

Collection #
SC 3513
OM 0710

**KIMBERLIN FAMILY
COLLECTION, 1844–1958**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 4 manuscript folders, 2 folder photographs, 2 oversize manuscripts folders, 6 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1844–1958

PROVENANCE: Donated by David R. Steup

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Jerry O. Potter, *The Sultana Tragedy: America's Greatest Maritime Disaster*, E595.S84 P68 1992;

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2017.0311

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL/ HISTORICAL SKETCH

James Harvey Kimberlin was born on 8 July 1844 near Allisonville in Marion County, Indiana. During the American Civil War, he enlisted with Company C of the 124th Indiana Infantry Regiment on 28 November 1863 as a private. He was later promoted to sergeant.

On 30 November 1864, he was captured by Confederate forces at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, and he was imprisoned at the Andersonville prison camp located in Georgia. James was released on parole on 7 April 1865 to return home. While returning home, he survived the explosion and sinking of the *Sultana*.

Kimberlin was finally discharged from the army on 16 May 1865, and he married Lucy Maria Church on 9 April 1868. They both moved to McCordsville, Indiana, in May 1874 where he worked as a notary public. James was a member of multiple groups and associations during his life, including the Masonic Lodge, the Grand Army of the Republic (Union veteran fraternal organization), and the Sultana Survivors Association. He died on 28 May 1924 and was buried in McCordsville Cemetery in McCordsville, Indiana.

William G. Kimberlin was born on 13 January 1881 to James H. Kimberlin and Lucy Maria Kimberlin. He married Lydia Lunsford on 26 August 1909 and lived with her in McCordsville, Indiana. He started working as a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service in 1921. William was also a member of the Grand Lodge Knights of Pythias, an international charity fraternity. He died on 26 January 1966 and was buried in Gravel Lawn Cemetery in Madison County, Indiana.

The explosion of the *Sultana* was the greatest maritime disaster in United States history. The *Sultana* was a Mississippi river steamboat that was charged with transporting released Union prisoners and civilians back north from Vicksburg, Mississippi. However, rather than carrying at its maximum capacity of 376 people including passengers and crew, the steamboat ended up carrying 2300 individuals. After traveling up towards Memphis, Tennessee, the strain of the excess passengers and a flooded Mississippi river caused one of the boilers to explode on 27 April 1865. The explosion caused the steamboat to catch fire and sink, leading to the deaths of an estimated 1800 people.

Sources:

Ancestry.com

Materials in the collection

Eschner, Kat. "This Civil War Boat Explosion Killed More People than the 'Titanic'" last modified April 27, 2017. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonianmag/civil-war-boat-explosion-killed-more-people-titanic-180963008/>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains materials relating to the Kimberlin family.

Folder 1 contains genealogical materials collected on the Kimberlin family that cover the years 1778 through 1958. These materials consist of marriage, birth, and death record album pages, letters between family members, and typed and handwritten research documents.

Folder 2 contains materials relating to James H. Kimberlin and his service during the American Civil War such as pension records and his discharge papers.

Folder 3 contains James H. Kimberlin's account of the *Sultana* steamboat maritime disaster written fifty-eight years after the event.

Folder 4 contains materials relating to William G. Kimberlin including letters regarding his appointment as a mail carrier and a certificate for the Grand Lodge Knights of Pythias in Indiana.

Also found within the collection are a photograph of James Kimberlin with his son William, photographic postcard of James with his grandson Forest Kimberlin (son of William), and two oversize manuscripts including James' notary public appointment certificates and William's life insurance policy certificate.

The collection contains a variety of artifacts belonging to both James H. Kimberlin and William G. Kimberlin. There are two Grand Army of the Republic ribbons and a Masonic pin belonging to James. There is a round tin snuffbox that belonged to George W. Church before being passed down to his daughter, Lucy Kimberlin. There is a rectangular tin containing locks of William G. Kimberlin and his wife Lydia's hair. There is a cloth banner featuring the song "Battle at the Polls" written by T.S. Williamson, with music composed by H.G. Neely. The banner also features pictures of Indiana Governor Winfield T. Durbin, President William McKinley, and Vice President Theodore Roosevelt.

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Kimberlin family genealogical materials, 1844–1958

James H. Kimberlin Civil War materials, 1865–1920

James H. Kimberlin *Sultana* account, 1923

William G. Kimberlin materials, 1909–1921

James H. Kimberlin notary public appointments,
1890–1910

William G. Kimberlin life insurance certificate, 1904

Portrait, James H. Kimberlin and William G.
Kimberlin, ca. 1890s

Portrait, James H. Kimberlin and Forest Kimberlin,
ca. 1910s

Grand Army of the Republic delegate ribbon

Grand Army of the Republic memorial ribbon

Masonic pin

George W. Church snuffbox

William and Lyda Kimberlin hair tin

"Battle at the Polls" song lyric banner, ca. 1901

CONTAINER

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