

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG FAMILY PAPERS, 1828-1957

Collection #

M 0410

OM 0112

Table of Contents

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Folder List](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by
Julie Moore
July, 1984

Updated 3 January 2002
Manuscript 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:	3 manuscript boxes, 5 oversize folders, 1 box of visual material.
COLLECTION DATES:	1828-1957
PROVENANCE:	Acquired from William P. Wreden, Palo Alto, CA, June 1984.
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 0006, John Armstrong Papers

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1984.0632

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John H. Armstrong was born in Hamilton Co., Ohio in 1809, the youngest child of revolutionary soldier Colonel John Armstrong (1755-1816). On May 6, 1830, he married Susannah L. Beggs and in June 1835, the couple moved to LaPorte County, where he became a successful cabinet maker, lumber dealer, and farmer. For a short time, Feb.-Sept. 1865, Armstrong served in Company "A," 151st Indiana Regiment. He had a great interest in the Spiritualism movement which became popular in Indiana in the 1870's. His wife, Susannah, also held a belief in Spiritualism, and was a noted healer and seer in LaPorte County. Genealogical records indicate that the couple had six children. Armstrong died in 1885 in LaPorte.

The collection includes the papers of a number of Armstrong's relatives, including the Adkins, Beggs, Andrew, Hall, and Loomis families. The largest group of papers belong to the family of Armstrong's son-in-law, Alphonso Adkins, a LaPorte railroad man. Other Adkins family members include his son, Irvin Ryan Adkins, a Chicago, Illinois businessman, and his daughter, Alta Viola Adkins, a Hammond, Indiana schoolteacher. Beggs family papers include those of Armstrong's father-in-law, James Beggs, a politician from Clark County, as well as papers from other Beggs family members of Plainfield, Illinois. Andrew family members include Abraham Piatt Andrew Jr. of LaPorte, Armstrong's brother-in-law; Viola J. Andrew of Ottumwa, Iowa; and other Andrew family members from Michigan City, Indiana. The Hall family are Armstrong's in-laws, and include Banks Hall and Batheny Hall of Baldwin City, Kansas, and John Hall of Ohio. Loomis family papers include those from Henry Loomis, a LaPorte farmer, and Alphonso Adkins' father-in-law.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection includes family correspondence, financial papers, writings, and family history information, primarily from the period 1850 to 1902. The first part of the correspondence consists of letters written to John H. and Susannah L. Armstrong, principally from their children and grandchildren living in Jeffersonville and Centerville, Indiana, and Nebraska, Oregon, and Minnesota. Other Armstrong letters are from family friends.

The Adkins family papers include letters between Alphonso Adkins and his wife Mary, dating from 1856 to 1881, when Alphonso was working and travelling on a railroad through Nebraska, and Mary was living in LaPorte. The remainder of the Adkins correspondence consists mainly of letters addressed to Mary Adkins, and are from her mother, Susannah Armstrong; her children Alta V. and Irvin R. Adkins; and various cousins and friends.

The Beggs family letters are from the period 1833 to 1893, and consist primarily of correspondence between John Beggs of Plainfield, Illinois and his sister, Susannah Armstrong. Much of the Hall family correspondence consists of letters to the Armstrongs from Batheny Hall in Baldwin City, Kansas (1857-ca.1880), and from John Hall in Mt. Vernon and Columbus, Ohio (1886, 1892). The Andrew family correspondence consists primarily of letters written from Viola J. Andrew in Ottumwa, Iowa to the Armstrongs in LaPorte (1872-1880). There are only two Loomis family letters, both containing family news. Most of the miscellaneous correspondence consists of family news. However, there are also three letters, one dated 1868 and two undated, addressing "Mr. President" and concerning usage of a farming tool and the granting of voting rights.

The collection also contains receipts and financial records from the period 1839 to 1909. The largest number of financial papers are those of the Armstrongs and are mainly tax-related. An account book from the 1840's and 1850's, possibly belonging to John H. Armstrong, contains financial records and many writings on Spiritualism. The collection

also includes Armstrong and Adkins family legal documents, deeds, and real estate transaction records, 1850-1897; teaching licenses of Alta V. Adkins, 1901, 1924; and poetry and other personal writings concerning Spiritualist beliefs.

Finally, the collection includes genealogical material for the Armstrong and related families; LaPorte County pamphlets and publications, including *The Crisis*, November 1, 1862, a semi-monthly newspaper which dealt with concerns of the "New Christian Church"; and various newspaper clippings, 1881-1954, giving historical information about LaPorte, and the Armstrong and related families.

Oversize materials in the collection include two love letters written to Susannah L. Beggs; deeds, and real estate records belonging to John H. Armstrong; educational record; personal writing; newspapers; advertisements. (See OM 0112, folder 1)

Sources:
From the Recollections of Catherine Piatt Andrew, a LaPorte Pioneer, by Catherine Piatt Andrew, 1973.
History of LaPorte County, Indiana, and its Townships, Towns, and Cities, by Jasper Packard. S.E. Taylor and Co., 1876, p. 377.
History of LaPorte County, Indiana, Chas. C. Chapman and Co., 1880, p. 905.

FOLDER LIST

Box I: Correspondence, 1828-1957

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	Armstrong Family, 1828-1856 (See also: OM 0112, folder 1)
2	Armstrong Family, 1857-1860
3	Armstrong Family, 1861-1880
4	Armstrong Family, 1883-1889
5	Armstrong Family, 1890-1898, n.d.
6	Beggs Family, 1833-1893
7	Hall Family, 1857-1876, 1886-1895, n.d.
8	Adkins Family, 1856, 1866-1879
9	Adkins Family, 1880
10	Adkins Family, 1881-1954, n.d.
11	Loomis Family, 1870, n.d.
12	Andrew Family, 1872-1880, n.d.
13	Miscellaneous, 1864-1890, 1954-1957, n.d. Includes several letters addressed to "Mr. President." One, dated Feb. 1868, concerns usage of a farming tool, the "Mechanic," and is signed James S. Armstrong. The other two are undated and unsigned; they concern voting rights.

Box II: Financial Papers and Personal Writings, 1839-1955

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	Receipts, Armstrong family, 1839-1890
2	Receipts, Armstrong family, 1891-1913
3	Receipts, Mary S. Adkins, 1872-1909
4	Receipts, Miscellaneous, 1853, 1872, 1894-1896
5	Financial Records, 1850-1895, 1902, n.d.
6	Account Book, n.d.

Legal Documents (Deeds, Real Estate Records, Will), 1850-1897, 1932, 1955, n.d.

FOLDER	CONTENTS
7	Deeds, 1850-1895, 1932 (See also: OM 0112, folder 1)
8	Records of Real Estate Transactions, 1865-1897, n.d. (See also: OM 0112, folder 1)
9	Will, 1955
10	Educational Records, 1858-1924, n.d. Includes two teaching licenses of Alta V. Adkins. (See also: OM 0112, folder 1)
11	Personal Writings/Notes, 1838, 1860-1872, 1890. Papers concern Spiritualism, most belonging to Armstrong family.
12	Personal Writings/Notes, n.d. (See also: Box 1, folder 3, letter June 13, 1870; OM 0112, folder 1)
13	Poetry, 1858-1869, n.d. Most written in religious tone.
14	Miscellaneous, 185?, 189?, 1919, 1953, n.d. Includes shorthand notes; blank postcards; lists of names and addresses; insurance notes of Irvin Adkins.

Box III: Genealogies, Printed Material and Photographs

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	Armstrong Family Genealogy, 1908-1953
2	Armstrong Family Genealogy, n.d.
3	Adkins Family Genealogy. 1915, 1947, n.d. Includes some information on Ryan family
4	Andrew Family Genealogy. 1924, n.d. Includes a chart of the seven generations of Captain Abram Piatt Andrew ancestry.

- 5 Loomis Family Genealogy 1934, 1948, n.d.
- 6 Beggs Family Genealogy 1950, n.d.
- 7 (OM) Newspapers, March 1861: November 1, 1862; October 23, 1869 (See OM 0112, Flat File: FF 11-g, for *The Spiritual Telegraph*, July 1, 1854). Includes *The Crisis*, a LaPorte County semi-monthly newspaper dealing with interests of the "New Christian Church."
- 8 Booklets, 1908, 1932, 1949. Includes "Antoine Ouilmette," 1908, a brief history of an early Evanston pioneer; "La Port Centennial," 1932, giving history of LaPorte since 1832; "La Porte County Pictures," 1949.
- 9 Programs, 1866-1867, 1900, 1956, n.d. Includes those from the Philosophian Literary Society, Baker University, First Baptist Church, and LaPorte High School.
- 10 Obituaries, 1881, 1894, 1897. Includes those of Viola J. Crawley, Mary A. Beggs, and Susannah L. Armstrong.
- 11 Newspaper Clippings, 1881-1954, n.d. Includes historical sketches of the Beggs family; articles on the rise of industry in Charlestown, Ind.; and clippings about various individuals. Undated articles include short poems or brief anecdotes, some dealing with pioneer history of LaPorte.
- 12 Ephemera, 1879, n.d. Includes an announcement for a temperance camp meeting in LaPorte; several business cards; a badge worn by John H. Armstrong when he was in the furniture business.
- 13 (OM) Advertisements, 1866, n.d. (See also: OM 0112, folder 4)
- 14 (VC) Photographs--2 photo albums; 11 cased images; 42 loose photographs.

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](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

END