

Collection #
M 0383

**RUFUS DOOLEY
PAPERS, 1855–1922 (BULK 1855–1866)**

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Processed by

Charles Latham
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 2 manuscript boxes

COLLECTION
DATES: 1855–1922 (bulk, 1855–1866)

PROVENANCE: Gift of Mrs. Eleanor B. Tofaute, 214 N. Jefferson, Rockville, IN

47872, 1982

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1982.1020

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rufus Dooley was born 26 August 1842. His parents, Silas S. and Sarah A. Dooley, were natives of Ohio, who moved in 1837 to the hamlet of Bethany, in Washington Township, Parke County, Indiana, to farm a tract homesteaded by his uncle. They had at least four sons: Atellus, Rufus, Barton, and Reuben, and several daughters. Silas died about 1874, Sarah in 1894.

During the Civil War, Dooley enlisted in the 21st Indiana Volunteers for two three-year terms. The regiment was organized 24 July 1861. A week later it moved to Baltimore, defending that city until February 1862. In that month the regiment moved to Newport News, and set sail on the ship *Constitution* for Ship Island, Mississippi. In April 1862 the 21st Indiana Volunteers took part in the action against Forts St. Philip and Jackson at the mouth of the Mississippi; it was the first regiment to land when New Orleans was taken in May. In the summer and fall of 1862 the regiment participated in skirmishes near Baton Rouge, St. Charles Court House, and Bayou Teche. In February 1863 the regiment was reorganized as the 1st Indiana Heavy Artillery Regiment. Company H, with which Dooley served, saw action at the siege of Port Hudson in 1863 and at Mobile Bay in 1864. Through 1865 Dooley was stationed at Fort Gaines on an island at the entrance of Mobile Bay.

After finally being demobilized, Dooley returned to Parke County. He moved to Rockville, and entered into a partnership selling hardware and farm implements. He was still in business in 1916. In 1869 he married Mary A. McAndrew; she died within a year. In 1877 he married Susan Rice; she died in 1887 after bearing three children. In 1889 he married Hasseltine Hinkle, who survived him.

Dooley became a well-known citizen of Rockville. He was an elder in the Presbyterian Church, and he and his wife were active in the local historical and literary societies. When a pageant was held in 1875 to raise money for the nation's centennial, Dooley played the part of Lafayette. In the early 1890s when the state legislature passed a law against letting livestock run wild, Dooley and a neighbor protested by taking down all their fences. And in 1902 when a baseball game was played between the Court House Knot Heads and the North Side Bumps, Dooley stood at the park gate to make sure that no one entered without making a contribution. He died 22 August 1927.

Sources: Roll, Charles, *Indiana, 150 Year of American Development*; Chicago, Lewis Publishing Co., 1931. General Collection F526 .R65 1931

Parke County Memorial; Rockville Chautauqua Association, 1911
Parke County Atlases of 1874 and 1906

Portrait and Biographical Record of Montgomery, Parke and Fountain Counties; Chicago, Champman Brothers, 1893 (article on W.C. Dooley a nephew) General Collection F532.M75 C52 1893
Indiana Battle Flags: and a Record of Indiana Organizations in the Mexican, Civil, and Spanish-American Wars; Indianapolis, The Commission, 1929. General and Reference Room Collection CR114.I16 A5 1929

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Though the Rufus Dooley papers are primarily from the Civil War period, they are different from most Civil War records in that they show the correspondence of a whole family rather than just the soldier at war. Dooley wrote to his parents at home, but also to a wide circle of relatives and male and female friends. Consequently the collection gives an idea of what was going on at home as well as at the front. And the letters from the front, when Dooley is there, don't hold back any military details which he knows about.

The collection begins with a small number of letters from the late 1850s between Silas Dooley and various relatives, mainly those in Ohio and some who have gone to farm in Iowa. It is a restless group. The most common themes are farm prices and illness. The water cure undergone by one of these valetudinarians described in a memorable letter.

Starting in 1861 comes Dooley's military experience. He writes dutifully to his mother about once a week. In addition to the descriptions of military action, his letters give some idea of camp life, and especially of the collapse of morale among troops kept in service after the end of the war. There are some letters from Dooley's relations in the service: George Henderson and Henry Cord, serving with the 31st Indiana, and Eugenious R. Dunwoodie, serving with the 72nd Indiana.

In his family, Rufus Dooley comes through as the "steady" brother who saves his money, stays through two long enlistments, and who writes regularly to family, friends and female admirers. In contrast, older brother Atellus marries early and dies in Baton Rouge in 1864; younger brother Bart, a likeable scapegrace enlists in the army for several short hitches, but in between is constantly going on trips to Ohio, Iowa, California, and Mexico. Bart's contest with an army mule (March 1865) would do justice to Mark Twain.

In the letters from home, the constant fret about mail delivery is varied by revivals (the New Life Church), and bitterness toward the Copperheads especially in 1863 and 1864 (see 24 June 1863). Sarah Dooley is the most regular correspondent; Silas writes only to report what he had done with the money sent home by Rufus and his friends.

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| Article by Rufus Dooley “Indiana’s part in General Butler’s expedition to New Orleans” (photocopy from <i>Indiana Historical Commission Bulletin</i> , No. 15, 1922, pp. 99–106 | Box 2, Folder 9 |

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0383).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.