EDMUND HENRY EITEL
FAMILY PAPERS, 1851–1920 (BULK 1913–1914)

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Processed by
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15 February 1993
Revised by Dorothy A. Nicholson
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Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 document case, 1 folder of photographs, 1 OVA photograph folder. 1 OVB graphics folder

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1851–1920; bulk 1913–1914

PROVENANCE: Jack McDonald, Indianapolis IN, 12 February 1992

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: James Whitcomb Riley and Harriet Eitel Wells Johnson (M 0240)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1992.0229

NOTES:
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edmund H. Eitel ([1887]–1960) was born in Indianapolis. His father was Henry Eitel and his mother was Elva Riley, sister of Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley. Eitel's uncle celebrated him in one poem as "The Knightly Rider of the Knee."

Eitel graduated from Shortridge High School in 1903, and earned a degree in mechanical engineering at Cornell University, where he was editor-in-chief of the Cornell Daily Sun.

Eitel worked for several years at the Union Trust Company in Indianapolis, but took some time off at the time of Riley's death in 1916 to act as his uncle's literary executor. He worked with Laurence Chambers at the Bobbs-Merrill Company to produce the standard biographical edition of Riley's works.

During World War I, Eitel was a lieutenant in the naval air force. He later built one of the first houses in the suburb of Golden Hill.

Sources:
Indiana Biographical Series, Vol. 56, pages 25 and 28

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, filing one manuscript box, contains family correspondence 1856–1900 and correspondence and notes on the genealogy of the Riley family and some of its forebears, notably the Slick, Marine, Wilson, and Harvey families. The name Riley, though it sounds Irish, has Pennsylvania Dutch origins, as Ryland or Reylandt.

The genealogical material, in Folders 1–17, came from a thick loose-leaf notebook, prepared by Eitel about 1913 when he contemplated doing a book about his uncle's ancestry. Material has been kept in its original order, which follows a numerical series set up by Eitel on a chart in Folder 1.

Family letters and papers are in Folders 18–26. They mainly concern Reuben A. Riley, James Whitcomb's father, who was a lawyer with considerable property and a poetical bent. There are also a few letters addressed to the poet, dating from 1870 to 1900.

An early photograph portrait, probably of Reuben Riley, four later photograph portraits, probably of Henry Eitel, and a pen and ink drawing of Andrew Riley are stored in Visual Collections. There is also a photograph of a Marine family reunion in 1913, two photographs of the cemetery where Margaret Slick Riley is buried, and a photograph of "Joshua Swingley & wife who lived on Andrew Riley's farm in 1914.
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