Henry Harmon Clark Papers, 1864-1895

Overview of the Collection

**Creator**
Clark, Henry Harmon, 1824-1896

**Title**
Henry Harmon Clark Papers

**Dates**
1864-1895 (inclusive)
1864 1895

**Quantity**
.3 linear feet of shelf space

**Collection Number**
MC 24 (1:2-7)

**Summary**
Henry Clark was one of the founders of East Helena, Montana. This collection consists of outgoing correspondence (1864-1895) of Clark and other members of his family to his relatives in Iowa, including extensive comments on frontier and pioneer life in Virginia City and Helena, Montana Territory.

**Repository**
Montana Historical Society, Research Center Archives
Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives
225 North Roberts
PO Box 201201
Helena MT
59620-1201
Telephone: 406-444-2681
Fax: 406-444-5297
mhslibrary@mt.gov

**Access Restrictions**
Collection open for research.

**Languages**
English

**Sponsor**
Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

---

Biographical Note

Henry Harmon Clark was born on February 5, 1824, in Granville, Massachusetts. He attended public schools there, helped his father on the family farm, and later worked as a carpenter. Clark and his brother, Sanford, went by the Isthmus of Panama to the California gold fields in 1850, and mined successfully for 2 1/2 years on the North Yuba River. In 1853, Henry returned to Massachusetts, married, and moved to Independence, Iowa, where he engaged in farming and stock raising. In 1864, Clark traveled overland to Virginia City, Montana Territory, with Cornelius Hedges and Timothy Wilcox. Wilcox began farming near Virginia City. Hedges and Clark worked for wages in the mines and later became partners in the operation of a placer mining claim they had purchased. The partners moved to Helena’s Last Chance Gulch in 1865. After working for wages for a period of time, Clark began farming in the Prickly Pear Valley near Helena. In 1867, his wife, Emily, and their two children, James and Jennie, traveled up the Missouri River with Mrs. Cornelius Hedges, Mrs. Timothy Wilcox, and Wells T. Clark. After farming for eight years, Henry Clark bought the Prickly Pear House, located in what is now the town of East Helena, and operated it as a hotel, road house, and tavern. He continued to operate the farm on a rental basis. Clark and a Mr. Riggs platted the townsite of East Helena in 1888. Clark served as a county commissioner, a school trustee, and East Helena’s first postmaster.
Content Description

The collection consists of 82 letters written by members of the Clark family, primarily Henry, to family members who remained in Independence, Iowa. These letters were written almost exclusively from Montana Territory, starting in Virginia City in 1864 and moving to Helena and other mining camps in 1865. There is much information on these early settlements as well as on economic conditions, the mining and farming methods employed, and Clark’s activities in Montana through 1882. Henry’s brother, Sanford Clark, died in Iowa in 1878, and the letters thereafter are written to "Sister Delia." In addition, there are four small subgroups containing outgoing correspondence of Clark’s wife, Emily; of two of his cousins, Horatio L. Clark and Wells T. Clark; and Cornelius Hedges.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Researchers must use collection in accordance with the policies of the Montana Historical Society. The Society does not necessarily hold copyright to all materials in the collection. In some cases permission for use may require additional authorization from the copyright owners. For more information contact an archivist.

Preferred Citation


Administrative Information

Arrangement

Arranged by subgroup and series

Location of Collection

1:2-7

Acquisition Information

Acquisition information available upon request

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection

Henry Harmon Clark subgroup
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / 1-9</td>
<td>Sanford Clark (brother)</td>
<td>1864-1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 / 10-12</td>
<td>Delia (sister)</td>
<td>1878-1882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emily R. Clark subgroup**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / 13</td>
<td>Delia (sister-in-law)</td>
<td>1895, undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Horatio L. Clark subgroup**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / 14</td>
<td>Sanford Clark (cousin), Delia (cousin), Wells T. Clark (brother)</td>
<td>1867-1870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wells T. Clark subgroup**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / 15</td>
<td>Sanford Clark (cousin)</td>
<td>1867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cornelius Hedges subgroup**
Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
- Farmers--Montana--East Helena
- Frontier and pioneer life--Montana
- Gold mines and mining--Montana--Virginia City
- Hotels--Montana--East Helena

Personal Names:
- Clark, Henry Harmon, 1824-1896
  (creator)

Geographical Names:
- East Helena (Mont.)--Commerce
- Helena (Mont.)--Description
- Helena (Mont.)--Economic conditions
- Prickly Pear Creek Valley (Mont.)
- Virginia City (Mont.)

Finding aid prepared by MHS Staff
2008

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License:
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Creative Commons Licenses in Archives West:
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/cc-attr.shtml