

**Collection #**  
**M 0858**

## **CYRUS RAYHILL FAMILY PAPERS, CA. 1855–1948**

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Kathryn M. Wilmot  
12 October 2005

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

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

### **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

<b>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</b>	1 manuscript box, 1 folder of color photographs, 1 cased image
<b>COLLECTION DATES:</b>	1855–1948 (bulk ca. 1860–1890)
<b>PROVENANCE:</b>	Heritage Photo Services, Indianapolis, IN, January 2000
<b>RESTRICTIONS:</b>	None

**COPYRIGHT:**

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

**ALTERNATE FORMATS:** None

**RELATED HOLDINGS:** 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment Indiana Infantry: OM 0306 (muster roll); SC 0464 (Israel Phalin letter)

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 2000.0282

**NOTES:**

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Son of Elizabeth Cathcart and John R. Rayhill, Cyrus W. Rayhill (16 April 1835–18 November 1905) was born in Franklin Township, Washington County, Indiana. In 1860, Cyrus married Hannah E. Wilson (b. 1838–d. 1878), daughter of Mitchell Wilson and Maria E. Huston. Hannah and Cyrus resided in Salem, Indiana and/or New Philadelphia, Indiana during the early years of their marriage.

On 24 July 1862, Cyrus enlisted as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in B Company of the 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment Indiana Infantry and resigned his commission on 30 March 1863, likely due to disability. Originally established in 1861, the 16<sup>th</sup> Indiana was reorganized in Indianapolis in 1862. The regiment participated in the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky, where they were captured and sent to Indianapolis. The prisoners were exchanged in November 1862 and sent to Tennessee. In addition to other battles, the regiment saw action at Chickasaw Bayou, MS; Fort Hindman at Arkansas Post, AR; Port Gibson, MS; Champion's Hill, MS; Big Black River Bridge, MS; the sieges of Vicksburg and Jackson, MS; and the Red River Campaign, LA.

The 1870 census indicates Cyrus was a farmer. He and Hannah lived in Pana Township, Christian County, Illinois with their five young children: John (b. ca. 1861); Maria (b. ca. 1863); J.A. (b. ca. 1865); George (b. ca. 1868); Thomas (b. ca. 1869). The 1880 census shows another child, Cyrus W., was born in 1868, and Hannah Rayhill's 1863 correspondence mentions a child called "Mitch."

Widowed in 1878, Cyrus continued to live in Pana, Illinois. The 1900 census indicates he resided with his son Cyrus W. and his daughter-in-law Clara. He was a member of the G.A.R. Post #411 in Pana and died on 18 November 1905.

Sources:

Information in the collection

"HeritageQuest Online." Search for "Rayhill." 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Salem, Indiana. Series M653, Roll 306, Page 313. Cited 11 October 2005.

"HeritageQuest Online." Search for "Rayhill." 1870 U.S. Federal Census for Pana, Illinois. Series M593, Roll 194, Page 87. Cited 11 October 2005.

"HeritageQuest Online." Search for "Rayhill." 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Pana, Illinois. Series T623, Roll 241, Page 150. Cited 11 October 2005.

"Family Search." Website search for "Cyrus Rayhill." Available from <http://www.familysearch.org>. Cited 11 October

2005.

“Civil War Research Database.” Database search for “Cyrus Rayhill.” Available from <http://www.civilwardata.com>. Cited 11 October 2005.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Cyrus Rayhill correspondence folders consist mainly of letters written to Cyrus by fellow soldiers and family members. There are a few pre-Civil War letters written to Cyrus by B. F. Huffman describing his work at the Hazelton mill and discouraging Cyrus from going to Kansas. During the Civil War, Cyrus received letters from Mathew Rayhill, John Rayhill, Samuel Rayhill, James H. Low, Jonathan Huston, John Robison, and J.H. Redfield, all of whom were also serving. These letters discuss weather; camp conditions; drills, picket duty, and battlefield action; names of those captured, promoted, and killed; lack of provisions and money; illnesses, hospitalization, and regimental health. The collection includes several entertaining letters from James H. Low of the 38<sup>th</sup> Regiment Indiana Infantry detailing his romantic involvements. Jonathan Huston (likely of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment Indiana Infantry), provides a description of Generals Smith, Paine, and Lew Wallace, and the outstanding capabilities of Wallace’s Zouaves. J.P. Lester describes a friendly fire incident that took place between the 16<sup>th</sup> Indiana and another company. Harry Weston informs Cyrus that his fellow comrades Samuel Sneed and Lewis Jamison were killed at Vicksburg and he himself was wounded. Hannah writes Cyrus telling him of her loneliness, their children, chores, and the illnesses and deaths of their neighbors. There is one letter from Cyrus in the collection written to Hannah informing her of his resignation. Post-Civil War correspondence includes an 1885 letter from Joseph Houghton offering his assistance in obtaining more disability money for Cyrus.

In relation to the 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment Indiana Infantry under Captain James H. Redfield, the collection consists of a muster roll listing soldiers absent, dead, deserted, and discharged, as well as a payroll record. There is a document authorizing Cyrus to arrest deserters, and a pass allowing him in and out of Fort Pickering on 11 January 1863.

The Rayhill family correspondence folder includes letters from Alexander Rayhill, Kate Rayhill, and S.A. Redfield. The general correspondence folder includes an unidentified letter from someone traveling through “Bleeding Kansas,” a letter from D. Hallenberg regarding a lot purchased in Louisville, and a touching Civil War letter from David Lester of New Philadelphia to his son Edward trying to get him out of service.

Among the Rayhill family documents and papers are business records such as receipts, bills of sale, a pension document, and a deed for Cyrus’s burial plot in Mound Cemetery, Illinois. In addition, Cyrus’s black bordered funeral notice is included, as is a wedding invitation from Mrs. R.A. Rayhill for her daughter Ruth.

The folder entitled Austin Family Papers contains items relating to Alonzo Austin, who married Cyrus’s daughter Maria Rayhill. Included are Alonzo and Maria’s 1886 marriage certificate, and Alonzo’s notebook / journal from 1892–1893.

General printed materials consist of three 1885 Christian children’s pamphlets entitled the *Picture Lesson Paper*, a pamphlet entitled *Calling on the Name of the Lord*, a 1919 copy of the Pana, Illinois *Local Option Herald*, ca. 1948 obituaries for William H. and Mary E. Wilkins McFadden, and a Women’s Christian Temperance Union publication.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

Cyrus Rayhill correspondence, 1858–1862

### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Cyrus Rayhill correspondence, 1863–1903	Box 1, Folder 2
Cyrus Rayhill papers, 1869–1905	Box 1, Folder 3
Rayhill family correspondence, 1855–1866	Box 1, Folder 4
Rayhill family documents, 1856–1898	Box 1, Folder 5
Austin family papers, 1881–1886; n.d.	Box 1, Folder 6
General correspondence, 1859–1887; n.d.	Box 1, Folder 7
Washington County, Indiana Land Deed, 1859	Box 1, Folder 8
16 <sup>th</sup> Regiment Indiana Infantry documents, 1862–1863	Box 1, Folder 9
General printed materials, 1885–1948; n.d.	Box 1, Folder 10
Illinois school law book, 1889	Box 1, Folder 11
Color photographs of Cyrus and Hannah Rayhill's headstones, n.d.	Visual Collections: Color Photographs, Folder 1
1/6 <sup>th</sup> plate ambrotype of Cyrus Rayhill, n.d.	Visual Collections: Cased Images

## 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 0858).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.