

MANUSCRIPT UNIT
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RYE, THOMAS CLARKE, 1863-1953.
PAPERS, 1875-1953.

Accession number 71-99;
90-348

Processed by JHT
Date completed 5/12/71

Location II-L-3

Microfilm Accession Number 1209

These papers of Thomas Clarke Rye (1863-1953), Attorney General for the Thirteenth Judicial District of Tennessee, 1910-1915; Governor of Tennessee, 1915-1919; Chancellor of Eighth Chancery Division of Tennessee, 1922-1942, span the years 1875-1953. The Thomas Clarke Rye Papers were taken from Governor Rye's official papers in the Archives Unit and were transferred to the Manuscript Unit, May 12, 1969.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 1.26
Approximate number of items: 1,300

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Thomas Clarke Rye Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

The addition to the Thomas Clarke Rye Papers was donated to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. John F. Caldwell, Jr., Nashville, Tennessee.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Thomas Clarke Rye Papers, containing approximately eleven hundred items, cover the years, 1875-1953; most of them, however, fall in the years between 1920 and 1922 when Rye was particularly active in politics of the Democratic Party in Tennessee. Included in the collection are Rye's incoming correspondence; his outgoing correspondence; some miscellaneous correspondence; accounts; and legal documents, including the legal briefs of cases in which Rye was involved as an attorney.

The largest part of the collection, approximately four hundred items, is composed of Rye's incoming correspondence, 1890-1932. During those years Rye corresponded with many prominent figures in Tennessee and national politics, people such as Jonathan W. Bachman, George L. Berry, Ambrose B. Broadbent, Gordon Browning, Joseph W. Byrns, Lee Douglas, Hallum W. Goodloe, Grafton Green, Arthur B. Lamb, Kenneth McKellar, Austin Peay, William F. Poston, and William R. Webb.

Of the items in Rye's incoming correspondence, most are dated 1920-1922. These are concerned primarily with Rye's automobile accident in Memphis, Tennessee, during the election campaign of 1920 and the reaction of Tennessee Democrats to the state and national elections of 1920. The correspondence for 1921 and 1922 deals with Rye's campaign for the chancellorship of the Eighth Chancery Division of Tennessee and includes expressions of congratulations from friends throughout the country.

Much of the remainder of the correspondence has to do with Rye's successful race for district attorney general in 1909 and his law practice which includes both the pre-1909 period and that following his second term as Governor of Tennessee, 1919-1922.

Almost all of Thomas Clarke Rye's outgoing correspondence in this collection was written between 1920 and 1922. The topics of these letters include acknowledgements of sympathy messages received following his automobile accident in Memphis, the campaign and election of 1920, and the successful campaign for chancellor in which Rye responded to numerous congratulatory letters.

Other correspondence included in this collection are the letters (1921-1928) of Arthur B. Lamb, legal associate of Rye, and the letters (1921-1926) of Fisher Neal, law partner of Rye during 1921-1922. These concern legal matters, particularly those in which Rye had an interest prior to his election as chancellor in 1922.

The remainder of the collection consists of three folders of general accounts; five folders of legal documents, including cases in which Rye and/or his associates were involved; four folders of various receipts; and a miscellaneous folder containing a commission from the Grand Lodge of Knights of Pythias, newspaper clippings, and a copy of the joint resolution of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Ninth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee in tribute to the memory of Thomas C. Rye dated September 12, 1953.

Addition -- 1990

The addition to the Thomas Clarke Rye Papers consists of correspondence, birth announcement, photographs of Governor Rye, friends and family; memorabilia; poetry by Governor Rye; obituaries; clippings; and vital statistics of the Arnold family.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas Clarke Rye

- 1863 Born June 2, in Camden, Benton County, Tennessee
- 1880 Left school and began study of law in the office of his uncle, Colonel Thomas C. Morris, in Charlotte, Tennessee
- 1884 June 2, licensed to practice law; commenced practice in Camden, Tennessee; law partner with Joseph E. Jones
- 1887 Editor of Benton County Enterprise at Camden, Tennessee
- 1888 June 17, married Bettie Arnold of Camden, Tennessee
- 1893 Appointed departmental chief in Pensions Bureau, Washington, D. C.
- 1897 Returned to Tennessee; resumed law practice
- 1900 Elected Mayor of Camden, Tennessee
- 1903 Moved to Paris, Tennessee; law partnership with W. W. Farabough
- 1909 Elected Attorney General for Thirteenth Judicial District of Tennessee
- 1914 November 3, elected Governor of Tennessee succeeding Ben W. Hooper
- 1916 Re-elected as Governor of Tennessee
- 1918 Unsuccessful candidate for United States Senate
- 1919 Returned to practice of law at Paris, Tennessee; law partner with Scott P. Fitzhugh
- 1922 Elected Chancellor of Eighth Chancery Division of Tennessee
- 1942 Retired as Chancellor
- 1953 September 12, died at his home; interment at Paris, Tennessee

Sources: Gillum, Prominent Tennesseans, 1796-1938
Federal Writers' Project. Tennessee. Records, 1941
William Henry McRaven Papers
Beeler Scrapbook, 1951-1954. XI.
Obituary
Manuscript Unit, Tennessee State Library and Archives

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RYE, THOMAS CLARKE, 1863-1953

Papers, 1875-1953

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