

Collection #  
SC 3044

## CLARK FAMILY MATERIALS, 1865–CA. 1898

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript folders, 2 photograph folders, 2 loose tintypes

COLLECTION DATES: 1865–ca. 1898

PROVENANCE: Mary Gertrude Clark Johnson, Cumming, Georgia

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2008.0362

NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

James Mitchell Alley was born March 18, 1845 to Rebecca Jones Alley (1805–95) and David Alley. During the Civil War he fought with the 123<sup>rd</sup> Indiana Infantry, Company K. Records list his home county as Morris, and that he entered service as a private and mustered out as a corporal. After the war he married Nancy Jane Hall (1845–?), the daughter of English immigrants. Prior to her marriage, Hall had been romantically involved with Henry Rohrkassa (also spelled Rohrkasse), principal musician for the 181<sup>st</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The Alleys had four children, including Ella Gertrude Alley, before James Alley's death in 1876.

In 1881, Nancy Hall Alley married Claudius Shafer (1845–?), with whom she had two more children. Shafer had also served in the Civil War, in the 68<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry, Company C. Records list his occupation as “laborer.”

Ella Gertrude Alley was born in Alton, Illinois in 1876, but by the time she was four years old, her parents had moved to Metamora, Indiana. In 1895 she married George Anson Clark, with whom she had five children, including Annie Elizabeth Clark (1896–1960).

John J. Rubottom (1825–96) was a Bermuda-born photographer who operated a studio in Metamora, Indiana in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Harrod's Studio was a photographic studio that operated in the late nineteenth century at 62 ½ Virginia Ave. in Indianapolis, and then later at 110 Virginia Ave.

Sources:

Collection Materials

Indiana and Ohio Civil War Enlistment Records

Indiana Birth, Marriage, and Death Records

*The Indianapolis News*, 25 October 1899

United States Federal Census Records

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This short collection consists of two letters and four photographs related to the Clark family. The letters convey much about the daily lives of Civil War soldiers, and the photographs are typical examples of period portraiture

The first letter, from Henry Rohrkassa to Nancy Hall, describes his emotions at parting after his recent visit home, and recounts his journey to Baltimore, near where his regiment is. He also says that his regiment (seemingly before his return) “suffered greatly on the road to Washington,” with several soldiers having frozen to death.

The second letter, from James Mitchell Alley (“Jimmie”) to his mother Rebecca Jones Alley, details his daily activities as a Union infantryman. He describes guarding communication lines and foraging for food, which is abundant where he is. “We don’t eat much government grub,” he says, seemingly pleased. He also reminisces about a meeting he went to with his parents, and advises his mother to find strength in God, “[for] we will some day meet all our dear friends in a land where death and wars will never again separate us.”

The collection’s photographs include corresponding individual portraits of Nancy Hall Alley Shafer and Claudius Shafer. These are large (half-plate) hand-tinted tintypes that were likely taken around the time of their 1881 marriage. There is also a cabinet card of Ella Gertrude Alley Clark taken by Metamora photographer John J. Rubottom, as well as a full-length photograph of Annie Elizabeth Clark as a child, taken at Harrod’s Studio in Indianapolis.

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### CONTAINER

Letter from Henry Rohrkassa to Nancy Hall, 9  
February 1865

Folder 1 of 2

Letter from James Mitchell Alley to Rebecca Jones  
Alley, 28 March 1865

Folder 2 of 2

Claudius Shafer, ca. 1881

Loose Tintypes  
1 of 2

Nancy Hall Alley Shafer, ca. 1881

Loose Tintypes  
2 of 2

Cabinet Card of Ella Gertrude Alley Clark, taken by J.  
J. Rubottom of Metamora, Indiana, ca. 1890s

Photographs  
Folder 1 of 2

Annie Elizabeth Clark, taken at Harrod's Studio, Indianapolis,  
ca. 1898

Photographs  
Folder 2 of 2

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:  
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
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 3044).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.