

Collection #
M 0839

RICHARD J. GATLING COLLECTION, 1865–1896

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Processed by

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April 15, 2005

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department

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Indiana Historical Society

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION:

Manuscripts: 1 manuscript box
Visuals: 1 OVA photograph

COLLECTION
DATES:

1865–1806

PROVENANCE:

Paul C. Richards Autographs February 1969, Robert F.
Batchelder September 1998, Early American History Auctions,
Inc. August 1999, Catherine Barnes November 1999, Early

American History Auctions, Inc. July 2000.

RESTRICTIONS:

None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION
RIGHTS:

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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS:

M 0292, Lew Wallace Collection (correspondence between Wallace and Gatling, 8-2-1865 to 9-3-1865); M 0653, John Love Papers; SC 0511, Nicholas J. Dorsey Letter; SC 1975, Lester M. Busby Research Materials

ACCESSION
NUMBER:

1969.0205, 1998.1126, 1999.0514, 2000.0084, 2000.0911

NOTES:

Two collections, formerly SC0615 and SC1696 have been reprocessed and are now part of this larger collection. This collection will continue to grow as materials are acquired.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Jordan Gatling (1818-1903) was born in North Carolina. His first important invention was a wheat drill that allowed for more efficient planting (1847). Gatling completed a medical degree at Cincinnati College, but never practiced medicine. He moved to Indianapolis in 1854. Though he ventured into real estate and into railroad speculation, he continued to work at his inventions. In 1857, Gatling patented a steam plow.

In 1862, Gatling invented and patented his first Gatling Gun, a hand-cranked, breech-loading cannon with ten revolving barrels and originally firing 250 rounds a minute. With Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton's help, Gatling obtained a government contract and set up his factory in Indianapolis. During the Civil War, the Navy installed several Gatling guns on gunboats, but production problems prevented delivery of more than two guns to the Army by war's end. The gun with later improvements sold well abroad, however, and was used in nearly every armed conflict for the next fifty years. One major appearance was at San Juan Hill in Cuba in 1898.

In 1870, Gatling moved from Indianapolis to Hartford, Connecticut, and his company, the Gatling Gun Company, was sold to the Colt Firearms Company ten years later. Gatling maintained his interest in inventing, and at the age of eighty-two patented a motorized plow.

John Love (1820-1881) was born in Virginia. He attended West Point (1837-1841), and embarked on a military career. Love resigned from the Army in 1852, and moved to Indianapolis. He served during the Civil War and began his connection with the Gatling Gun during that time. After Richard Gatling set up his factory in Indianapolis, Love bought stock in the company, and also represented the company as it presented the gun for sale to the United States, China, Japan, Turkey, and throughout Europe. Love, though he began selling his stock in 1873, was still representing the company a year later.

James William Denver (1817-1892) lived for a while in California, where he served in the state legislature and represented the state in Congress (1855-1857). In 1858 he became governor of Kansas Territory, which included present Colorado. He brought order to the turbulent mining towns of the area, and the city of Denver was named in his honor. Commissioned a brigadier general in 1861, he served first in Kansas and then in the Army of Tennessee. After

the war he practiced law in Washington, D. C.

Sources:

M 0653, General John Love Papers.

Encyclopedia of Indianapolis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. General Collection: F534.I55 E4 1994

Libraries: Encyclopedia Americana. N.Y. : Encyclopedia American, 1962

Wahl, Paul and Donald R. Toppel. *The Gatling Gun*. New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1965. passim. General Collection: UF620.G3 W3 1971

Who Was Who in America. Chicago, Marquis-Who's Who [etc.]. Reference Room Collection: E176 .W64

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains four letters arranged chronologically from Richard J. Gatling to four different individuals. The first letter dated 1865 is addressed to B. F. Hayney and is in regard to Gatling's concerns over who to hire to forge his model gun. The second letter dated 1873 is a one-page autograph letter from R. J. Gatling to J. W. Denver concerning the purchase of gunstocks. Letter three is a three-page letter, dated 23 August 1873, from Richard J. Gatling (Hartford, Connecticut) to General John Love. Gatling informs Love of a letter written by Alfred Nobel to L.W. Broadwell, a European sales agent for the Gatling Gun Company, and his belief that the letter is part of a plan to give Broadwell greater interest in the company. Gatling discusses Nobel's conditions for entering into a contract with the company, which Gatling finds unacceptable. He also writes concerning sales of Gatling guns to the Russian government and the roles of Alfred Nobel and General A. Gorloff in those matters. Letter four dated 1896 is to Miss Margaret Hollowell regarding Gatling's family history.

The visual component of the collection contains on cabinet card photograph of Gatling signed and dated 6 April 1891.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Gatling Correspondence, 1865–1896

CONTENTS

Letter from Gatling to B.F. Hayney concerning manufacture of model gun, 6 August 1865

Letter from Gatling to J.W. Denver concerning purchase of gunstocks, 15 January 1873

Letter from Gatling to General John Love concerning Alfred Nobel and sales of Gatling guns to Russia, 23 August 1873

Letter from Gatling to Miss Margaret Hollowell regarding his family history, 24 February 1896

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Series 2: Photograph, 1891

CONTENTS

Cabinet card photograph of Gatling, signed, 6 April 1891

CONTAINER

OVA Photographs:
Box 1

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, M 0839).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.