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MS-162: Col. William Brisbane Papers

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MS-162: Col. William Brisbane Papers

Description

The Col. William Brisbane Papers consist of 133 documents covering a span of thirty-three years, from 1858 to 1891, with the bulk of these springing from Brisbane's service in the American Civil War from 1861 to 1863. The early documents of the collection illustrate Brisbane's personal service, containing such items as his own commission and discharge papers for the Pennsylvania Volunteers as well as an invitation to dinner at the house of his brigade commander, Winfield Scott Hancock.

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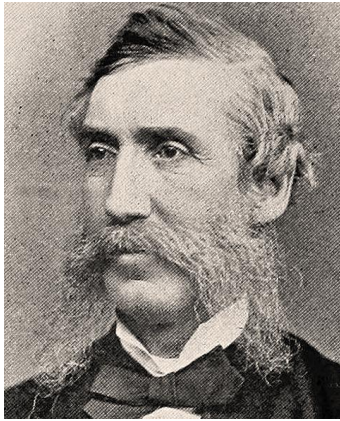
Keywords

Civil War, Civil War Correspondence, 8th Pennsylvania, 49th Pennsylvania, Army of the Potomac, Battle of Antietam, Pennsylvania Emergency Militia, Battle of Gettysburg, Winfield Scott Hancock

Disciplines

History | Military History | United States History

**Guide to the
Col. William Brisbane Papers**



**Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections & College Archives**

**Bryan Caswell '15
May 2014**

Picture: Robert S. Westbrook, *History of the 49th Pennsylvania Volunteers* (Altoona, PA: Altoona Times, 1898), 9. Accessed through *House Divided: The Civil War Research Engine at Dickinson College*.

MS – 162: Papers of Col. William Brisbane

(1 box, .5 cubic feet)

Inclusive Dates: 1858-1891

Bulk Dates: 1861-1863

Processed by: Bryan Caswell '15

Provenance

Purchased in 2014 from Michael Brown Rare Books, LLC.

Biography

William Brisbane was born in 1824 in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. Brisbane studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, practicing for a short time in Oswego, New York beginning in 1854. The outbreak of the American Civil War found Brisbane residing in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Having already been commissioned as the first lieutenant of a company of Pennsylvania militia known as the Wyoming Light Dragoons, Brisbane wasted no time in answering President Abraham Lincoln's call for volunteers in the spring of 1861. Now a captain, Brisbane and his men became Company C of the newly formed 8th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry on April 24, 1861. The 8th Pennsylvania was tasked with guarding the fords of the Potomac River between Williamsport and Falling Waters during the summer of 1861, and experienced little more than picket duty and patrolling both north of the river and south into the mouth of the Shenandoah Valley. As their papers only provided for their enlistment for three months, the 8th Pennsylvania disbanded in July of 1861. Brisbane then returned to Harrisburg to help found a new regiment, the 49th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, in which he would be commissioned Lieutenant Colonel.

Assigned to the VI Corps of the Army of the Potomac, Brisbane and the 49th Pennsylvania served with distinction during the Peninsula Campaign, in Southeastern Virginia, in the spring of 1862. Here Brisbane contracted a malarial infection which would plague him for the rest of his life. Though present at the Battle of Antietam in the fall of 1862, the regiment was never engaged, and Brisbane was forced to resign from the unit on October 15 due to his illness. The 49th Pennsylvania would continue to serve until the end of the war, though it would lose nearly eighty percent of its fighting strength over the course of three days at the Battle of Spotsylvania in May of 1864.

Army officials were unwilling to let Brisbane go completely, and so he was granted the rank of Colonel of Pennsylvania Militia and given the post of Commandant of Camp Franklin in York, Pennsylvania, a processing camp for men drafted into the state's militia forces. With Robert E. Lee's 1863 invasion of Pennsylvania, however, Brisbane's services were once again required in the field, and he was given command of the Fourth Brigade of the First Division of the Pennsylvania Emergency Militia forces to counter the Confederate incursion. Brisbane and his brigade guarded the town of Carlisle during the days surrounding the Battle of Gettysburg before then assisting in chasing the retreating Confederates as the Army of Northern Virginia fled back across the Potomac. He was appointed Military Governor of Hagerstown, MD on July

15, 1863, and once again took part in guarding the fords of the Potomac against Confederate action until relieved of his post on July 25.

The war now over for him, Brisbane returned to practicing medicine, and would continue to do so for another eleven years until his appointment as US Counsel to Ghent, Belgium, by President Ulysses S Grant. A recurrence of his illness forced Brisbane to return to the country in 1879, however, and lead him to apply for an invalid pension for his service during the war. The pension was ultimately granted on June 3, 1880, just one month before his death on July 7. His wife Mary Ann attempted to receive her deceased husband's pension instead, but was not successful.

Scope and Content Notes

The Col. William Brisbane Papers consist of 133 documents covering a span of thirty-three years, from 1858 to 1891, with the bulk of these springing from Brisbane's service in the American Civil War from 1861 to 1863. The early documents of the collection illustrate Brisbane's personal service, containing such items as his own commission and discharge papers for the Pennsylvania Volunteers as well as an invitation to dinner at the house of his brigade commander, Winfield Scott Hancock.

The nature of the documents shift with the beginning Brisbane's tenure as an officer of Pennsylvania militia in late 1862. The vast majority of correspondence from October of 1862 to the end of July, 1863 is made up of general and special orders as well as general communiques from Brisbane's commanding officers. The sheer volume of paperwork and micromanaging necessary for the daily operation of an army is fully on display, and even during the crisis of Robert E. Lee's invasion these orders seldom take on an exciting or agitated tone. Very little agency is seen on the part of Brisbane himself, however, save for a handful of general orders from the colonel to his men relating marching orders or in-camp regulations.

These documents thus help to create a picture of the activities of Brisbane's command, whether at Camp Franklin in York or the Fourth Brigade, First Division PEM in the field, yet provide very little insight into character of William Brisbane as an individual. This picture is far from thorough, as numerous general and special orders are not contained in the collection, as can be seen by the sporadic numbering of the documents. No guiding pattern of preservation is evident, and it is unclear what motivated Brisbane to save these documents above others.

The final series of documents and correspondence was generated by Brisbane's application to receive an invalid pension for his service during the war and his widow's attempt to transfer it to herself after Brisbane's death in 1880, a practice which was not uncommon. The special nature of Brisbane's claim is clearly stated multiple times, as is his difficulty in convincing the Office of Pensions that he should be compensated for malaria that he had contracted while in the army.

Series Description

This collection is divided into four Series.

Series 1: Service in the Volunteer Infantry

This series contains papers relating to Brisbane's service as captain in the 8th Pennsylvania and Lieutenant Colonel in the 49th Pennsylvania. Included are commissions and discharge papers, as well as a handwritten note inviting Brisbane to dinner at the house of the 49th Pennsylvania's brigade commander, Winfield Scott Hancock.

Series 2: Commandant of Camp Franklin, York, Pennsylvania

Included within this series are documents pertaining to Brisbane's tenure as Commandant of a camp of drafted Pennsylvania militia in York, Pennsylvania. Supply requisitions and telegrams from Brisbane's commanding officers, most notably Darius Couch, make up the bulk of this series.

Series 3: Officer in the Pennsylvania Emergency Militia

This series contains papers and correspondence dated to Brisbane's time as the commander of a brigade of Pennsylvania Emergency Militia during the crisis of Lee's invasion of the North in the summer of 1863. Marching orders are most prevalent, along with documents related to Brisbane's garrisoning of Carlisle, Pennsylvania and his appointment as military governor of Hagerstown, Maryland.

Series 4: Remuneration and Pension Applications

This series includes documents relating to Brisbane's payment after his discharge, his application to receive an invalid pension after the war, and his widow's attempts to transfer that same pension to herself after Brisbane's death. Correspondence with the Pension Office, testimonials, and Brisbane's obituary are contained herein.

Box 1

Box-Folder

0-0 Finding Aid and Biographical Information

Series 1 *Service in the Volunteer Infantry*

- 1-1 Correspondence & Service in the 8th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry
22 September, 1858 - 29 July, 1863
 - Commission as First Lieutenant of the Wyoming Light Dragoons, 22 September, 1858
 - Commission as First Lieutenant of the Wyoming Light Dragoons, 6 June, 1859
 - Commission as Captain of 8th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, 24 April, 1861
 - Memorandum of Promotions, Discharges, and Desertions in Co. C, 8th P.V., 26 April – 20 June, 1861
 - Discharge Papers, George Kelley, 29 July, 1861
 - Discharge Papers, William Brisbane, 29 July, 1861

- 1-2 Correspondence & Service in the 49th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry
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 - Commission as Lieutenant Colonel of the 49th Pennsylvania Volunteer

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General Order No. 45, Hdqs. William Mitchell, 22 March, 1862
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Series 2 Commandant of Camp Franklin, York, Pennsylvania

- 2-1 Correspondence while Commandant of Camp Franklin, York, PA
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A. L. Russell to William Brisbane, 13 November, 1862
A. G. Curtin to William Brisbane, 14 November, 1862
Rufus J. Winterode, Supply Requisition and Receipt, 22 November, 1862
Alonzo Ettinger, Supply Requisition and Receipt, 22 November, 1862
PA Chief Mustering Officer to William Brisbane, 27 November, 1862
MD Provost Marshal General to William Brisbane, 30 November, 1862
A. L. Russell to William Brisbane, 2 December, 1862
William Brisbane to A. L. Russell, 3 December, 1862
General Orders No. 201, 8 December, 1862
William Brisbane to Major True and Response, 18-20 December, 1862
Envelopes
- 2-2 Correspondence while Commandant of Camp Franklin, York, PA
6 June, 1863 – 20 June, 1863
Letter of Payment, 6 June, 1863
Copy of Letter of Payment, 6 June, 1863
Darius Couch to William Brisbane, 14 June 1863
G. M. Brayton to William Brisbane, 15 June 1863
Henry Palmer to William Brisbane, 15 June 1863
Capt. E. C. Wilson, Receipt of Military Clothing, Camp and Garrison
Equipage, Etc., 20 June 1863
Capt. E. C. Wilson, Receipt of Military Clothing, Camp and Garrison
Equipage, Etc., 20 June 1863
Capt. E. C. Wilson, Receipt of Military Clothing, Camp and Garrison
Equipage, Etc., 20 June 1863

Series 3: Officer in the Pennsylvania Emergency Militia

- 3-1 Correspondence while Commanding Fourth Brigade, First Division, PEM
24 June, 1863 – 30 June, 1863
General Orders No. 8, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 24 June, 1863
General Orders No. 9, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 24 June, 1863
Special Orders No. 14, Hdqs. Darius N. Couch, 27 June, 1863
General Order, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 27 June, 1863

General Order No. 6, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 28 June, 1863
Special Order, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 29 June, 1863
General Order No. 2, Hdqs. William Brisbane, 30 June, 1863
General Order No. 3, Hdqs. William Brisbane, 30 June, 1863
Special Orders No. 6, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 30 June, 1863
Special Order No. 11, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 30 June, 1863
Special Orders No. 12, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 30 June, 1863

3-2 Correspondence while Commanding Fourth Brigade, First Division, PEM
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William F. Smith to William Brisbane, 1 July, 1863
General Order No. 4, Hdqs. William Brisbane, 3 July, 1863
General Orders No. 5, Hdqs. Darius N. Couch, 3 July, 1863
General Order No. 8, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 3 July, 1863
General Order No. 9, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 3 July, 1863
General Order No. 10, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 3 July, 1863
General Order No. 11, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 3 July, 1863
General Order No. 12, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 3 July, 1863
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Names of guard for three days at Carlisle (no date)
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General Order No. 12, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 8 July, 1863
Circular, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 9 July, 1863
General Order No. 3, Hdqs. William Brisbane, 9 July, 1863
General Order No. 6, Hdqs. William Brisbane, 9 July, 1863
General Order No. 13, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 9 July, 1863
General Order No. 14, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 9 July, 1863
General Order No. 15, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 9 July, 1863
Special Orders No. 29, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 9 July, 1863
Special Order No. 32, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 9 July, 1863
Special Order No. 33, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 10 July, 1863
General Order No. 16, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 11 July, 1863
Special Order, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 11 July, 1863
Copy of Special Order, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 11 July, 1863
Special Order No. 39, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 11 July, 1863

3-3 Correspondence while Military Governor of Hagerstown, MD
15 July, 1863 – 21 July, 1863

General Orders, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 15 July, 1863
General Order, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 15 July, 1863
General Order, Hdqs. William Brisbane, 15 July, 1863
William Brisbane to Commanding Officers of Blue Reserves, Grey
Reserves, and 28th PEMR, 15 July, 1863
Appointment of Provost Marshal of Hagerstown, Hdqs. William
Brisbane, 16 July, 1863
Copy of Appointment of Provost Marshal of Hagerstown, 16 July, 1863
Special Orders, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 17 July, 1863

Special Orders, Hdqs. William F. Smith, 17 July, 1863
 Frank P. Nicholson to William Brisbane (no date)
 William Brisbane to the Commanding Officers of Capt. Landis' Battery
 and Capt. Miller's Battery, 17 July, 1863
 United States Military Telegraph, 17 July, 1863
 William Brisbane to Darius N. Couch, 17 July, 1863
 William Brisbane to Commanding Officers of Blue Reserves, Grey
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 Orders, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division PEM, 18 July, 1863
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 Relief and Appointment of New Provost Marshall of Hagerstown, MD, 18
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3-4 Correspondence while Military Governor of Hagerstown, MD
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 Fitz Henry Warren to William Brisbane, 23 July, 1863
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 Fitz Henry Warren to James Chamberlain, 24 July, 1863
 Charles S. Smith to J. Ross Clark, 25 July, 1863
 Extract of Special Orders No. 44, Hdqs. Darius N. Couch, 25 July, 1863
 Extract of Special Orders No. 44, Hdqs. Darius N. Couch, 25 July, 1863
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Series 4: Remuneration and Pension Applications

- 4-1 Post-Service Bills and Remuneration
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 William Brisbane to L. Thomas, 4 August, 1863

H. F. Lehman to William Brisbane, 7 August, 1863
Circular No. 35-Series of 1863, US Ordnance Office, 10 August, 1863
H. F. Lehman to William Brisbane, 12 August, 1863
James M. Sellen to L. Thomas, 20 November, 1863

4-2 Pension Claim and Application for Widow's Pension

5 March, 1879 – 31 January, 1891

William Earnshaw to William Brisbane, 5 March 1879
John A. Bentley to James G. Blain, 16 June, 1879
Assistant Adjutant General to William Brisbane, 21 June, 1879
O. P. G. Clarke to William Brisbane, 17 July, 1879
George W. Johnes to William Brisbane, 13 December, 1879
George W. Johnes to William Brisbane, 30 January, 1880
General Affidavit, April, 1880
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Record of Pension Testimony (no date)
Record of Pension Testimony (no date)
Record of Pension Testimony (no date)
Certificate of Pension, 5 June, 1880
Obituary
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Robert P. Porter to Mary A. R. Brisbane, 26 January, 1891
Mary A. R. Brisbane to Robert P. Porter, 31 January, 1891

For more information about Col. William Brisbane

MS-129 The Burlew Letters, Gettysburg College Special Collections

Robert S. Westbrook, *History of the 49th Pennsylvania Volunteers*

Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-5*