

Collection #
SC 3206

SYLVANUS COCKEFAIR LETTERS, 1903–1906

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder (2 letters, 1 envelope)

COLLECTION
DATES: 1903, 1906

PROVENANCE: Michelle R. Wood

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE
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RELATED
HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 2012.0265

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in Connersville, Union County, Indiana, Sylvanus Cockefair (1832–1912) was the son of Elisha and Frances (Miller) Cockefair. His father owned and operated several woolen-, saw-, and flour-mills in the Union County area until Sylvanus and his brother took over the business in 1854. In February 1863, he married Mary A. Brookbank (1845–1946) of Jennings township, Fayette County, Indiana. In October of that same year, Sylvanus was drafted into the Union Army to serve in the Civil War. Sources to determine further information about his military service could not be found.

While running the family business, Sylvanus Cockefair also managed a farm and served a county commissioner in Union county for a term of four years (dates unknown). He operated the mills until 1888 and died in 1912, having lived his entire life in the Connersville home where he had been born

Sylvanus and Mary Cockefair had three children, though one died in infancy. Their daughter, Alice May Cockefair (1864–1930), married Sanford Marion Keltner (1856–1940) of Anderson, Madison County, Indiana, in 1886. Together they had two daughters: Ruth Keltner Masters (1888–1960) and Mary Keltner (1892–1969). Sanford Keltner was a prominent lawyer, businessman, and holder of public office in Anderson.

The Cockefairs' son, Lafayette (Lafe) D. Cockefair (1869–1954) married Mary Caroline (Callie) Murphy (1873–1949) in Jennings, Fayette County, Indiana in 1891. They had four sons: Elisha Alford Cockefair (1892–1980), Frank Sylvanus Cockefair (1896–1967), Sanford Keltner Cockefair (1899–1946), and Lafayette D. Cockefair, Junior (1908–1979). Lafe Cockefair was a prominent farmer and landowner in Fayette County, Indiana, in addition to being a trustee of Jackson township.

In various sources, the Cockefair name is sometimes spelled Cochefair or Cokefair.

Sources:

Ancestry, Library Edition, Accessed 19 January 2017.

History of Fayette County, Indiana: Her People, Industries, and Institutions. Frederic Irving Barrows, ed. Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen and Company, 1917 (pp. 1078–1081).

History of Madison County, Indiana. John L. Forkner, ed. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1914 (pp. 416–417).

"In Memoriam." *Connersville Evening News*, 30 October 1912. Newspaper Archive. Accessed 19 January 2017.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains two letters, one typed and one handwritten, and one envelope. The first letter, dated 17 December 1903, is addressed to "Pa" and printed on letterhead for the Law Offices of Chipman, Keltner, and Hendee of Anderson, Madison County, Indiana. It is signed "A.M Keltner." The letter, from Alice (Cockefair) Keltner to her father Sylvanus, details the delays in moving several houses from one street to another, including one that Sylvanus owns. She also writes with annoyance that the Anderson Loan Association will not take her endorsement on a check on her father's behalf when he has instructed them to do so and asks him to send the check back at his earliest convenience. The letter also indicates that Alice is in charge of several other properties owned by her father.

The envelope which contained this letter is retained in the collection because of a handwritten note, probably written by Sylvanus Cockefair as a reminder to himself. The note reads: "Mr Keltners order to draw money out of Lone [sic], Dec. 22nd 1903."

The second letter, dated 9 July 1906, is handwritten by an unknown woman and addressed to "Cousin Mary," i.e., Mary (Brookbank) Cockefair. The woman writes about her garden and the recent cool, wet weather. Additionally, she complains about the new houses going up near her home and her difficulties in finding good home help, for which she blames the factories. She also writes that a man named Dick (possibly the author's husband?) recently had a nail through his foot and only went to the doctor after his coworkers told him stories of relatives who died quickly after similar incidents. She closes out by asking Mary to give her love to "Lafe and Callie" (Mary's son and daughter-in-law) and ends the letter without signing it.

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CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

