

## Finding Aid to the Reiff Family Papers, 1833-2007

### Summary Information

**Title:** Reiff family papers

**Creator:** Harry Reiff (primary)

**ID:** 116.8001

**Date:** 1833-2007 (inclusive); 1912-1994 (bulk)

**Extent:** .25 linear feet

**Language:** The materials in this collection are in English.

**Abstract:** The Reiff family papers are a compilation of photographs, maps, summaries, drawings, a journal, a scrapbook, newspaper articles, transcriptions, and VHS tapes related to reminiscences of the Reiff family members.

**Repository:**

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong  
One Manhattan Square  
Rochester, New York 14607  
585.263.2700  
library@museumofplay.org

### Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Use:** This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

**Custodial History:** The Reiff family papers were donated to The Strong between 2003 and 2007 as a gift from Daniel D. Reiff. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID116.8001 and were received from Daniel Reiff in 2 folders, 2 volumes, and 2 objects.

**Preferred citation for publication:** Reiff family papers, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong.

**Processed by:** Nicole Pease, February 2017

### Controlled Access Terms

#### Personal Names

- Drake, John F.
- Johnson, John Dillard
- King, Joseph Samuel, Jr.
- Reiff, Daniel Drake
- Reiff, Henry ("Harry")
- Reiff, Ione Drake
- Reiff, Michael
- Reiff, Nicholas
- Reifschneider, Henry

**Corporate Names**

- Brooklyn and Queens YMCA
- Mount Hermon School for Boys
- Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass.
- Harvard College (1780- ). Class of 1925
- Saint Lawrence University

**Subjects**

- American diaries
- Amusements -- New York (State) -- History -- 20th century
- Autobiographical memory
- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)--Social life and customs--20th century
- Education.
- Families -- United States -- History -- 19th Century
- Families -- United States -- History -- 20th Century
- Play – History
- Spokane (Wash.)
- Spokane (Wash.)--Social life and customs--20th century
- Waco (Tex.)
- Waco (Tex.)--History
- Waco (Tex.)--Social life and customs -- 19th Century
- Waco (Tex.)--Social life and customs -- 20th Century

**Biographical Note**

Henry (“Harry”) Reifschneider (later shortened to Reiff) was born in Brooklyn in 1899, the fourth child of German immigrants who settled in the Williamsburg area. Despite being from a poor family, Harry Reiff pursued his education at the Brooklyn YMCA, Mount Hermon School for Boys in Massachusetts, Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and Harvard College, where he received the Carnegie Endowment Fellowship. He received both master’s and doctoral degrees in history from Harvard University. In 1928, Harry joined the faculty at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York.

Harry Reiff married Ione Drake of Spokane, Washington, in 1935. They had two children, Jonathan and Daniel. Appointed head of St. Lawrence University’s History and Government Department in 1944, Harry additionally served as a legal specialist for the U.S. State Department during President Harry S. Truman’s tenure. He passed away in 1981.

Harry’s son Daniel also entered academia. He and wife Janet had two children, Michael and Nicholas. A SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, Daniel Reiff taught in the Department of Art at SUNY Fredonia for many years. In 2013, Daniel published *Teacher, Scholar, Mentor: Dr. Harry Reiff of St. Lawrence University*, using diaries, letters, oral histories, and other archival material about his father.

**Collection Scope and Content Note**

The Reiff family papers contain materials from 1836 through 2007, with the bulk of the papers dated between 1912 and 1994. This collection contains mostly reproductions of a journal, correspondence, genealogical information, newspaper articles, photographs, drawings, maps, transcriptions, summaries, VHS tapes, and a scrapbook. In addition to Harry Reiff's reminiscences, this collection includes similar recollections of play and adventure by his grandsons, Michael and Nicholas Reiff, as well as those of his wife, Ione Drake Reiff, members of her family including her brother, John F. Drake, her uncle, Joseph Samuel King, Jr., and grandfather, John Dillard Johnson of their time living in Waco, Texas, and Spokane, Washington.

The Reiff family papers have been arranged into two series, one of which has been divided into subseries. This collection is housed in two archival document boxes.

**System of Arrangement**

Series I: Provenance information, 2003-2007

Series II: Reminiscences, 1833-1994

Subseries A: John Dillard Johnson, 1833-1913

Subseries B: Joseph Samuel King, Jr. ("Jody"), 1856-1929

Subseries C: Ione Drake Reiff ("IDR"), 1909-1959

Subseries D: John F. Drake ("Johnny"), c. 1913-1924

Subseries E: Harry Reiff, 1892-1965

Subseries F: Michael Reiff, 1991-1994

Subseries G: Nicholas Reiff, 1991-1994

## Contents List

### Series I: Provenance information, 2003-2007

**Scope and Content Note:** This series holds original correspondence between Daniel Reiff and The Strong National Museum of Play providing a description and the provenance of materials in this collection.

#### Box 1

Folder 1 Correspondence re: provenance, 2003-2007

### Series II: Reminiscences, 1833-1994

**Scope and Content Note:** This series contains reproductions of correspondence, photographs, drawings, maps, floor plans, a journal, a scrapbook, newspaper articles, transcriptions, summaries, and VHS tapes all relating to memories of childhood and play by Reiff family members.

#### Subseries A: John Dillard Johnson, 1833-1913

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains reproductions of reminiscences and photographs regarding John's move to Texas in the 1830s as a child and his adventures on a modest farm in the wilderness.

#### Box 1

Folder 2 John Dillard Johnson, 1833-1913

#### Subseries B: Joseph Samuel King, Jr. ("Jody"), 1856-1929

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains reproductions of reminiscences, photographs, drawings, and maps providing a view of growing up on a plantation between 1858 and 1863 in Waco, Texas. Also outlines Jody's interaction with Indians and slave children.

#### Box 1

Folder 3 Joseph Samuel King, Jr. ("Jody"), 1856-1929

#### Subseries C: Ione Drake Reiff ("IDR"), 1909-1959

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains reproductions of photographs, floor plans, transcriptions of conversations, and correspondence that Ione wrote to her brother, Johnny, regarding her memories of growing up in Spokane, Washington.

#### Box 1

Folder 4 Ione Drake Reiff ("IDR"), 1909-1959

#### Subseries D: John F. Drake ("Johnny"), c. 1913-1924

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains a reproduction of a letter that Johnny wrote to his sister, Ione, regarding his memories of growing up in Spokane, Washington.

#### Box 1

Folder 5 John F. Drake ("Johnny"), c. 1913-1924

**Subseries E: Harry Reiff, 1892-1965**

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains reproductions of a journal entitled “Journal of the Inseparable Trio”, a scrapbook entitled “Annotated for Family Archives: Clippings about New York City and Vicinity Relating to His Youth, Collected by Harry Reiff” including indexes, photographs, maps, and newspaper clippings which document the excursions of Harry Reiff and two friends in the greater New York City area. Summaries of oral history stereo reels document Harry’s family, childhood, education, marriage, and professional life. (Page sizes vary in the “Annotated” scrapbook.)

**Box 1**

- Folder 6 Harry Reiff - Journal, 1899-1930
- Folder 7 Harry Reiff - Scrapbook, 1899-1981
- Folder 8 Harry Reiff - Oral history summaries and photographs, 1892-1965

**Subseries F: Michael Reiff, 1991-1994**

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains a VHS tape and content summary documenting Michael Reiff’s daily activities and growth over time. (The VHS tape needs to be acclimated prior to watching.)

**Box 1**

- Folder 9 Michael Reiff, 1991- 1994

**Box 2**

- Object 1 Mike Reiff video, 1991-1994

**Subseries G: Nicholas Reiff, 1991-1994**

**Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains a VHS tape and content summary documenting Nicholas Reiff’s daily activities and growth over time. (The VHS tape needs to be acclimated prior to watching. There is some drop-out on the VHS of Nicholas Reiff.)

**Box 1**

- Folder 10 Nicholas Reiff, 1991- 1994

**Box 2**

- Object 2 Nick Reiff video, 1991-1994