Guide to the William E. Walsh Civil War Diary Collection 1861-1865

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Collection Overview

Creator: William E. Walsh, 1832-1907
Title: The William E. Walsh Civil War Diary Collection
Dates: 1861-1865
Quantity: 1 box(es) (0.25 linear feet)
Abstract: The William E. Walsh Civil War Diary Collection contains an account of his experiences as a trooper in the 1st Regiment, Rhode Island Cavalry during the American Civil War of 1861-1865. The account comments on the conditions of daily army life and the tragedy of the Civil War. In addition, a copy of Walsh's enlistment papers and a statement of his military service is included in the collection.

Identification: Ms. walsh
Language: The records are in English.
Repository: Phillips Memorial Library, Special and Archival Collections 549 River Avenue Providence, RI 02918-0001 http://www.providence.edu/Academics/Phillips+Memorial+Library/Library+Archives/

Biographical or Historical Information

Enlisting in Providence, Rhode Island on December 2, 1861, as a private and mustering out on August 3, 1865, as a corporal, William E. Walsh's "Notes in Brief" is the centerpiece of the collection. Dated May 17, 1865, and based on memory and notes, this is the first reminiscence of an Irish immigrant serving in the Civil War to be uncovered in Rhode Island.

Timeline
1832  Born in King's County, Ireland
unknown  Immigrated to the United States, and employed as a machinist prior to enlisting in the 1st Regiment, Rhode Island Cavalry.
1861 Dec 2  Enlisted at Providence, Rhode Island in the 1st Regiment, as a private for three years.
1863 Feb 24  Taken prisoner near Potomac Creek, Va. and transported to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia.
1863 Mar 10  Paroled from Libby Prison and transported to Annapolis, Md.
1864 Jan 5  Re-enlisted for 3 three years in the 1st Regiment, Rhode Island Cavalry.
1864 Dec 4  Promoted to Corporal.
1865 May 17  Wrote "Notes in Brief" from memory and notes, dated May 17, covering the period from his enlistment to his furlough.
1865 Aug 3  Mustered out at Baltimore, Maryland, with the rank of Corporal.
unknown  Married Susan Gilday of Charlestown, Massachusetts; the couple had at least four children.
1907  Died; buried in Taunton, Massachusetts.
Scope and Content Note

The diary consists of thirty-one unnumbered pages written on both sides of sixteen sheets of stationary. The sheets, some including the Corporal's name and regiment and a regimental banner in the upper left corner, measure approximately 5" wide x 8" high.

Walsh (1832-1907) comments on battles (e.g., Fredericksburg), conditions in Libby Prison, prominent military figures (e.g., George A. Custer), treatment and performance of the Irish and other ethnic groups in the ranks, and life in the Union Army.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Notes in Brief, 1861-1865

Restrictions

Open for research.

Terms governing use and reproduction: Photocopying and scanning of materials is a fee based service available in the repository and is allowed at the discretion of the Librarian for Special and Archival Collections when in compliance to the College's policy on copyright and publication.

Related Material

A digitized copy of the William E. Walsh Civil War Diary collection can be found on the College's Digital Commons website.

Further information on the military service of William E. Walsh can be found in the Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System site, maintained by the National Park Service.

There are no known separated materials to this collection.

Index Terms

These records are indexed under the following headings. Researchers wishing to find related materials should search HELIN under these index terms.

- Rhode Island History 1775-1865
- Rhode Island History Civil War, 1861-1865
- United States. Army. Rhode Island Cavalry Regiment, 1st (1861-1865)
- United States History Civil War, 1861-1865 Participation, Immigrant
- United States History Civil War, 1861-1865 Personal narratives
- Walsh, William E., 1832-1907

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Prior to their donation, the collection remained in the possession of William E. Walsh's descendants.
**Preferred Citation**

The William E. Walsh Civil War Diary Collection, Providence College, Phillips Memorial Library, Special and Archival Collections.

**Acquisitions Information**

John C. Walsh, the grandson of William E. Walsh, donated the collection to Providence College in January 1974.

**Processing Information**

The Providence College Archives staff in 1976 prepared a transcription of the Notes to assist readers with Walsh's handwriting and to preserve the fragile and fading original pages. Copies of the 1976 transcription and a 2007 revision are included in the Collection.
### Inventory

**Series:** Notes in Brief  
**Dates:** 1861-1865  
**Extent:** 1 box(es) (0.25 linear feet)  
**Material types:**  
- manuscripts  
- transcripts

**Scope and Content Note**

The inventory is comprised of handwritten notes and transcripts of William E. Walsh’s reconstructed diary and reproductions of documents relating to his military service.

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| 1 | 1 | Notes in Brief 1865 May 17  
  |   | Contains the original 31 handwritten pages. |
| 1 | 2 | Notes in Brief 1976  
  |   | Transcript copy of the notes compiled by staff of Providence Colleges Archives. |
| 1 | 3 | Notes in Brief 2007  
  |   | Revised transcript copy of the notes compiled by staff of Providence Colleges Archives and Special Collections. |
| 1 | 4 | Volunteer Enlistment Papers 1864 Jan 5  
  |   | Includes Walsh’s signature, biographical information and physical description (reproduction). |
| 1 | 5 | Statement of Military Service undated  
  |   | Summarizes Walsh’s military service, the organization of the 1st Regiment Rhode Island Cavalry, and battles and troop movements in which Walsh participated (reproduction). |