

# Archives and Special Collections

University Libraries



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## George R. Dale Papers 1922-1979 MSS 45

Title: George R. Dale papers

Creator: George R. Dale, 1867-1936

Inclusive Dates: 1922-1979

Extent: 0.3 cubic feet

Container(s): 1 box

Language of Materials: Materials entirely in English.

### Preferred Citation:

George R. Dale Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries

### Biographical Note:

George R. Dale, mayor of Muncie from 1930-1935, was also the editor and publisher of the *Post Democrat*, a local newspaper. Mr. Dale gained the national attention in the late 1920s for his battles with the Ku Klux Klan.

George Dale was born in Monticello, February 5, 1867, the son of an attorney. Dale was educated in the Monticello public schools, but quit in his senior year because of chronic headaches. His father died when Dale was sixteen and his mother two years later. Following the deaths of his parents, Dale temporarily worked in a Monticello dry goods store. He then went to work for his uncle, who owned a paper mill and the first electric light plant in Hartford City, Indiana. Dale served one year as the town clerk and then co-established the *Hartford City Times*.

During this period he also met and married his wife, the former Lena Mohler. A quarrel with his business partner led Dale to sell his interest in the *Times* and go to Montpelier, where he established the *Montpelier Call*. Dale launched a fight against the liquor trade in that town and succeeded in driving out the saloon owners. Returning to Hartford City, Dale began publishing the *Journal*, again taking up a crusade against saloons and liquor. After his crusade largely succeeded subscriptions and general interest decreased, so Dale sold his subscription list to the

*Times-Gazette* and moved to Muncie. With Drs. Fred and Rollin Bunch, first his friends and later his political enemies, Dale founded the *Post-Democrat* in 1920.

He soon gained national prominence with the paper, as he fought the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and its influence on local politics. During this long and bitter fight, Dale was physically manhandled several times. In one instance he grabbed the gun of a KKK assailant and shot the man in the abdomen. It was never known whether or not the man died as a result of the wound. Dale's enemies attempted to silence him through criminal libel and contempt of court charges. Dale was convicted on these charges by Judge Clarence Dearth, whom Dale had accused of being a Klan member. At one point Dearth sent Dale to the state prison farm for two days before Dale was pardoned by Governor Ed Jackson. As support for Dale's efforts poured in from across the country, the circulation of the *Post-Democrat* reached 18,000. Dale ran for mayor in 1929 and campaigned with the same fervor in which he ran his newspaper. He was swept into office and promptly dismissed all forty-two police officers and ten firemen of the city.

During his time as mayor, Dale was often at odds with the city council. One of his hardest fights came in 1932, when he and twelve others were indicted for violating Prohibition laws. He was convicted in District Federal Court, and his conviction was upheld by the Circuit Court of Appeals. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case, but Dale was pardoned by President Roosevelt on Christmas Eve, 1933. Defeated in his reelection bid in 1934, Dale retired to run his newspaper until his death in 1936.

#### Scope and Contents:

The collection includes correspondence (1924-1934), including a warning from the Klan in 1923, printed material from Ku Klux Klan Material, newspaper clippings (1925-1979), Notice of Death, March 27, 1936, and printed material.

#### Related Materials:

Materials relating to George R. Dale Papers may be found in the following collections in Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries, Muncie IN:

MSS 1: Richard A. Greene Collection  
N 8: *Muncie Post-Democrat* Newspapers

#### Existence and Location of Copies:

Digital reproductions of the *Muncie Post-Democrat* are available electronically through the Ball State University Libraries' Digital Media Repository at <http://libx.bsu.edu>.

#### Conditions Governing Access:

This collection is open for research.

#### Copyright Notice:

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Ball State University, Muncie, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Archives and Special Collections.

Custodial History:

This collection was received by Archives and Special Collections as a donation on 1980/10.

Accruals: No additions are expected.

Processing Information:

Collection processing completed 1993/03/03 by Nancy Turner.

Finding aid created 1993/03/03 by Nancy Turner.

Finding aid revised 2003/02/05 by Chris Martin.

EAD finding aid completed 2008/01/15 by Maren L. Read.

EAD finding aid revised 2009/08/03 by Maren L. Read.

Arrangement:

The George R. Dale Papers are organized in the following series:

Series I: Correspondence, 1923-1934

Series II: Ku Klux Klan Materials, 1922-1944

Series III: Newspaper Clippings, 1925-1979

Series IV: Printed Materials, 1925-1943

Controlled Access Headings:

Muncie (Ind.)

Stoeckel Archives of Local History

Dale, George R., 1867-1936.

Post Democrat (Muncie, Ind.)

Mayors

Politics and government

Politicians

Ku Klux Klan (1915- )

Correspondence

Documents

Clippings

Newspapers

Collection Inventory:

Series I: Correspondence, 1923-1934

- Box Contents  
1 George R. Dale, Incoming and Outgoing, 1924-1934  
Dale Family, 1925-1947  
Ku Klux Klan Warning, 1923

Series II: Ku Klux Klan Materials, 1922-1944

- Box Contents  
1 C. Lewis Fowler. *The Ku Klux Klan: Its Origin, Meaning, and Scope of Operation*, circa 1922  
Constitution: Independent Klan of America, 1924  
Klan Songbook, undated  
Virginia Gardner, "Klansmen Crusade for Dewey," *New Masses*, 1944/10/31  
Virginia Gardner, "Meet Grand Kleagle Wolfe, Dewey Stalwart," *New Masses*, 1944/11/07  
*The Klan Unmasked*, circa 1922  
Marion Monteval, *The Klan Inside Out*, 1924  
"The Truth about the Women of the Ku Klux Klan," undated  
Miscellany, undated

Series III: Newspaper Clippings, 1925-1979

- Box Contents  
1 Newspaper clippings, 1925-1979  
Notice of Death, 1936/03/27

Series IV: Printed Materials, 1925-1943

- Box Contents  
1 George R. Dale, "Narrative of Events Which Led to the Dale Contempt Proceedings," undated  
Democratic State Committee, "Free Speech," undated  
Rev. William C. Kernan, "Have We Liquidated Our Fascists," 1943  
Hugh Evander Willis, "Punishment for Contempt of Court," *Indiana Law Journal*, 2, 4 (January 1927), 309-314  
Supreme Court Motion to Reinstate Cause for George R. Dale, 1925