

Collection #  
BV 0027-0033

## WILLIAM H. CLARKE & CO. RECORDS, 1874-1882

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF  
COLLECTION: 7 bound volumes, 1 cabinet card with two photographs

COLLECTION 1874-82

DATES:

PROVENANCE: Bertha R. Ellis, 3203 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN, November 1952

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1952.1110

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

This collection centers around the organ-manufacturing firm of William H. Clarke & Co., operating in Indianapolis between 1874 and 1882. The two principals of the firm were William H. Clarke and George R. Ellis.

William Horatio Clarke (1840-1913) was born in Newton, Massachusetts, the son of Horatio and Elvira (Richards) Clarke. He was educated in the public schools and high school of Dedham. In 1861 he married Eliza T. Richardson. Beginning at the age of sixteen he was an organist, and he served churches in Boston, Indianapolis, Toronto, and Rochester. Retiring from professional life in 1892, he lived the rest of his life in Reading, Massachusetts.

Clarke was organist at Roberts Park Methodist Church in Indianapolis from the mid-1870s until 1881. The 1878 city directory lists his residence at 406 Park Avenue. In addition to his church duties in Indian, he gave concerts, taught students, and wrote both books and music. His book, *Outline of the Structure of the Pipe Organ*, was published about 1878. His correspondence also mentions *Harmonic School for the Organ* and a "Concert Fantasia" published by Oliver Ditson.

In addition, Clarke operated an organ-building firm, located at the then terminus of Massachusetts Avenue. This firm specialized in building large pipe organs with from twenty to sixty stops. It also repaired and tuned existing organs (including those in most of the large churches in town), and made hundreds of pitch pipes for use in school music classes. The firm's voluminous correspondence covered mainly Indiana and its surrounding states, but also extended through the Northeast. Clarke apparently left Indianapolis in 1881, and the firm was maintained for about a year by George R. Ellis, who had worked there for several years.

George Ramey Ellis (fl. 1874-1901) is listed in city directories as living at 179 North Alabama Street in 1881 and 1883, at 1008 North Pennsylvania Street in 1891, and at 2180 North Pennsylvania Street in 1901. In 1883 he is listed as a clerk; in 1890-1901 he is listed as proprietor of Ellis and Helfenberger, Enterprise Foundry and Fence Company, operating on South Senate Avenue. His daughter was the donor of this collection.

Sources: Materials in collection; *Who Was Who in America*, Vol. 1; City directories 1868-1901.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains seven bound volumes, three ledgers and four letter books, of the firm of William H. Clarke & Co., dated 1874-1882. All the correspondence is hand-written. There are two portraits of Clarke: an albumen photograph on a cabinet card with the imprint, "Busey, Photo."; and a cyanotype adhered to the verso of the cabinet card. The photographer for the first portrait is probably Thomas H. Busey, who operated a photographic gallery in Indianapolis in the Hutchings Building on the northwest corner of Pennsylvania and Ohio streets in Indianapolis in 1876 and 1877. The cyanotype portrait was made later in Clarke's life.

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Cash book, 1874-1881

Ledger, 1874-1881

Day book, 1874-1881

Letter book, 1876-1878

Letter book, 1877-1878

Letter book, 1878-1880

Letter book, 1880-1882

Photographs of William Horatio Clarke

### CONTAINER

BV 0027

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Visual Collections:  
Manuscript Photographs,  
folder 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://157.91.92.2/>
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, BV 0027).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.