

Collection #
P 0042

**RICHARD C. VONNEGUT, SR.
VISUAL COLLECTION, 1855–1953**

Collection Information	1
Historical/Biographical Sketches	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Series Contents	4

Processed by

Pamela Tranfield

June 1995

Revised by

Dorothy A. Nicholson

August 2013

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

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half size photograph box
1 OVA photograph box
1 Oversize Photograph in Flat File Storage
5 8x10 nitrate negatives, 8 4x5 acetate negatives

COLLECTION DATES: 1855–1953

PROVENANCE: Richard C. Vonnegut, Sr., Indianapolis

RESTRICTIONS: The negatives are in cold storage and researchers must request negatives a day in advance and may view them with the assistance of Library Staff

COPYRIGHT:

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

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Rasmussen Collection (P 0024); Haerle Collection (P0234); State Street Investment Corporation Records (BV 2695-6); Freethinkers Society of Indianapolis, Translation of Minutes (SC 2060); *Seventy-five Years of Vonnegut Hardware*. Indianapolis: 1927; Vonnegut Hardware Company catalogs (ca. 1900–1953); *Death and Burial of Clemens Vonnegut*. Indianapolis: 1907; Vonnegut, Clemens. *A Proposed Guide for Instruction in Morals: from the Standpoint of a Freethinker....* Indianapolis: 1987.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1982.0129, 1982.0328, 1984.0213, 1988.0356, 1988.0597, 1988.0890X, 1989.0489, 1989.0490, 1989.0691X, 1989.0692X, 1992.0495, 1995.0825X

NOTES:

HISTORICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

The Vonnegut Hardware Company began operations in 1852 as Vollmer and Vonnegut, a general merchandise retail business at 71 Washington Street, Indianapolis. Clemens Vonnegut Sr. assumed Charles Vollmer's share in the business in 1858 and opened Clemens Vonnegut Hardware at 8 East Washington Street. The storefront moved to several Washington Street locations before Vonnegut's death, including 338 East Washington Street in 1859 and 342 East Washington Street in 1867. The Vonnegut Hardware Company was incorporated in 1908 and was operated by three of Vonnegut's sons, and other descendants until 1965. The Schlage Lock Company of San Francisco bought the business that year, which by this time included twelve neighborhood retail hardware stores, an industrial division with two warehouses, and the Van Duprin Lock Company. Schlage Lock retained Van Duprin Lock but sold the stores and warehouses in 1966. The retail stores operated through the 1970s, and were all closed by 1980.

Clemens Vonnegut Sr. (1824–1906) was born in Muenster, Westphalia, Germany. He arrived in the United States in 1851 on business for his employer, a ribbon manufacturer. He located to Indianapolis ca. 1852 at the urging of Charles Vollmer, a schoolmate. Vonnegut married Katharina Blank (d. 1904) circa 1855 and was the father of four sons: Clemens Jr., Bernard, Franklin, and George. Bernard Vonnegut was the founder of Vonnegut and Bohn, an architectural firm in Indianapolis. Clemens Jr. died in 1921.

The donor of this collection Richard C. Vonnegut (1913–2008) was a lifelong resident of Indianapolis. His parents were Anton and Ina Hollweg Vonnegut. He graduated from Park School, Cornell University, and served in the Coast Guard during WWII. He worked for the Vonnegut Hardware Company his entire career and retired from there as the Secretary-Treasurer. His many interests included local history, and genealogy and he was a member of several local historical organizations, including the Indiana Historical Society.

Sources:

Bodenhamer, David J., and Robert G. Barrows. *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Seventy-five Years of Vonnegut Hardware. Indianapolis: Vonnegut Hardware Company, 1927.

<http://flannerbuchanan.tributes.com/show/Richard-C.-Vonnegut-84114362>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains black-and-white photographs assembled from a number of accessions donated by Richard C. Vonnegut, Sr. He identified most of the items and gave approximate dates.

Series 1: Vonnegut Hardware and Hollweg & Reese; primarily exteriors of the Vonnegut Hardware Company warehouses, and neighborhood storefronts in Indianapolis. Other photographs include an architectural drawing of the Hollweg & Reese Building and some of the Vonnegut Hardware Company staff.

Series 2: Vonnegut Family; contains images of the Vonnegut, Schnull, Hollweg, Haerle, Chapman, and Blank families and some of their homes and cottages at Lake Maxinkuckee. Portraits include profiles of Clemens and Bernard Vonnegut.

Series 3: Political Photograph; consists of one Cirkut photograph at a reception to honor William Jennings Bryan at the Indiana Democratic Club on April 12th 1912. Bryan is seated in the center with a large group of Indiana Democrat leaders.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Vonnegut and Hollweg Companies, 1855–1953

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
“C. Volmer & Vonnegut, Dealers in Leather, Hardware & Groceries...” [copy photo of advertisement taken from the 1855 Indianapolis Directory]	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
[Storefront, Clemens Vonnegut Hardware] 184 East Washington Street, 1878	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
East Washington Street, east of Meridian Street, north side, ca. 1900	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
[View of N. E. Corner of Washington and Pennsylvania Streets, Vonnegut Hardware in view, ca. 1910]	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
[3 small photos of Vonnegut’s 120–124 East Washington Street storefront, ca. 1920s, ca. 1940s	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
[Vonnegut Hardware Co. Warehouse, [No. 1] South Delaware Street] Bass Photo: 65332-F, 2/1/1919	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
[Vonnegut Hardware Co. Warehouse No. 1] Negative number: 9042 Year: 1925	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
[Vonnegut Hardware Co. Warehouse No. 2] Negative number: 9043 Year: 1925	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
Vonnegut Hardware Co., 120–124 East Washington] Negative numbers: 9044, 9044A [no print] Year: 1925	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
[Vonnegut Hardware Co. Warehouse No. 2] Negative number: 9415, ca. 1925	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
Negatives for 9042, 9043, 9044, 9044a, 9415	8x10 Nitrate Negatives: Cold Storage

Vonnegut Hardware, Irvington Store, ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Vonnegut Hardware, Fountain Square Store, ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Vonnegut Hardware, Belmont Store, ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Vonnegut Hardware, 42 nd and College Ave., ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Vonnegut Hardware, East 10 th Street Store, ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Vonnegut Hardware, Illinois and 38 th Street, ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Vonnegut Hardware, Broad Ripple Store, 63 rd Street, ca. 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 3
Vonnegut Wholesale Warehouse groundbreaking and site of warehouse before construction, 5/14/1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 4
Vonnegut Wholesale Warehouse under construction from June to September 1940	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 5
Vonnegut Wholesale Warehouse, 3 photos, 1952	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 6
Vonnegut Wholesale Warehouse, 6 negatives, 1952 [3 negatives have corresponding photos in Folder 6]	4x5 Acetate Negatives: Negatives 1–6 Cold Storage
Vonnegut Hardware employees, ca. 1905 with typed list of names	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 7
Vonnegut Hardware, 18 employees, ca. 1910 with typed list of names	OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
Vonnegut Hardware, 42 male employees in service 20 years or more, July 20, 1940	OVA Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
Vonnegut Concert Band, 8/17/1953	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 8

Hollweg & Reese building, later Mutual China Co.
120 South Meridian Street,
Copy of drawing by Bernard Vonnegut,
built 1886 and demolished about 1972

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 9

Series 2: Vonnegut Family, ca. 1880s–1938

CONTENTS

Portraits of Clemens and Bernard Vonnegut
possible image of Clemens Vonnegut, Jr. at work

10 copy photographs of Vonnegut, Schnull, and
Hollweg families, and cottage on Lake Maxinkuckee,
ca. 1888–1920s

Cottage on Lake Maxinkuckee

Blank family reunion at Clemens Blank residence on
South Lyndhurst Drive, includes typed list of names,
August 1938

Louis Hollweg residence, [505 North Meridian Street]
built in the 1870s

Louis Hollweg's 80th birthday party at 7808 North
College Ave., July 27, 1920
[with typed list of names of Hollweg, Haerle,
Chapman, and Vonnegut family members,
Richard C. Vonnegut age 7 in photograph]

Henry Schnull residence at the north east corner of
13th and Central Avenue, built 1888

CONTAINER

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 10

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 11

4x5 Acetate Negatives
Negative 7
Cold Storage

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 12

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 13

OVA Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 3

4x5 Acetate Negative:
Negative 8
Cold Storage

Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 14

Series 3: Political Photograph, 1912

CONTENTS

Reception to Honor William Jennings Bryan
Indianapolis, Indiana
Jefferson Day, April 12th, 1912
[group in front of the Indiana Democratic Club]
Cirkut Photo
Size: 10 x 30 inches
Photographer: Losey

CONTAINER

Oversize Visuals:
Folder 1
Flat File 2-n