

Collection #
SC3653

**William And Elizabeth Conner Family
Letters, 1847-1865**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	4
Contents	5

Processed by

Maire Gurevitz
December 2022

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 manuscript folder

**COLLECTION
DATES:** 1847-1865

PROVENANCE: Gift of Linda Pendleton, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

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

**ALTERNATE
FORMATS:**

**RELATED
HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION
NUMBER:** 2022.0106

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Conner (December 10, 1777-August 28, 1855) was a politician, businessman, and land speculator who was the first white settler in what is now Hamilton County, Indiana. He arrived in the Indiana Territory and set up a trading post with his brother John in 1800. He married Mekinges, the daughter of Chief William Anderson of the Unalatchgo Lenape people in 1802. The couple had six children. In 1820, Mekinges and their six children were removed from central Indiana after the Treaty of St. Mary's Ohio, but Conner remained. Conner married Elizabeth Chapman on November 20, 1820. In 1823, Conner built a two-story Federal style brick house in Hamilton County, which became the county's first seat of government and mail stop. When Conner moved to Noblesville in 1837, he owned over 4,000 acres of land. Currently, the living history museum Conner Prairie is located on former Conner land. Additionally, Conner served three non-consecutive terms in the Indiana General Assembly and invested in a variety of businesses and land speculation in the area.

Elizabeth Chapman Conner (November 1802-December 14, 1891) was born in Goshen, New York. She was the daughter of Mahettable Finch and the stepdaughter of Judge John Finch, and she arrived in Indiana with her family in 1819. In 1820, Elizabeth married William Conner. The couple had ten children. Elizabeth spent the later years of her life residing in Indianapolis at 472 N. East Street.

Richard Conner (April 10, 1825-July 24, 1895) was the son of William and Elizabeth Conner. He worked variously in the wholesaling business in Cincinnati and New York City before returning to Indiana. He was a journalist and senior editor of the Miami County Sentinel in Peru, Indiana, and was involved in Democratic politics. He married Louisa Vandergriff Finch in 1858 and remarried after Louisa's death to Lavinia Conner in 1875. He had three children.

Dr. William Henry Conner (April 23, 1829-April 20, 1896) was the son of William and Elizabeth Conner. Conner served in the Civil War as a 1st Lieutenant and Quartermaster in the 101st Indiana Infantry from September 1862-June 1865. Upon his return to Hamilton County after the war, he purchased a drug store and worked as a physician. He also was involved in politics and various other business interests. He married Sarah Osenbach (1833-October 16, 1906) on December 11, 1851, and the couple had four children.

Hon. Alexander Hamilton Conner (August 4, 1832-May 29, 1891) was the son of William and Elizabeth Conner. Conner practiced law in Noblesville and served as the chair of the Republican State Central Committee in 1860. In addition, he served as the first postmaster of Indianapolis. In 1872, Conner moved his family to Nebraska, where he continued to practice law and served two terms in the Nebraska State Senate. He was married to Katherine Willis (August 8, 1842-May 13, 1911) and the couple had three children.

George Frederick Conner (January 17, 1834-March 29, 1918) was the son of William and Elizabeth Conner. He served as the deputy Recorder and owned a Conner Abstract Company business. He was married to Elizabeth Hazelrigg (May 1836-January 27, 1910) and the couple had six children.

Catherine Russell Conner Massey (June 26, 1836-October 11, 1896) was the daughter of William and Elizabeth Conner. Massey was married to Moses J. Massey (1827-1891), a

Civil War veteran who was part of the Purnell Legion, Maryland Infantry. The couple had two children.

Elisha Harrington Conner (April 7, 1839-November 29, 1909) was the son of William and Elizabeth Conner. Conner was a Civil War veteran, serving with the 54th Indiana Infantry and the 118th Indiana Infantry. He took over the Conner family farm. He was married to Nancy Emmaline “Emma” Austin Conner and the couple had ten children.

Benjamin Franklin “Cap” Conner (April 5, 1842-February 13, 1899) was the son of William and Elizabeth Conner. Conner was a veteran of the Civil War, attaining the rank of Captain with the Indiana 9th Calvary and serving as an orderly for General Knefler. He was appointed as Deputy Assessor for Marion County in 1880 and was a member of the George H. Thomas Post, G.A.R.

Margaret Ellen “Ellen” Conner Crans (1846-1928) was the daughter of William and Elizabeth Conner. Ellen attended the Indianapolis Female Institute. She was married to Dr. James T. Crans (1841-1919), a physician, in 1873 and the couple had one child.

Mary Elizabeth Conner Boxley (December 15, 1844-March 27, 1899) was the daughter of William and Elizabeth Conner. Elizabeth was married to Calvin F. Boxley and the couple had four children.

Herbert Conner (1848-187) was the son of William and Elizabeth Conner. Conner was a Civil War veteran, and served in the 8th Indiana Calvary.

Sources:

“Old Settler Passes Away.” *The Indianapolis Journal*. 16 Dec. 1891, Page 4.

“Richard J. Conner, Senior Editor of the Miami County Sentinel.” *The Indianapolis Journal*. 26 July 1895. Page 2.

“George Conner Dead at Age of Eighty Four.” *The Noblesville Ledger*. 30 March 1918, Page 1.

“B.F. Conner Dead.” *The Indianapolis News*. 14 February 1899. Page 2.

“Burial Mrs. Crans Here Thursday.” 26 December 1928. Page 6.

Ancestrylibrary.com

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains thirty letters written between members of the William and Elizabeth Conner family of Noblesville, Indiana between 1847 and 1865, with the majority of the correspondence taking place during the years of the Civil War, 1861-1865. Many of the letters are addressed to “Ellen”, or Margaret Ellen Conner, while she was away from Noblesville at school. Her mother, Elizabeth Conner, encourages her to stick with her studies even though it seems she would like to leave school for home. Ellen’s brothers, William, Benjamin Franklin “Frank”, and Herbert, write to her from their respective camps during their war service. Her brothers discuss their daily activities, the food they eat, time on the picket, foraging, and marching. They mention other folks from home that they run into along the way and comment on the land and the weather. Frank seems to enjoy soldiering as an occupation, but William and Herbert seem to be less enchanted. On February 4, 1863, William Conner writes to Ellen, “my hair always light colored is now almost as gray as our poor old Father’s was before he died but I cannot account for the cause of it.” The brothers also reference Gettysburg, Murfreesboro, troop transcription, and playing euchre while they are in camp waiting for orders.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS
Letters, 1847-1865

CONTAINER
Folder 1 of 1