

Collection #  
M 0085  
OMB 0093  
BV 1074–1082, 3470

## DEAN FAMILY PAPERS 1788–CA. 1920

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Processed by

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	14 document cases, 1 oversize box, 11 bound volumes, 1 visual image.
COLLECTION DATES:	1788– ca. 1920
PROVENANCE:	Noble Dean Jr., Dean Brothers Pump Works, 6040 Guion Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, May 1972, August 1973.

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1972.0506, 1973.0807

NOTES: Originally processed by Charles Latham, May 1985

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

This collection concerns four generations of the Dean family, centered first in New York State, then in Indianapolis.

In 1798 John Dean, a Quaker, moved from Westchester to Brothertown, New York, to work for fifty pounds a year on behalf of the Friends in New York City and Elizabeth, New Jersey. His mission was to help and to educate the Indians at Brothertown, remnants of the Pequot, Stonington, Narragansett, Mohican, and Niantic tribes of New England. Removed from New England by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1753, they had purchased land from the Oneida Indians in 1774. John Dean was soon joined by his son Thomas, who succeeded him as agent and served in that capacity for over thirty years. It was the aim of the mission to teach the Indians the ways of the white man: to read and write; to wear shoes; to raise crops and build barns; to run a sawmill; to behave in a moral manner, avoiding liquor. A boarding school was established. The men were involved in a Moral Society, the women in a Moral Society and a spinning school.

As early as 1810, some of the friends of the Indians were talking about their moving west. By 1817 Thomas Dean was urging his charges at Brothertown to move. In that year, with seven Indian companions in a home-made boat, he made a journey to Indiana to see about buying land on the White River. The purchase fell through, however, when the Indians from whom they were buying moved west of the Mississippi. In 1821, arrangements were made to buy land from the Menominee Indians at Green Bay, Wisconsin. The Menominee in their turn sold out to the Americans in 1824 and moved west, again leaving the Brothertown Indians landless. It took a decade, and at least ten trips by Thomas Dean to Green Bay and two to Washington to get the Brothertown clear title to some land. Finally in 1832 a treaty was signed giving them land on the east shore of Lake Winnebago, together with an annuity. This whole story, well documented in the collection, gives a good sampling both of pressures on the Indians and of government policy toward them. Though these particular Indians had learned the white man's ways and language, even to the point of taking English names and surnames, the government clearly wanted them moved west of the Mississippi. Thomas Dean, at any rate, exerted himself vigorously on their behalf until his death in 1843.

In 1830, after the Indians had gone west, Brothertown became known as Deansville, and Thomas Dean was appointed postmaster. Thomas Dean's son John attended Hamilton College and became a lawyer. He became involved with Democratic politics, and served a term in the New York state legislature in 1847–49. In 1850 he moved his legal practice to New York City. He began with an office on Broadway, and then in 1851 moved his home and practice to the Williamsburgh section of Brooklyn.

In 1860, John Dean went to Washington to try to obtain a position in the Treasury department, relying on the influence of his friend, John C. Underwood, with Treasury Secretary Chase. This quest for office took two years, during which

he supported himself by legal work. He had come to sympathize with the Radical Republicans in Congress, regarded President Lincoln's policy on emancipation as weak and timid, and spent a great deal of his time working on behalf of fugitive slaves. In 1862 he obtained a clerkship in the Treasury department at \$2,000 a year. This work did not occupy much of his time, and he kept busy working for fugitive slaves, visiting wounded soldiers in hospitals, getting his son Thomas a furlough so that he could go back to New York to recruit troops, and trying to get two of his other sons positions as engineers in the Navy. He died in October 1863.

John Dean's sons all seem to have had a mechanical bent. They worked at a foundry in Willowvale, New York, where the family for some time established a home. They then set up a works at Rome, New York. Finally, at the urging of young Thomas Dean, they decided in 1871 to move to Indianapolis. Borrowing capital from a relative in Chicago, they established the Dean Brothers Pump Works, which remained in the family for over 100 years. John C. Dean (1845

astronomer and author of *Life of Count Rumford*, *Astronomical Superstitions*, and *Mysteries of Matter*.

Source:

Information in collection.

*Who Was Who*, Chicago: A. N. Marquis Co., 1943 (E 176 .W64), Vol. 1, p. 308.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, spanning the years 1788 to ca. 1920, contains family and business letters, deeds, Indian treaties, and a number of notebooks describing early trips from New York to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Among the more interesting topics covered in the collection are the history of the Brothertown Indians from 1800 to 1840 and the political climate of Washington during the first two years of the Civil War.

The collection begins at approximately the same time as the appointment of John Dean to work with the Indians at Brothertown in 1798. Of particular note are documents pertaining to the work of Thomas Dean as Agent (ca. 1805 to ca. 1840). The purpose of the agency is shown by correspondence from Dean's Quaker sponsors in New York and New Jersey. Its operation is shown both by correspondence and by the minutes and other papers of the Moral Society. Thomas Dean's long effort to find a secure home for his charges, first in Indiana and then in Wisconsin, is documented by journals of each of his trips, including those to Washington; by copies of treaties, government surveys, and reports; and by correspondence. Documents through 1834 have been calendared. Documents after 1834 dealing with the Indians have been copied, and are in two folders.

The papers of the second John Dean (1813–63) contain a considerable amount of his early legal work. After that, there is mainly correspondence which occurs when John Dean is separated from his family: when he is setting up practice in New York; when the family is visiting upstate; when he is in Washington seeking an appointment, and also visiting wounded soldiers and working on behalf of fugitive slaves. Descriptions of scenes and buildings in Washington, written for his children, are of more than passing interest. Also included are several of his rather brief diaries for 1852 and for 1860–63.

The collection also contains family correspondence centered largely on Mary Dean, the elder daughter of the fourth generation, and around Emma, the younger, who married a lawyer and remained in Williamsburgh while the rest of the family moved west. These letters contain mainly family news exchanged between Emma in Brooklyn and the rest of the family in Indianapolis. Trips to Europe by Mary Dean in the summer of 1892 and by Wilfred Dean and Besse Taylor in 1900 are described in detail.

Other materials in the collection include family Bibles, with some genealogical material in the pages between the Old and New Testaments; and Volume II of *Clarkson's Portraiture of Quakerism* (1806) and daybooks and account books

of Thomas Dean, 1807–47; and oversized parchment treaties of 1821 and 1822 involving the Stockbridge and other Indian tribes and lands at Green Bay, Michigan Territory (later Wisconsin).

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## CATALOGING INFORMATION

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1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
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