

Collection #
P 0871

**GUSTAVUS L. SPILLMANN FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS,
CA. 1880–1889**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 folder of photographs

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1880–1889

PROVENANCE: Gift from Jay Hale Brower of Washington, from the estate of his grandfather, Charles E. Hale, of Logansport, Indiana, 2005

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NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gustavus L. Spillmann was a Swiss immigrant who grew up in Tell City in Perry County, Indiana. He became a teacher and moved to Danville in Hendricks County, before eventually moving to Louisville, Kentucky, where he was a professor of German at the University of Louisville. He and his wife, Lottie, had two daughters, Stella and Ora.

Gustavus L. Spillmann was born on 6 November 1855 in Zurich, Switzerland, to Johann (1823–1899) and Dorothea (1825–1894) Spillmann. Dorothea's maiden name is spelled on different documents as Walder and Wiedler, and the spelling of Spillmann was eventually changed to Spillman. The family immigrated from the port of Antwerp, Belgium, on the ship *Julia Howard*, arriving in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 27 May 1856. Gustavus's sister, Mary, was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on 27 September 1857. By 1860 the family had settled in Tell City, where Gustavus's brother, Albert, was born on 17 January 1862. Johann began using the name John and worked as a cooper and carpenter. John served as a musician in the Civil War with the Union troops of the Third and Fifth Kentucky Infantry regiments.

At the time of the 1870 census, 14-year-old Gustavus, sometimes known as Gustave, was working in a chair factory in Tell City. By 1880, he still lived with his parents in Tell City but had become a teacher. He taught for two years at a high school in Rockport in nearby Spencer County. In November 1882 he married Swedish immigrant, Lottie Peterson (1858–1945). They had two daughters, Stella and Ora.

In 1897 Gustavus earned his bachelor's degree from Indiana University, and went on to earn a master's degree there, having studied Gothic and Greek, Old Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, and Middle and Old High German languages. He also studied at the University of Chicago for some summer terms.

At the time of the 1900 census, the family lived in Danville, Hendricks County, where Gustavus taught at Central Normal College. He then taught for a few years at East Florida Seminary in Gainesville. The family appears twice in the 1910 census, in Florida and in Louisville, Kentucky. This must have been a transition period for the family. Gustavus began teaching German at the University of Louisville in 1907 and retired from there in 1931. He died on 21 December 1936 in Louisville.

Stella Cornelia Spillmann was born 27 May 1884 in Hendricks County. At the time of the 1910 census, when she and her family lived in Florida, she taught at a college. She died in Louisville, Kentucky on 4 April 1913; her death certificate lists her occupation as school teacher.

Ora Spillman was born on 28 or 29 June 1886 in Hendricks County. She graduated from high school in Danville in 1904. When the family lived in Florida in 1910, she was a public school teacher. At the time of the 1930 census, she was living in Washington, DC, and working as a clerk for the U.S. government. In 1940 she was still in DC, working for the Veterans Administration. No occupation was listed for her in the 1950 census. It appears that Ora continued to live in DC until her death on 15 May 1974. Frances Lottie Junod (1896–1962), from Angola, Steuben County, Indiana, lived with Ora Spillman on New Hampshire Avenue in Washington, DC, for decades, as documented in the census records of 1930, 1940, and 1950. Frances had been a teacher in Steuben County but moved to DC to help with the war effort during World War I. She continued to work for the U.S. government while living

with Ora. In the 1940 census she is listed as Ora's "partner"; other years she is listed as "lodger" with Ora as the head of household.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com (Accessed 5 December 2023):

- Find a Grave
- Indiana, U.S., Death Certificates, 1899–2017
- Indiana, U.S., Marriages, 1810–2001
- Indiana, U.S, WPA Birth Index, 1880–1920
- Kentucky, U.S., Death Records, 1852–1965
- New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Passenger Lists, 1813–1963
- U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995
- U.S., Civil War Pension Index...1861–1934
- U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935–2014
- U.S., Union Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861–1865
- United States Federal Census, 1860–1950

"Commencement at Danville." In *The Indianapolis News*, 13 May 1904, p. 18.

"Miss Columbia." In the *Angola Herald* (Angola, Indiana), 10 January 1919, p. 5.

"School Opens Sept. 10...Full List of Teachers Now Complete...." In *Steuben Republican* (Angola, Indiana), 22 August 1917, p. 1.

University of Louisville, Archives and Special Collections. Gustavus L. Spillman's faculty file, copy received via personal communication, 4 December 2023.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of three carte-de-visite photographic portraits. One is of Gustavus L. Spillmann as a young man in Tell City, Indiana, and the other two are of his two daughters, Stella and Ora, as young children in Danville, Indiana.

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CONTAINER

Portrait of G. L. Spillmann [Gustavus Spillmann] as a young man, when he lived in Tell City [ca. 1880].

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Portrait of Stella Spillmann as a child, standing, wearing a head covering. (Photo by E.H. [Edwin Harper] Wilkinson of Danville, Ind., [ca. 1889]).

Folder 1 of 1

Portrait of Ora Spillman as a young child, seated, holding flowers. (Photo by E.H. [Edwin Harper] Wilkinson of Danville, Ind., [ca. 1889]).

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