

Collection #  
M 0418  
F 1011–1015

## JOHN M. KILLIAN COLLECTION, 1900–1906

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Processed by

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1991

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December 2007

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Indiana Historical Society  
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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	Manuscript Materials: 2 document cases, 5 reels of microfilm Visual Materials: 1 box of photographs, 8 boxes of glass plate negatives, 4 OVA photograph folders, 4 copy negatives
COLLECTION DATES:	1900–1906
PROVENANCE:	Bert R. Fenn, Tell City, Indiana, 1984; John L. Haines, Pompano Beach, Florida, 1984; Bert R. Fenn, Tell City, Indiana 1991

RESTRICTIONS: Glass plates may be viewed only with assistance of a Library staff member.

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1984.0703, 1984.0704, 1991.0277

NOTES: Visual materials formerly in P0135 have been placed in this collection.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John M. Killian, was born on 20 May 20 1861 in Spencer County, Indiana. He was one of six children of James Killian (31 December 1834–15 September 1899) and spent his childhood near Little Pigeon Church in Spencer County. At the age of seventeen, he apprenticed himself to the tinner's trade in Grandview, Indiana. Sometime later, he merchandised hardware in Stendal until 1891, when he moved to Bradley Station and became a farmer. In 1899 he moved to Rockport, bought a farm, and married Mary E. Bauermeister on 26 December of that year. The couple did not have children.

Through his diaries ranging from the years 1900–1904, we know that Killian was an industrious and intelligent man. Killian bought his first Kodak camera in September, 1901 and fell in love with photography. By October, 1901, Killian had built his own darkroom and was spending increasing amounts of time with his new interest. In August 1902 he became a professional photographer after he bought a Pony Premo No. 5 for \$45 and began making and printing photographs for money; on 10 September 1902 he sold a photograph to the *Indianapolis News*. Little else is known about Killian. Mrs. Killian survived her husband by several years after his death on 7 April 1931. In the years following his death, she sold most of his negatives and photographs to collectors.

The collection was acquired through three different donations from two donors. Donor Bert R. Fenn obtained the original prints, copy prints and negatives, and original glass negatives with the G numbering system from a Rockport antique dealer who had acquired them from Killian's widow. Nine of the copy prints were made by a Tell City photographer and are among those donated by Fenn. Bert Fenn sent along notes describing four of Killian's photographs and a newspaper clipping from the *Indianapolis News* depicting Killian's photograph of the *Harry Brown* stranded on a sandbar in the Ohio River at Rockport.

Donor John Haines also contributed to the collection. Haines acquired his part of the collection through his grandfather, who bought the Killian's house after the death of Mrs. Killian. The negatives had been left in the house at the time of its sale. This set of negatives are numbered 1–80. It is not known whether this numbering system is Killian's or was assigned by IHS at the time of acquisition. Mr. Haines also donated Killian's personal diaries from 1900 through 1904.

Sources:

Materials in collection

*Rockport Journal*, 10 April 1931.

*Indiana Historical Society Newsletter*, No. 70 (October, 1984).

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The John M. Killian collection is comprised of five diaries, 102 glass-plate negatives, thirty-two copy prints made from the glass-plate negatives, four modern copy negatives, four oversize original photographs, one photographic postcard, a 1902 newspaper clipping with a Killian photograph that appeared in the *Indianapolis News*, and some notes furnished by donor Bert R. Fenn.

Series 1 contains the diaries. These record the daily weather, Killian's daily concerns, and business activities, as well as political, national, and local events of interest in Rockport. Here also are donor Bert Fenn's notes and a newspaper clipping from the *Indianapolis News* from September 9, 1902 about the Steamer *Harry Brown* being stranded on a sandbar.

Series 2 are the glass plate negatives. There are two different groups of glass plates. Listed first are the glass plates numbered 1–80. These negatives show activities on the Ohio River, town life at Rockport, portraits of citizens, houses, and monuments in Cincinnati, Ohio. Following these are the glass plate negatives numbered G-1 to G-20 depicting commercial activity on the Ohio River at Rockport's Upper and Lower Landings. Three of the negatives show the U. S. *Monitor Arkansas* at Evansville, Indiana on 16 April 1903; the other shows Rockport's Main Street ca. 1905. It is thought that this numbering system was Killian's numbering system, although no written information exists that indicates why the negatives are numbered in this manner.

Series 3 contains the photographs. These are arranged to reflect the same order of the glass plates. They are the modern copy prints made from the glass plate negatives, four oversize original prints, one photographic postcard, and 4 modern copy negatives. When possible the photographs identify the numbered glass plate it was made from. Some of the photographs can also be linked to entries in the diaries and these events are written on the verso of those photographs and are noted in the Contents section in the photographs series.

Note: Quotations in the descriptions indicate that text concerning some negatives was from the original envelopes or was provided by donor Bert Fenn. Killian used the negative formats (in inches): 6.5 x 8.5, 5 x 8, 5 x 7, 4.25 x 6.5, and 3.25 x 4.25. These are noted in square brackets [ ]. Positive images found on the 3.25 x 4 plates are likely unmounted lantern slides.

## SERIES CONTENTS

### Series 1: Diaries and Notes, 1900–1904

#### CONTENTS

Diary, 1900

Diary, 1901

Diary, 1902

Diary, 1903

#### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Diary, 1904	Box 2, Folder 1
Microfilmed diaries, 1900–1904	Microfilm: F1011–F1015
Notes and newspaper clipping from donor Bert R. Fenn	Box 2, Folder 2

**Series 2: Numbered Glass Plate Negatives, 1901–1906, n.d.**

CONTENTS (negative sizes in inches)	CONTAINER
“ <i>Sprague</i> , tied up for repairs ½ mile below Rockport July 3 1905. Note several men in the wheel and one man on fan tail.” “The <i>Sprague</i> was the largest towboat ever built. Her paddlewheel was 40 ft. diameter, 40 ft. wide” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 1
Steamer <i>Harry Brown</i> [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 2
“The Lincoln School in Indiana / Chrisney, Ind. Puplic [sic] School / Reproduced from Mr. Grigsby’s Description,” drawing by Bessie Davis; (1 of 3), [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 3
“The Lincoln School in Indiana / Chrisney, Ind. Puplic [sic] School / Reproduced from Mr. Grigsby’s Description, drawing by Bessie Davis” (2 of 3) [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 4
“The Lincoln School in Indiana / Chrisney, Ind. Puplic [sic] School / Reproduced from Mr. Grigsby’s Description, drawing by Bessie Davis” (3 of 3) [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 5
Steamer <i>Joseph B. Williams</i> [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 6
Bluff Scene [5 x 8]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 7
“Probably Main Street, Rockport, Indiana” [5 x 8]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 8
“Upper Landing, Rockport, Indiana and R.R. Depot / Looks Like High Water” [5 x 8]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 9
“Main Street, Rockport, Indiana” [5 x 8]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 10

“Decoration Services, May 30, 1906, sign ‘French’s New Sensation Tonight’ is advertising the Showboat <i>New Sensation</i> ” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 11
“Decoration Services, May 30, 1906” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 12
“Lincoln Park” [written on paper, cornfield with man beside road, paper adhered to negative] [5 x 8]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 13
View of trees; [paper adhered to negative] [5 x 8]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 14
R.R. depot, upper landing, Rockport, Indiana [paper adhered to negative] [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 15
Corn field [4.25 x 6.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 16
Threshing Scene [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 17
Portrait—Woman and Child, “_____ & Mallie” [from paper stuck on negative] [4.25 x 6.5]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 18
Man and woman, and female child standing in doorway of St. Stephani [?] Schoolhouse [built] 1881 [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 19
“On the Rocks / Rockport, Ind.” [group portrait] [5 x 7]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 20
“Rockport, Ind.” [written on paper “Lady Washington,” [one-time name of the bluff at Rockport, according to Bert Fenn] copy negative? [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 21
Portrait, unidentified man [4.25 x 6.5]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 22
“Fountain at Cincinnati, Ohio” [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 23
“View of the ‘Upper Landing’ at Rockport, Indiana from the bluff, <i>Harry Brown</i> taking on provisions after getting free from sandbar Oct. 21, 1902.” [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 24
Portrait, unidentified young boy [copy negative, same image as negative number 35] [4.25 x 6.5]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 25
“Henry W. Brand baby, Carlton Hargis” [4.25 x 6.5]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 26
“Up the hill / Rockport Ind.” “Road to “Lower	5x7 Glass Plates:

Landing” and ferry landing” [4.25 x 6.5]	Box 1, Plate 27
“Fountain Square at Cincinnati, Ohio” [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 28
“James A. Garfield Monument, Cincinnati, Ohio. The sculpture originally stood in the middle of Vine Street, but by the early 1900's had become an obstacle for traffic and was moved into Piatt Park” [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 29
“William Henry Harrison Monument, Piatt Park, Cincinnati, Ohio” [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 30
“Methodist Church, Rockport, Indiana” [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 31
“Looking upstream at end of bluff, Rockport, Indiana. The warehouse served the Upper Landing” [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 32
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Portrait, unidentified woman [See also negative number 33] [4.25 x 6.5]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 34
Portrait, unidentified young boy [copy negative, same as negative number 25] [4.25 x 6.5]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 35
Farm scene, landscape with house and fields [5 x 7]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 36
“Lieb & Artman Derrick / Boat / Rockport Ind” “Upper Landing,” Lieb and Ortman sawmill, Steamer <i>Sabrina</i> —” [4.25 x 6.5]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 37
Man performing stunt on ladder, Main Street, Rockport, Indiana(?) [3.25 x 3.375]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 38
Bluff scene from Ohio River [ positive image] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 39
Lula Toskey [J. T. Hodges photographer, Rockport, Indiana. “205” written in margin] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 40
“Billy Peterdick” [copy negative, 4 x 5]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 41
Portrait, unidentified elderly man [4 x 5]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 42
“Ice scene, Ohio River, February 16, 1902” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 43
“Ice scene under bluff, February 16, 1902”	4x5 Glass Plates:

[positive image, 3.25 x 4]	Box 1, Plate 44
“Lawyer W.C. Mason's residence” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 45
“Little Pigeon Baptist Church” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 46
“Back yard. First negative I ever exposed.” [Summertime scene] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 47
“Our old home. Bradleys. No. 1” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 48
“Elm Street from our house down. Sleet of January 29, 1902” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 49
“Clara Bauermeister on bluff at Rockport, Indiana” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 50
“Our poultry house on farm at Bradley” [note box next to the house labeled “J. M. Killian / Gentryville” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate 51
“Main Street, Rockport, Indiana. Winter, 1901” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 52
“Possibly laying of traction line down Main Street, Rockport, Indiana” [positive image, see negative number 71] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 53
“3rd Street, Rockport, Indiana. Sleet scene” [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 54
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“Uniformed marchers in parade” [See also negative number 62] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 56
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[Seated woman holding book <i>Curiosities of the U.S. Patent Office</i> by William Chandler Raymond] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 58
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[Elevated view, Rockport, Indiana?] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 60

Portrait, unidentified man in city marshall uniform [positive image] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 61
“Horses pulling parade float” [See also negative number 56] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 62
Portrait, two unidentified children [positive image, copy, broken plate] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 63
Unidentified man standing in wheat field [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 64
Portrait, unidentified baby [copy, positive image] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate 65
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Steamboat and row boat on river [upper left corner of negative is missing] [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 67
Group of men standing outside store [4 x 5]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 68
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“Steamer <i>Tell City</i> at Upper Landing, Rockport, Indiana” [positive image] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 70
“First car on traction” “Years ago the tractionline from Grandview to Evansville went down the middle of Main St. in Rockport” [number 119, positive image] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 71
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Children seated at dinner table [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 74
Portrait, City Marshall [positive image, broken and stuck to Kodak Kloro Paper envelope labeled “Blanche E. Read / Hardinsburg / Ky” same man as negative 61] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 75
Street scene with rails [positive image, plate stuck to negative number 77] [3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 76
Nancy Hanks Lincoln gravestone [positive image,	4x5 Glass Plates:



plate stuck to negative number 76] [3.25 x 4]	Box 3, Plate 77
Portrait, unidentified child [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 78
Water Tank, Rockport waterworks [3.25 x 4.25]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 79
Portrait, city marshall [positive image, 3.25 x 4]	4x5 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate 80
“ <i>Harry Brown</i> with empty coal barges at Rockport, Indiana, shows construction of crude coal barges” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-1
“ <i>Harry Brown</i> with empty coal barges, grounded at Rockport, Indiana, shows construction of crude coal barges” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-2
“ <i>Sprague</i> upbound with empties at Rockport, Indiana” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-3
“ <i>Sprague</i> upbound with empties at Rockport, Indiana—a few minutes after” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-4
“Engine room of <i>Sprague</i> ” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-5
<i>Sprague</i> with coal barges tied up at Rockport, Indiana [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-6
“Str. <i>Joe B. Williams</i> and her large tow” “probably taken at upper landing, Rockport, Indiana” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-7
“ <i>U.S. Monitor Arkansas</i> at Evansville, Ind. April 16, 1903” [see diary] [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate [G-8]
“ <i>U.S. Monitor Arkansas</i> at Evansville, Ind. April 16, 1903” [see diary] [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate [G-9]
“ <i>U.S. Monitor Arkansas</i> at Evansville, Ind. April 16, 1903” [see diary] [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate [G-10]
“Lower landing at Rockport, Indiana showing ferries” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-11
“Bluff scene, Rockport, Indiana, riverside” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-12

“Str. <i>Louisiana</i> at lower landing, Rockport, Indiana” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-13
“Steamer <i>J.S.</i> at lower landing, Rockport, Indiana” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-14
“Ice scene, Rockport, Indiana, Jan. 30, 1904” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-15
“Ice scene, Rockport, Indiana, Jan. 30, 1904” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-16
“Upper landing, Rockport, Indiana, Str. <i>Sabrina</i> , Liebe & Ortman Sawmill loading” [6.5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-17
“ <i>Nellie</i> and <i>Laura</i> in ice at lower landing, Rockport, Indiana” [5 x 8.5]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-18
“Bluff scene, Rockport, Indiana, with boat” [4.5 x 6]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-19
“Steamer <i>Louisiana</i> at lower landing, Rockport, Indiana” [copy of neg. G-13] [4.5 x 6]	5x7 Glass Plates: Box 2, Plate G-20
“Main Street, Rockport, Indiana, ca. 1905” [5 x 8]	7x9 Glass Plates: Box 3, Plate G-21

### **Series 3: Photographs and Copy Negatives, 1902–1905, n.d.**

#### CONTENTS

Steamer *Sprague*, 3 July 1905 at Rockport, Indiana  
[print from neg. 1]

R.R. depot, upper landing, Rockport, Indiana  
[print from neg. 15]

“Lieb & Artmans Derrick Boat Rockport, Ind.”  
Photograph postcard from glass plate 37

“Lieb & Artmans Derrick Boat / Rockport Ind”  
[Upper Landing, Lieb and Ortman sawmill, Steamer  
*Sabrina*—“Bert Fenn,” print from neg. 37]

Copy photographs from negatives 11, 15, 24, and 37

Copy photographs from negatives G1–G21

Lower landing at Rockport, Indiana showing ferries  
[print from neg. G-11]

Copy photographs documenting events from 1902  
diary entries for March 7, April 22, August 20

#### CONTAINER

OVA Photographs:  
Folder 1

OVA Photographs:  
Folder 2

Photographs: Folder 1

OVA Photographs:  
Folder 3

Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 3

OVA Photographs:  
Folder 4

Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 4

Copy photographs documenting events from June 22, 1903

Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 5

Copy photographs of steamboats

Photographs:  
Box 1, Folder 6

4 Copy negatives

4x5 Polyester negatives:  
G-1  
G-2  
G-5  
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## 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, M0418).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.