

THE WILLIAM E. WALSH CIVIL WAR DIARY COLLECTION

Corp. William Walsh,



Co. A, 1st R. I. Cavalry.

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Phillips Memorial Library
Providence College
Providence, Rhode Island

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

William E. Walsh's May 1865 "Notes in Brief" is the centerpiece of the Walsh Civil War Diary Collection. Written from memory and notes, the thirty-one (31) page document is the first reminiscence of an Irish immigrant serving in the Civil War to be uncovered in Rhode Island.

Enlisting in Providence on December 2, 1861, as a private, mustering out on August 3, 1865, as a corporal, 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.

The Providence College Archives staff 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.

Walsh's grandson donated the Notes to Providence College in January 1974. Other descendants later provided biographical information and added reproductions of the Corporal's 1864 re-enlistment papers and a chronology of his service in the First Regiment, Rhode Island Cavalry.

In May 2007 the College posted a digital version of the entire William E. Walsh Civil War Diary Collection at http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/walsh_diary/.

BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM E. WALSH

- 1832 Born in King's County, Ireland
- ? Immigrated to United States, employed as a machinist prior to enlisting
in the RI Cavalry
- 1861 Dec. 2 Enlisted for three years in Providence, Rhode Island; private in the
First Regiment, Rhode Island Cavalry
- 1863 Mar. Imprisoned in Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia
- 1864 Jan. 5 Reenlisted for 3 years in the First Regiment, Rhode Island Cavalry
- 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 in Baltimore, Maryland, with the rank of corporal
- ? Married Susan Gilday of Charlestown, Massachusetts; the Walshes
had at least 4 children
- 1907 Died; buried in Taunton, Massachusetts

THE COLLECTION

FOLDER	TITLE AND CONTENTS	DATE
1	“Notes in Brief” by William E. Walsh, 31 handwritten pages	1865 May 17
2	“Notes in Brief” transcription by staff of Providence College Archives	1976
3	“Notes in Brief” transcription by staff of Providence College Archives and Special Collections	2007
4.	Volunteer Enlistment Papers, including Walsh signature, biographical information and physical description (reproduction)	1864 January 5
5	Statement listing Walsh dates of military service, organization of First Regiment Rhode Island Cavalry, and battles and troop movements in which Walsh participated (reproduction)	undated

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