

Collection #
M 0087
OM 0759

**JOHN DOWLING PAPERS,
1829-1878**

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Reprocessed by

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1 December 1999

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	Two Manuscript boxes, One OM folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1829-1878
PROVENANCE:	Purchase, Mrs. C.W. Plummer, New York City, NY, May 1951
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	M 0098: William H. English Collection, 1741-1928
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1951.0515
NOTES:	

SKETCH

Born in Ballinrush Ireland, County Carlon, in 1808, John Dowling came to America with his family in 1818. They settled in Washington, D.C., where John and his six younger siblings were quickly orphaned and left to make their own way in a new land. He was only thirteen at the time of his parents' deaths but proved to be resourceful. He was apprenticed to learn the arts of the printing business. John officially became a citizen of the United States of America at age 24.

Once he reached age, Dowling moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky, where he worked at the *Case*, a local newspaper. In around 1832 to 1835 John moved to Terre Haute, IN to work with his brother, Thomas Dowling, on the *Wabash Courier*. The two brothers had a very close relationship, and when Thomas sold the *Courier* to Judge Jesse Canard in 1841 and part of the terms of the sale were that Thomas could not start another paper for five years, John started the *Terre Haute Express* for him. At the close of the five years stipulated in the sale of the *Courier* John sold his share in the paper back to his brother.

Along with their shared love for journalism, the two brothers also shared a great interest in politics. Having grown up, and worked in the Washington, D.C., area they had a good understanding of the nature of politics. In Indiana the two brothers held a variety of offices. Thomas served in the Indiana House of Representatives as a representative for Vigo County from 1836-1838, 1840-1841, 1843-1846, and 1848-1849. John also served as a representative for Vigo County in the Indiana House of Representatives from 1846-1847. He lost a re-election bid in 1847. John also served in the office of superintendent of public printing in 1852, he was appointed as an aide to Governor Noah Noble and as a clerk in the Indian Bureau of Affairs from 1850-1861. While working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs John primarily dealt with issues concerning settlements with the Miami Indians.

With the advent of the Civil War, John found himself out of political favor and in need of a job. He took employment back in Terre Haute as the editor of the *Journal*. He also worked for a time as an editor of a political newspaper published by Thomas Palmer in Jackson, Mississippi.

After the war John moved back to Washington, D.C., where he was a political correspondent for the *Boston Pilot* in 1873. He died on 20 June 1878. He was married to Catherine West, and they had one son, Fenelon.

Sources:

H.C. Bradsby, *History of Vigo County, Indiana with Biographical Selection* (Chicago: S.B. Nelson and Co. Publishers, 1891); William H. English Collection, Indiana Historical Society; Rebecca A. Shepherd, *A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly Vol. 1, 1816-1899* (Indianapolis: Select Committee on the Centennial History of the General Assembly in cooperation with the Indiana Historical Bureau), 1980-1984; information in collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The majority of this collection consists of the letters of John Dowling. They are concerned both with his official business and also his personal matters and interests.

Also contained in this collection are the papers of Catherine West Dowling, John Dowling's wife, their son Fenelon Dowling, and John's brothers Robert and Thomas Dowling. Genealogical materials collected by the family are in the last folder of the collection.

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