

**Collection #
SC 3023**

**JOHN W. FOSTER
LETTERS, 1872-1875**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 3 manuscript folders

COLLECTION
DATES: 1872-1875

PROVENANCE: Charles Apfelbaum, 2009

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NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Watson Foster was born on March 2, 1836 in Pike County, Indiana. After graduating from Indiana University in 1855 at the age of 19, he attended Harvard Law School and moved to Cincinnati, where he began practicing law at the firm of Conrad Baker. He joined the Union Army as a major in 1861, and he was promoted to colonel in 1864.

Foster returned to Indiana after his military duty and worked as editor of the *Evansville Daily Journal* from 1866 to 1869 and transformed the newspaper into a forum for Republican politics. He was able to develop relationships with Indiana's Republican leaders due to the wide influence and popularity of the newspaper, paving the way for his political career. In 1868, he was named Postmaster of Evansville. In 1872, he was appointed chairman of the Republican State Committee, a position often given to the strongest speaker and political strategist of the party. Foster supported Ulysses S. Grant's re-election campaign in 1872 and in return was appointed Minister to Mexico from 1873 to 1880. He then served as Minister to Russia from 1880 to 1881 and Spain from 1883 to 1885. He then went on to serve as counsel representing foreign diplomatic legations in the United States. On June 29, 1892, President Harrison appointed Foster as Secretary of State.

Foster was the father-in-law and grandfather of Secretaries of State Robert Lansing and John Foster Dulles. He died from a severe asthma attack in Washington, D.C. on November 15, 1917. His body was laid to rest in Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville, Indiana.

Sources:

"Biographies of the Secretaries of State: John Watson Foster." *U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian*. <http://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/foster-john-watson>, accessed 5-27-2014.

"John W. Foster (1892-1893): Secretary of State." *The Miller Center*. <http://millercenter.org/president/bharrison/essays/cabinet/381>, accessed 5-27-2014.

Snepp, Daniel W. *John W. Foster: Evansville's Distinguished Citizen*. [S.l.: s.n.], 1975.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of 3 letters and 3 envelopes from John W. Foster addressed to Col. Geo W. Carr and Dr. D. W. Voyles.

Foster's letter to Col. Carr of Brownstown, Indiana on March 22, 1872 discusses an article published in the *Brownstown Banner* written by a "prominent Republican of Jackson County," allegedly Col. Carr. Foster's letter questions the allegations and hopes that they are false, as he had believed Col. Carr to be sympathetic to the Republican State Central Committee's State Campaign.

The letter to Dr. D. W. Voyles of New Albany, Indiana on August 27, 1872 discusses some bureaucratic affairs regarding enrollment in Dr. Voyles's county. Foster considered preventing bureaucracy and ensuring thorough enrollment the most important work that needed be done. The letter written on December 19, 1875 is regarding Foster's endorsement of an application submitted by Dr. Voyles.

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

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1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
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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, SC 3023).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.