Lincoln Clark Papers: Finding Aid

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Overview of the Collection
Title: Lincoln Clark Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1758-1942
Bulk dates: 1850-1860
Collection Number: mssCL 1-702
Creator: Clark, Lincoln, 1800-1886.
Extent: 695 pieces + printed materials and ephemera in 9 boxes
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Abstract: This collection contains the letters of American lawyer and politician Lincoln Clark (1800-1886), his wife, Julia Annah Clark, and their family, with the bulk of the collection consisting of Clark's letters to his wife. There is also material related to Julia Clark's relatives in the the Smith and Williams families. Subject matter includes: New England religious principles over multiple generations; life in Massachusetts (1758-1836), Alabama (1837-1847), Iowa (1848-1851), Washington, D.C. (1852-1853), and Illinois; the financial depression of the late 1850s; Julia Clark's work with the United States Sanitary Commission (1864-1865).
Language: English.
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Lincoln Clark Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Biographical Note
Lincoln Clark (1800-1886), a lawyer and Democratic legislator, was born in Conway, Franklin County, Massachusetts, the son of Elisha Clark (who had traced his ancestry to the Mayflower) and Lucinda Keith. Clark studied with Rev. Moses Hallock of Plainfield, Massachusetts, and then attended the Hopkins Academy in Hadley. In 1820, he taught school at Plainfield and Patterson. He graduated from Amherst College in 1825, and soon left for North Carolina where he studied law with Nathaniel Boyd and worked as a teacher. In 1831, Clark moved to Alabama; he soon was admitted to the state bar and settled a law practice in Pickensville. In 1834, he was elected to the state legislature and served one term. In June 1836, while visiting New England, Lincoln Clark met Julia Annah Smith (born 1812), daughter of Erastus Smith, a successful merchant and selectman of Hadley, Mass., and Sarah Chester Williams. The couple was married in September 1836 in New York and immediately left for Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where Clark had established a busy law practice in partnership with E. Woolsey Peck. In 1839, the state legislature elected him attorney general, and in 1846 the governor appointed him a circuit judge. The Clarks started contemplating moving north in 1843 not wishing "to die and leave our children in a slaveholding country." Although he disapproved of slavery, he thought that only "the silent workings of the religion of Christ" could put an end to it. He sympathized with the "Southern people" who, he felt, were too victimized by slavery "fastened upon them." In 1846, Clark made his decision to move to Iowa rather than Illinois, which he disliked as a seat of "bigoted, fanatical abolition." His wife and children left in the fall for Massachusetts in 1846; Clark remained in Alabama to close his law practice and dispose of his property which included family slaves whom he decided to hire out "until they earn nearly what they cost me and then set them free." He moved to Dubuque, Iowa in 1848, and his family joined him. Clark established a successful practice and served as the president and a director of the Dubuque and Western Railroad. In 1851, he was elected as a Democrat to the Thirty-second Congress; his reelection bids in 1852 and 1853 were unsuccessful. In 1857, Clark was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives. He supported Stephen A. Douglas in the 1860 presidential
election, but during the Civil War, sided with War Democrats. In 1862, the family moved to Chicago where Clark resumed the practice of law. In 1866, he was appointed United States register in bankruptcy. He retired in 1869, following an attack of typhoid fever and returned to Conway, Mass. In 1837, Clark who had come from a Congregationalist family joined the Presbyterian church. He was soon ordained an elder and later was a member of the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church. Clark also was an early trustee of Northwestern (McCormick) Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Clark's wife Julia Annah Smith (born 1812) hailed from an old New England family. Her grandfather was William Williams (1734-1808), son of Col. Israel Williams (1709-1788), and her grandmother, Dorothy Ashley Williams (1763-1833), daughter Rev. Jonathan Ashley. Julia Clark was a well-educated woman of broad interest. During the Civil War, she and her daughters worked in the United States Sanitary Commission. In the 1870s and 1880, she wrote on science, religion, and social reform contributing various, mostly Presbyterian, magazines and journals.

The Clarks had four children who survived to maturity: Catharine Lincoln Clark (1838-1897); Julia Annah (1840-1913), Lincoln Ellis Clark (b. 1843), and Edward Fessenden Clark (b. 1845). In the 1860s, Catherine Lincoln Clark worked with her mother for the Sanitary Commission, and later was a teacher to freedmen in Northern Alabama. In 1864, Julia Annah Clark was married to Charles Henry Ray (1821-1870). Between 1878 and 1881, she served as the Lady Principal of Vassar.

Lincoln Clark Papers Addenda, 1837-1853  (Call number: mssCL 696-702)

Scope and Content
This collection contains the letters of Lincoln Clark, his wife, Julia Annah Clark, and their family, with the bulk of the collection consisting of Clark’s letters to his wife. The correspondence was accumulated by Mrs. Clark and her side of the family the Smith and Williams families. Also included is a genealogical chart and a family history written in 1942 by Julia Lincoln Ray Andrews.


Persons represented by five or more pieces:
- Mary Ann (Ball) Bickerdyke, 5 pieces
- Catharine Lincoln Clark, 31 pieces
- Julia Annah (Smith) Clark, 47 pieces
- Lincoln Clark, 368 pieces
- Isabel A. Pratt, 10 pieces
- Sarah C. (Smith) Robinson, 5 pieces
- Pandius Theodore Ralli, 9 pieces
- Erastus Smith, 10 pieces
- Sarah C. (Williams) Smith, 19 pieces
- William Williams, 9 pieces

Lincoln Clarks' letters are written during his many absences riding the circuit in Alabama between 1837 and 1847; trips back east; their two-year separation between 1846 and 1848; his stay in Washington, D.C., in 1852-1853; and his business travels in the 1850s and 1860s. The letters discuss Lincoln Clark’s professional and political career; Mrs. Clark's work at home and involvement in charities, their religious feelings, their children's upbringing and education, the fate of their slaves; financial troubles, especially in the wake of the 1857 panic, the Civil War, the U. S. Sanitary Commission, etc. Also included are five letters written between 1854 and 1861 by Frederick Clark and his wife Charlotte, Lincoln Clark’s former slaves who immigrated to Liberia in 1856.

Also included is correspondence of Julia Clark’s parents and grandparents, her sisters Dorothy Williams Smith Holbrook, Rachel Bardwell Smith Holbrook, and Catharine Amelia Smith Jones, a cousin Caroline W. Porter, and her daughters. William Williams’s letter written in 1758 to his then sweetheart Dorothy Ashley discusses the proper relationship of faith and reason; a long letter of February 1, 1800, describes, in great detail, the passage by the Massachusetts legislature of the Act Providing for Public Worship of God, which Williams had sponsored. The 1816 letter from a cousin, Sarah T. Williams Newton, wife of Edward Augustus Newton (1785-1862), from Calcutta discusses Christian missionaries in India and Indian society. The letters from Julia Annah Clark Ray describe her studies at Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut. The letter from Alfred Wright (July 4, 1825) discusses his work as a missionary to the Choctaw Nation. The correspondence of Caroline W. Porter includes letters from her friends and admirers, including Thomas R. Ingalls (1798-1864), the future
president of Jefferson College and then (in 1816-1818), a West Point cadet, and Pandias Theodore Ralli (1819-1882) who later became a director of the firm Ralli Bros.

Some notable items include:

- Clark, Lincoln. To Mrs. Clark: a gossipy letter from Washington, D. C. "I dined at Col. King’s [William Rufus King] on Friday... it was a real state dinner - no ladies - I was never behind the curtain where great men relaxed before..." Jan. 26, 1852
- Clark, Lincoln. To Mrs. Clark: "Iowa is not worth bargaining with, if she could be bargained with, because her political strength is so small..." Washington, June 6, 1852
- Clark, Lincoln. To Mrs. Clark, regarding a visit to James Buchanan at Wheatland. Philadelphia, Feb. 10, 1857.
- Correspondence of Mrs. Lincoln Clark and her daughter Catharine, having to do with their war service on the U. S. Sanitary Commission, 1864-1865

Arrangement

Arranged in chronological order.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

**Subjects**

Clark, Lincoln, 1800-1886 -- Archives.
Williams, Israel, 1709-1788 -- Family -- Correspondence.
Democratic Party (U.S.) -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
Hopkins Academy (Hadley, Mass.)
Miss Porter's School (Farmington, Conn.) -- History -- Sources.
United States Military Academy -- Cadet life, 1802-1845 -- Sources.
United States Sanitary Commission -- History -- Sources.
African Americans -- Colonization -- Liberia -- Personal narratives.
Child rearing -- United States -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
Church and state -- Massachusetts -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
Congregationalists -- New England -- Correspondence.
Depressions -- 1857 -- United States.
Freedmen -- Alabama -- Correspondence.
Freedmen -- Liberia -- Correspondence.
Lawyers -- Alabama -- Correspondence.
Lawyers -- Illinois -- Correspondence.
Lawyers -- Iowa -- Correspondence.
Legislators -- Massachusetts -- Correspondence.
Legislators -- Iowa -- Correspondence.
Legislators -- United States -- Correspondence.
Politicians -- United States -- Correspondence.
Presbyterians -- United States -- Correspondence.
Slavery -- Alabama -- History -- Sources.
Slaves -- Alabama.
Women -- New England -- Correspondence.
Women -- United States -- Correspondence.
Women -- Religious life -- History -- Sources.
Women authors, American -- Correspondence.
Women scientists -- United States -- Correspondence.
Women social reformers -- United States -- Correspondence.
Alabama -- History -- 1819-1950 -- Sources.
Kolkata (India) -- Description and travel.
Illinois -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
Iowa -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
Liberia -- History -- 1847-1944 -- Sources.
Massachusetts -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
New England -- History -- 18th century -- Sources.
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Sources.
United States -- Politics and government -- 19th century -- Sources.

Forms/Genres
Family papers -- United States.
Genealogies -- United States.
Letters (correspondence) -- Alabama -- 19th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- New England -- 18th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- United States -- 19th century.
Personal papers -- United States -- 19th century.

Alternate Authors
Turner, J. B. (Jonathan Baldwin), 1805-1899.
Cable, George Washington, 1844-1925.
Clark, Charlotte, active 1854-1861.
Clark, Frederick, active 1854-1861.
Clark, Julia Annah Smith, 1812-
Crosby, Howard, 1826-1891.
Dana, James Dwight, 1813-1895.
Gardiner, H. Norman (Harry Norman), 1855-1927.
Gladden, Washington, 1836-1918.
Greene, Cordelia Agnes, 1831-1905.
Hayes, Rutherford B., 1822-1893.
Hoge, Mrs. (Jane Currie Blaikie), 1811-1890.
Holbrook, Dorothy Smith.
Howe, Joseph, 1747-1775.
Ingalls, Thomas R., 1798-1864.
Lander, Meta, 1813-1901.
Livermore, Mary A. (Mary Ashton), 1820-1905.
Mitchell, Maria, 1818-1889.
Ralli, Pandias Theodore, 1819-1882.
Phillimore, Catherine Mary.
Poor, D. W. (Daniel Warren), 1818-1897.
Porter, Caroline W. (Caroline Williams)
Ray, Julia Annah Clark, 1840-1913.
Scott, W. A. (William Anderson), 1813-1885.
Smith, Sarah Chester Williams, 1778-1845.
Tice, John H.
Whitney, Mary Watson, 1847-1921.
Williams, Dorothy Ashley.
Williams, Israel, 1709-1788.
Williams, William, 1734-1808.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>1758-1836: Massachusetts</th>
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<td>Box 2</td>
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<td>Box 4</td>
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<td>Box 8</td>
<td>1862-1876: U.S. Sanitary Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 9</td>
<td>1879-1892; Ephemera; Fragments; American Scene manuscript</td>
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Includes a typescript manuscript of *American Scene*, by Julia Ray Andrews (1942 September); a photostat copy of a family tree of the Williams family; 22 pieces of fragments and ephemera including a newspaper obituary of Lincoln Clark; 12 cards and notes with names and addresses of persons met in the Army; and a pamphlet: *No. 1. Talks With A Child. For Mothers Only. The Body and How to Protect It* by M. A. L.