



# OLD FORT NEWS

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## NOTES ON THE COLLECTION— THE HANNA PORTRAITS

by Walter R. Font

In 1983 the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society received three fine portraits through a generous donation from the Carnahan family. The mid-nineteenth century paintings are good examples of artifacts in the museum's collection that have a keen relevance to local history. The paintings provide us with

images of local resident James Bayless Hanna, his wife Mary, and their two older children Clara and Oliver. The portraits of James and Mary were painted by the same artist, probably soon after their marriage in 1843. The portrait of the children was probably done about 1849.

None of the portraits are signed

and little investigation has been done to determine who the artist may have been. It is possible the family portraits were painted by Horace Rockwell. Rockwell completed a painting of the Samuel Hanna family in 1843 (now at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art) and the

CORPORAL JOHN NOONAN:  
FT. WAYNE'S MAN  
WITH CUSTER  
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portraits of James and Mary were completed about the same time. The painting of the children shows a strong resemblance to Rockwell's style.

Who were these people who look out at us from the past? Although the evidence is often slim, the biographical sketches that follow provide some notable details.

## JAMES BAYLESS HANNA

Four years after he settled in Fort Wayne, Samuel Hanna and his wife Eliza (Taylor) had their first child. James Bayless Hanna was born to the prominent pioneer couple on 11 February 1823.<sup>1</sup>

As the eldest son and primary heir to the Hanna enterprises, James grew along with his father's mercantile business at the corner of Columbia and Barr Streets. Sam evidently introduced his eldest son to the world of business and social

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Mary King (Fairfield) Hanna, c. 1844.  
Oil on canvas, 30" × 25-<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>", artist unknown.

life at an early age. When James was fourteen, his father took him to a gathering of bank directors on election day in 1836. Along with most of the other men, the pair imbibed too much champagne and had to be carried home, much to the dismay of Eliza.<sup>2</sup> After his apprenticeship under his father's mercantile business under the name S. Hanna & Son.

James married Mary King Fairfield on 22 February 1843. His father built a new home for

the young couple on East Wayne Street about 1844.<sup>3</sup>

By the mid 1840's, James was becoming a prominent citizen who was beginning to contribute to the town's growth. He participated in the organizational meeting of the Fort Wayne Female College. He also was elected to city council in 1846.<sup>4</sup> But James did not live long enough to make a name for himself in business and public life. He died at age 28 on 20 August 1851.<sup>5</sup>

## MARY KING FAIRFIELD HANNA

Mary came to Fort Wayne with her parents, two brothers, and the Asa Fairfield family in 1833. She was born in Kennebunkport, Maine, on 8 September 1823, the daughter of Sarah Hayes and Oliver Fairfield. Her mother died when she was three and a half years old, and her father married Sarah Alden.<sup>6</sup>

In their early years of settle-

ment, the Oliver Fairfield family lived in a log house on Columbia Street between Barr and Clinton Streets. Mary undoubtedly knew and probably was a playmate and classmate of her future husband, James Hanna. The Fairfield family and Hugh McCulloch were from Kennebunk, Maine, and their common origin and the environment in the small community probably led to a close relationship. Mary lived in the McCulloch household and served as a companion and helper to Susan McCulloch from about 1838 until

shortly before her marriage to James Bayless Hanna in 1843.<sup>7</sup>

Eight years after James died she married Barnett Jenkins in the Hanna home on east Lewis Street on 4 October 1859. Jenkins was a businessman from Lafayette. Mary and two of her children moved to Lafayette with her new husband.

Mary remained in Lafayette until Barnett died on 27 January 1887. After the death of her second husband, Mary returned to Fort Wayne and lived with her daughter, Clara Louise Carnahan. Mary remained with her daughter until her death at age 93 on 29 January 1916.<sup>8</sup>

## CLARA LOUISE CARNAHAN

The first child born of the union of Mary Fairfield and James Hanna was Clara Louise. She was born in 1845. When her mother moved to Lafayette with her new husband in 1859, Clara and her brother James went with them.

Clara married William L. Carnahan on 3 November 1864. They had four children; Robert, Louise, Clara, and Virginia.

William was a native of Lafayette engaged in the Boot and Shoe business. The Carnahans moved to Fort Wayne in 1872 when William moved his shoe business and later formed a partnership with local businessmen including his brothers-in-law, James T. Hanna and Oliver S. Hanna.

William died in 1897. Clara lived thirty more years at the family home at 712 Rockhill Street. Clara passed away on 25 August 1927.



Clara Louise and Oliver Samuel Hanna, c. 1849.  
Oil on canvas, 30" × 25- $\frac{5}{8}$ ", artist unknown.

## OLIVER SAMUEL HANNA

Oliver was the second child born to James and Mary Hanna. He remained in Fort Wayne with his grandparents at the Hanna homestead in 1859 when the rest of his immediate family moved to Lafayette. In addition to his local education, he attended school in Stamford, Connecticut, and Poughkeepsie, New York.

Oliver began work as a clerk in the First National Bank and worked his way up to the position of director of the bank. He entered the business world by becoming a partner in the wholesale boot and shoe house of Carnahan, Hanna & Co. He also organized a wholesale dry goods and notion house under the name of Hanna, Wiler & Co.

Oliver married Mary Ella Nuttman on 4 December 1878. Two daughters survived to adulthood from this union.

In 1882 Oliver formed a partnership with Joseph D. Nuttman in the banking business under the name Nuttman & Company. When Joseph died in 1890, Oliver continued with the enterprise until a few years before this retirement.

Oliver lived a long and busy life, outliving most of his generation. He died in Fort Wayne on 30 October 1935 when he was 88 years old.<sup>10</sup>



James Bayless Hanna, c. 1844.  
Oil on canvas, 30" × 25-½", artist unknown.

1. Paul Wehr to David Drury, 30 September 1970, Allen County-Ft. Wayne Historical Society Archives, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
2. Copy of a letter from Susan Man McCulloch to Marie Halsey, 27 November 1836, Allen County-Ft. Wayne Historical Society; original in McCulloch Collection, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
3. *News Sentinel*, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 29 January 1916; residence on East Wayne Street is mentioned in *Old Fort Bulletin*, April 1962. James and Mary had three children: Clara Louise born in 1845, Oliver Samuel born in 1847, and James T. born in 1850.
4. B.J. Griswold, *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne, Indiana* (Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1917), pp. 389 and 396. James resigned from the city council on 5 October 1846, *Laws and Ordinances of Fort Wayne*, 1901, p. 9.
5. *Fort Wayne Times*, 28 August 1851.
6. *News Sentinel*, 29 January 1916.
7. *McCulloch Letters, 1838-1841*.
8. Details of Mary Jenkins' later life were taken from her obituary in the *News Sentinel*, 29 January 1916.
9. Details concerning Clara Louise Carnahan are from the *Fort Wayne Morning Journal*, 27 June 1897; the *News Sentinel*, 26 August 1927; and *Index to the Marriage Record, Tippecanoe County, 1850-1920*, vol. 1 (Indiana WPA Project, 1938).
10. Details concerning Oliver Hanna are from *Who's Who in Finance* (New York: Joseph & Sefton, 1911); and the *News Sentinel*, 31 October 1935.