

The Filson Historical Society

**Nall family
Papers, 1797-1945**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Special Collections.

Size of Collection:

0.66 cubic feet and 1 oversized folder

Location Number:

Mss. A N172

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Scope and Content Note

The Nall family papers include the letters, land and legal documents, and writings of several generations of a western Kentucky family. The collection provides a glimpse into the life and society of Hartford -- a small town in Ohio County, Kentucky -- in the second half of the 19th century. Courtship rituals of the time are especially well-documented in the correspondence of Blanche Nall, as well as some of her sister Margaret's correspondence. The literary interests of Nall family members are also preserved. Poetry and other writings, particularly by women of the Nall family, comprise a portion of this collection. Blanche Nall's theatrical pursuits and Margaret Nall's work as a piano teacher are also documented. Some World War II era correspondence of the allied Robins family is also included.

Folders 1-6 contain Nall family correspondence, 1850-1926. Letters are primarily written by female members of the Nall family. Blanche Nall's correspondence comprises a large portion of the collection. A lively young woman in her early twenties with interests in literature and the theater, Blanche led an active social life. Her social engagements are especially documented in letters she wrote to her sister Jessie. Blanche was also popular with the young men of Hartford. The collection contains a series of love letters and invitations from her numerous suitors.

The educational pursuits and career aspirations of the Nall women are also documented. A few letters touch on Margaret Nall's career as a pianist and music teacher. Other correspondence mentions the education of female family members at institutions including Shelbyville Female College and Louisville Girl's High School. A few letters also reveal women in the family pursuing career opportunities as educators.

Folder 7 contains the correspondence of the allied Robins family. Included are letters to David Robins from his family, written during his military service in the Air Force during World War II. Letters to David Robins from his mother, Bernice, relate family news and comment on the shortage of doctors caused by the war. Letters to David Robins from his fiancée Kathryn Frost include details on preparations to get married. Letters written by the family in the spring of 1945 primarily concern the illness and death of Bernice Robins.

Folder 8 contains undated correspondence, much of it correspondence between Blanche Nall and her friends, her suitors, and her sister Jessie. A number of letters are fragmentary.

Folder 9 contains business correspondence, including a letter regarding the distribution and sale of spring water.

Folder 10 contains an 1819 bill of sale for two slaves, Prudence and her daughter Matilda. They were sold by David Glover to Moses Crabtree.

Folders 11-13 include the land papers of the Henderson and McFarland families. The Henderson documents concern a land dispute case in the Daviess circuit court involving the heirs of James L. Henderson. Others named in the lawsuit include Richard Skinner, John Dozier, John Young, and James Barbour. The land in question was located in Daviess County along Panther Creek. McFarland land records especially relate to the estate of Walter McFarland. The McFarland land was located in Ohio County (later Daviess County, due to county boundary changes).

Folder 14 contains poetry and other writings. The pieces are primarily written by the women of the Nall family, and date from the mid to late 1800s. Most of the writings are in manuscript form, although one poem, entitled "Valentine's Day," was published in the Farmer's Home Journal.

Folder 15 contains newspaper clippings. Some are clippings of poetry; others are obituaries for Pendleton and Nall family members.

Folders 16-17 contain genealogy materials. Folder 16 contains some material on the Pendleton family, including genealogical information and a biographical sketch of Dr. John E. Pendleton. There is also information on the Pendleton family's historic home in Hartford, including images of the building's interior and exterior. Additional genealogy material located in Folder 17 includes information on the Burks, Randolph, and Frost families.

Folder 18 contains miscellaneous materials. There are several playbills announcing theatrical performances at in Hartford. There is also a dance card, a program for a library opening in 1902, and a short biographical sketch of writer James Lane Allen.

Folder 19 contains oversized land papers, including 2 plats of the area along Panther Creek in Daviess County.

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Biographical Note

The Nalls were a prominent family in Hartford, Ohio County, Kentucky. John G. Nall (b. ca.1809) married Emily Henderson (b. ca. 1813). John and Emily Nall had at least 7 children: Laura, Margaret, Charles, Eugene, Jon, Emily, and Ida. Laura and Margaret attended Shelbyville Female College in 1850. Margaret married Dr. John E. Pendleton, who practiced medicine in Hartford for 30 years, and served as a surgeon in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. After Margaret's death in 1869, Dr. Pendleton remarried her younger sister Ida.

John & Emily's son Charles G. Nall (b. ca. 1837) was a clerk in the Webster County circuit court. He married Mary Elizabeth Frost (b. 1840). The couple resided in Dixon, Webster County, Kentucky where they had 4 daughters: Blanche, Jessie, Margaret, and Mary ("Poppie"). In the early 1880s, Jessie attended school in Louisville where she studied telegraphy. Blanche Nall, whose lively correspondence comprises a large part of the collection, died when she was only about 24 years old, in 1885. Jessie, Margaret, and Mary never married and lived in Hartford, Kentucky during adulthood.

The Robins family of Owensboro, Ky. may have been connected to the Nall family. Harry M. Robins and his wife Bernice Dowdle had three children: Harry, George, and David. David served in the 767 Bomb Squadron in the U.S. Air Force during World War II. David married Kathryn Frost.

The Henderson family, whose land papers are included in the collection, may also be connected to the Nall family. Emily Henderson Nall's father, Charles Henderson, was county and circuit court clerk in Ohio County for over 30 years.

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Folder List

Box 1

- Folder 1: Nall family correspondence, 1850-1875
- Folder 2: Nall family correspondence, 1881-1882
- Folder 3: Nall family correspondence, 1883-1884
- Folder 4: Nall family correspondence, 1885
- Folder 5: Nall family correspondence, 1891-1899
- Folder 6: Nall family correspondence, 1900-1926
- Folder 7: Robins family correspondence, 1942-1945

Box 2

- Folder 8: Correspondence, undated
- Folder 9: Business correspondence, 1845-1879
- Folder 10: Slave bill of sale, 1819
- Folder 11: Henderson family land dispute papers, 1801-1821
- Folder 12: Henderson family land dispute papers, 1822-1824
- Folder 13: McFarland family land papers, 1812-1816
- Folder 14: Poetry and other writings
- Folder 15: Newspaper clippings
- Folder 16: John E. Pendleton family genealogy & historic home
- Folder 17: Genealogy
- Folder 18: Miscellaneous

Oversized

- Folder 19: Henderson family land dispute papers, 1797-1824

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Subject Headings

Allen, James Lane, 1849-1925.
Child abuse.
Christmas – Kentucky.
Circus – Kentucky.
Clothing and dress – Kentucky.
Concerts – Kentucky.
Courtship.
Dance parties – Kentucky.
Dating (Social customs).
Daviness County (Ky.)
Death.
Depressed persons.
Diseases – Kentucky.
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1803-1882.
Etiquette for children and teenagers – Kentucky.
Finance, Personal.
Floods – Indiana – 19th century.
Frese, Gustave.
Hartford College.
Hartford (Ky.) – Social life and customs.
Henderson family.
Housekeepers.
Ice skating – Kentucky.
King family.
Louisville (Ky.) – Social life and customs.
Louisville Girls' High School.
Love-letters.
Manual work.
McFarland family.
Musicians – Kentucky.
Nall, Blanche, ca. 1861-1885.
Nall, Emily Henderson, b. ca. 1813.
Nall, Jessie, 1867-1939.
Nall, Margaret, 1836-1869.
Nall, Margaret, 1863-1936.
Ohio County (Ky.)
Ohio County (Ky.) – Social life and customs.
Pendleton family.

Playbills – Kentucky.
Poetry.
Presidents – United States – Election – 1884.
Religious gatherings – Kentucky.
Revivals – Kentucky.
Robins family.
Schools – Kentucky.
Shelbyville Female College.
Shull family.
Slave bills of sale.
Springs – Kentucky.
Steamboats – Kentucky.
Surgery – Kentucky.
Superstition – Kentucky.
Sutton, Cicero Truman.
Teachers – Employment – Kentucky.
Theater – Kentucky.
Women – Education – Kentucky.
Women – Social life and customs.
Women's clothing.
World War, 1939-1945.
World War, 1939-1945 – Medical care.