



**State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives**

**THOMAS CLARKE RYE
PAPERS, 1875-1953**

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:

Rye, Tom C., 1863-1953

Inclusive Dates:

1875-1953

Scope & Content:

Consists of approximately 1,100 items that 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 400 items, contains 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 primarily concern 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.

Most of Thomas Clarke Rye's outgoing correspondence dates 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 includes 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 that involved Rye and/or his associates; 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.

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

Physical Description/Extent:

1.5 linear feet

Accession/Record Group Number:

1971-099, 1990-348

Language:

English

Permanent Location:

ASRS

Repository:

Tennessee State Library and Archives, 1001 Rep. John Lewis Way North,
Nashville, Tennessee, 37219-1115

Administrative/Biographical History

- 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, James L. *Prominent Tennesseans, 1796-1938*. Lewisburg, Tenn.: Who's who publishing co., 1940.
Federal Writers' Project, Tennessee Records, 1941, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
William Henry McRaven Papers, 1851-1960s, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
Scrapbook No. 11, 1951-1954, Roy Hood Beeler Papers, 1904-1954, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
Obituary

Organization/Arrangement of Materials

Correspondence occurs first with the rest of the collection arranged alphabetically by format. The addition (Box 3) follows the main collection and is alphabetical by format.

Conditions of Access and Use

Restrictions on Access:

No restrictions.

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Index Terms

Personal Names:

Bachman, Jonathan Waverly, 1837-1924
Berry, George Leonard, 1882-1948
Browning, Gordon, 1889-1976
Byrns, Joseph Wellington, 1869-1936
Lamb, Arthur Becket, 1880-1952
McKellar, Kenneth Douglas, 1869-1957
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Corporate Names/Organizations/Government Bodies:

Knights of Pythias

Subjects:

Elections -- United States -- History
Governors -- Tennessee
Politicians -- Tennessee -- 20th century
Traffic accidents -- 20th century

Geographic Names:

Benton County (Tenn.)
Camden (Tenn.)
Henry County (Tenn.)
Memphis (Tenn.)
Paris (Tenn.)
Tennessee -- History -- Sources
Tennessee -- Politics and government -- 1865-1950

Document Types:

Accounts
Birth announcements
Clippings (information artifacts)
Correspondence
Legal documents
Obituaries
Photographs
Poems
Receipts (financial records)

Acquisition and Appraisal**Provenance and Acquisition:**

Transferred from Governor Rye's official papers on May 12, 1969. Mrs. John F. (Betty) Caldwell, Jr., donated the addition in 1976.

Processing and Administrative Information**Preferred Citation:**

Thomas Clarke Rye Papers, 1875-1953, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Processing Information:

Completed by John H. Thweatt, May 1971. Finding aid reformatted by
Lori D. Lockhart, March 2021.

Existence and Location of Copies:

Mf. 1209

DETAILED COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

CONTAINER LIST

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RYE, THOMAS CLARKE, 1863-1953

Papers, 1875-1953

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