

Collection #  
SC 3663

**SCALES FAMILY  
ARCHIVE, 1863-1865**

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF  
COLLECTION:** 3 folders

**COLLECTION  
DATES:** 1863-1865

**PROVENANCE:** Scott A. Scales, 2023

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

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**ALTERNATE  
FORMATS:**

**RELATED  
HOLDINGS:** William Cockrum Letters, 1863 (SC2855); William Roberts  
Stuckey, 1861-1864 (M0269)

**ACCESSION  
NUMBER:** 2023.0049

**NOTES:**

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

### William M. Cockrum

William Cockrum (1837–1924) was born in Gibson County and worked as a farmer. An anti-slavery Baptist, Cockrum assisted in helping runaway slaves via the Underground Railroad. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Cockrum enlisted in the 42nd Indiana Regiment as a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in Company F. Cockrum rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel and was twice wounded, the last time at Chickamauga on 20 September 1863 at which time he was taken prisoner and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia, where he remained for eight months. After his release, Cockrum, now crippled for life, was assigned to be commandant of a military prison in Nashville, Tennessee. After the war Cockrum returned to Oakland City in Gibson County and resumed farming. Cockrum was also an author. Among his books is *A Pioneer History of Indiana* (1907).

Cockrum was twice married. He and his first wife, Sarah Barrett had seven children. After her death, he married Lucretia Harper in 1856 and they produced nine children.

### John B. T. Dearing

John Dearing (1842-1923) was born in Kentucky and came to Pike County with his parents at a young age. After his father died in 1852, he was bound out to John Selby. At the age of 19, on 9 October 1861, he was mustered into Company I of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Indiana. He fought at Perryville, Chickamauga, and participated in Sherman's March to the Sea and the Carolinas Campaign. Shortly before the end of the war he was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant. He was mustered out on 21 July 1865 at Louisville, Kentucky. That November, he married his sweetheart, Betty Ann Selby [also found as Elizabeth, Betsy, or Betsey]. They had two sons, Laurentus L. Dearing (1867-1942) and William P. Dearing (1874-1958). Along with an H.D. Houchins, Dearing established Oakland City College in Gibson County on land donated by Col. William Cockrum.

#### Sources:

“1LT John Bisreal Thomas Dearing,” [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)

“Father of Pres. Dearing Dies,” *Huntingburgh Independent*, 9 June 1923

“John B.F. Dearing,” [www.civilwardata.com](http://www.civilwardata.com)

“John B.T. Dearing,” *History of Pike and Dubois Counties Indiana* (1885), 419

Paul Brockman, William Cockrum Letters (SC2855) Collection Guide

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Civil War correspondence in this collection was created by two men in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Indiana who would later collaborate on the founding of Oakland City College (now University) and whose families would unite two generations later. The donor's grandmother was John Dearing's granddaughter on her father's side, and William Cockrum's granddaughter on her mother's side.

The two Cockrum letters were written to his parents from Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. They give updates on his wound and the condition of his health.

The 31 letters from Dearing to Betty Ann Selby are dated 20 June 1863 (Murfreesboro, TN) to 23 June 1865 (Louisville, KY). They detail his experiences during the Chickamauga Campaign, the Atlanta campaign, the occupation of that city, and the Carolinas campaign.

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William Cockrum to Parents, 23 Oct. and 7 Nov. 1863

John B. T. Dearing to Betty Ann Selby, 20 June 1863  
to 25 Jul. 1864

John B. T. Dearing to Betty Ann Selby, 26 Jul. 1864  
to 23 June 1865

### CONTAINER

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