

JOHN T. DYE

LETTERS, 1857-1864

Collection #
SC 2490

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Processed by
Charles Latham
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USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1857-1864

PROVENANCE: Katherine Breckinridge Prewitt, Mount Sterling, KY, 26 July 1995

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: Speech delivered 9-4-1884 before Independent Republican Club (Ip 815 D995a)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 95.0640

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John T. Dye (1835-1913) was born in Mason County, Kentucky. He attended Bethany College in Virginia, graduating at the age of sixteen. He then studied law with James Speed and at the law school of the University of Louisville, and

was admitted to practice in 1857.

Dye first practiced law in Maysville, Ky. In November 1858 he married Annie Glenn Holton. In the 1860 election he was one of seven people in town who voted for Lincoln. Because of his Unionist sympathies he moved to Indianapolis in 1861. For a while he was an associate editor and editorial writer for the Indianapolis Journal. A much respected lawyer with a philosophical bent, he worked in partnership at different times with William P. Fishback and Addison J. Harris.

Though he did well financially as general counsel for the Big Four Railroad, Dye did not hesitate to take on adventurous causes. He sued to get Negroes admitted to Berea College in Kentucky, and formed part of the prosecutorial team in the notorious Cold Springs murder case. At his death he was involved in a suit to keep Governor Thomas R. Marshall from presenting a new state constitution, which would, among other things, have expanded the governor's power of item veto and established literacy and poll tax requirements for male suffrage.

Dye usually lived outside the city, first on Virginia Avenue and later in Castleton. One of his children was Charity Dye, a well-known teacher at Shortridge High School.

In addition to several legal books, Dye was the author of *Ideals of democracy: conversations in a smoking car* (Indianapolis, 1908).

The recipient of Dye's letters in this collection, R. H. Prewitt, was a classmate of Dye's at Bethany College, and practiced law in Lexington and Louisville, Kentucky.

Sources: *Indiana Biographical Series*, I 66-67

Indiana Scrapbook Collection, II 23-24

Who Was Who in America, Vol. I

Banta, *Indiana authors and their books 1816-1916*

Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in transition 1880-1920*, 110-113

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling two folders, contains letters written between 1857 and 1864 by John T. Dye (Maysville and Indianapolis) to R. H. Prewitt (Lexington and Louisville, Ky.). It is arranged chronologically.

Letters in Folder 1 (1857-1859) are personal, mainly dealing with the author's legal prospects and with joshing about possible romances. In Folder 2 (1860-1864), in two letters, of 12-22-1860 and 5-14-1862, Dye expounds at some length his feelings about slavery and North-South relations. Though he at first shows loyalty to the South, he also feels that South Carolina has been radical and rash, and that slavery will "die by suicide," killed by its own worshippers. The two letters give an insight into the thinking of at least one Border State resident at the outbreak of the Civil War.

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Dye, John T., 1835-1913

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Dye, John T., 1835-1913

Prewitt, R. H. (Richard Hickman), b. 1833

Slavery--United States

Lawyers--Indiana--Indianapolis

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Public opinion

Indiana--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Public opinion

END