton.

Born enslaved, Robert Smalls commandeered the Confederate transport CSS *Planter* in 1862 and sailed it through Charleston Harbor to the Union blockade freeing himself, his family, seven other enslaved crewmen, and their families. After serving as a Union navy pilot during the Civil War, Smalls became one of South Carolina's most influential Black politicians, representing Beaufort County in the South Carolina House of Representatives (1868–1870) and South Carolina Senate (1870–1875), the Fifth District (1875–1879 and 1882–1883) and the Seventh District (1884–1887) of South Carolina in the United States House of Representatives. He was appointed Collector of Customs for the Port of Beaufort by President Benjamin Harrison, a position he held until 1913 except during Democrat Grover Cleveland's second term. **Acquired for the Library by the University South Caroliniana Society.**