

Collection #  
SC 3622

**JOHN DOWNS  
LETTERS, 1864-1865; 1874; 1888**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Contents	3

Processed by

Paul Brockman  
June, 2020

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department  
William Henry Smith Memorial Library  
Indiana Historical Society  
450 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 1 manuscript folder; 1 photograph folder; 1 Bible

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1864-1865; 1874; 1888

**PROVENANCE:** Estate of Blair Walter Sears, Helen, Georgia, February, 2020

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

**COPYRIGHT:**

**REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:** Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 2020.0035

**NOTES:**

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

John B. Downs (1829-1865) was born in Kentucky. He later moved Nettle Creek, Randolph County, Indiana, where he married Mary Jane Shoemaker in October, 1853. They had two children. Downs was a farmer when he enlisted in Company I of the 16<sup>th</sup> Indiana Regiment in November, 1864. In June, 1865, he transferred to Company G of the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana Cavalry. On 15 August 1865, he died from disease in Mobile, Alabama.

### Sources:

*Ancestry, Library Edition*, accessed 18 June 2020  
Information in Collection

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of the collection consists of ten letters written by John Downs to his wife, Mary, while serving with Union Army in Indianapolis, Louisiana, and Alabama, November, 1864-August, 1865. He writes of preparations to leave Indianapolis to New Orleans and sending her \$400.00 by way of a friend to help run the farm. He later tells of having chills and a fever but is feeling better and does not want to become ill while in the army. He also wants her to have a photograph taken of her and children. He also writes about the war ending and the hopes of being sent home. The final letter was from a hospital in Mobile, Alabama, on 7 August 1865, where he writes that he is receiving good care and looks forward to coming home to see her and the children, and he is sending her a Bible as a present.

Other items include a tintype photograph of Downs in his cavalry uniform and some unrelated letters and writings from 1874 and 1888.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

Letters and other writings, 1864-1888

Bible sent by John Downs to Wife, August, 1865

Tintype of John Downs, ca. June, 1865

### CONTAINER

Folder 1 of 1

General Collection:  
BS185 1865 .N4

Photographs:  
Folder 1 of 1