

Collection #
M 1414
BV 5376–5377

**NELLIE BLODAU MCELHANEY
COLLECTION, 1897–1942**

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Processed by

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July 2018

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half size manuscript box, 2 bound volumes, 1 PAA album, 1 photographs folder, 2 upright graphics folders, 1 OVC graphics folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1897–1942

PROVENANCE: Trail’s End Books, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1995.0284

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nellie Rolanna Blodau McElhaney (2 October 1881–25 January 1958) was born to Robert P. Blodau and Ella O'Malley Blodau in Indianapolis, Indiana. Robert Blodau was a druggist and ran a shop out of 402–404 Indiana Avenue. The family lived up the street at 419 Senate Avenue, before moving up to 2027 Illinois St.

Nellie graduated from Shortridge High School in 1902, and then attended Herron Art School in 1908 and the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1909. Nellie produced many sketches in pencil and ink, as well as some photography. Her subjects seemed to be mostly of naturalist subjects like grasses and flowers.

In her later years, it appears as though Nellie became interested in New Age practices, such as astrology, numerology, and tarot. Nellie married Clifford McElhaney (b. 1873) on 6 June 1911 in Indianapolis, but it is unclear how long the union lasted. The couple had one child, Estherella (20 March 1912–5 May 1993), who became a biologist and was employed by Riley Hospital in Indianapolis.

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

[Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection mostly contains items related to Nellie Blodau McElhaney's study and practice of studio art as a high school and college student in Indianapolis and Cincinnati at the turn of the 20th century. This includes a hand painted autograph book, a book of photograms, a sketchbook of grasses and sedges, and a lesson book which includes both the instructions for daily art lessons and then the application of the lesson. A small photo album also documents Nellie and her fellow students at both Herron Art School and the Art Academy of Cincinnati, as well as assorted portraits and snapshots of Nellie and her daughter Estherella.

This collection also contains a volume of Nellie's notes, drawings, and calculations for her exploration of astrology and numerology.

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CONTENTS

Photo Album, ca. 1882–1939

Art lesson book, 1897–1900

Loose painting of a woman in Art Nouveau style on tissue paper removed from art lesson book [Use digital file]

Loose sketches and prints, ca. 1900s

Coupon Book, National Studio Indianapolis Photography Studio, ca. 1900s

Book of quotations and illustrations from *The Canterbury Tales* selected and illustrated by Nellie Blodau, 1900

Sketchbook, Grasses and Sedges, 1901

Autograph Book, Shortridge High School Class of 1902

“Wee Bit of Nature” book of photograms, 1902

“A Hand Clasp” by Wilhelmina Seegmiller, 1909

Indianapolis Sketching Club Programs, 1910–1911; 1915–1916

Correspondence, Munro & Company Commercial Artists, 1915

Notes and Charts, Astrology and Numerology, 1942

CONTAINER

PAA Album Storage

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OVC Graphics,
Folder 1 of 1

Graphics,
Folder 1 of 2

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Graphics,
Folder 2 of 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs,
Folder 1 of 1

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

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