

Burns, William S. Reminiscences

William S. Burns Reminiscences,
[1887?]



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

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Unit Date

[1887?]

Language

English .

Abstract

Civil War reminiscences of William S. Burns, captain in the 4th Missouri Cavalry, clipped from an unidentified newspaper and pasted into a scrapbook.

Creator

Burns, William S. (William Stewart), 1833-1911

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Physical Characteristics

0.1 cu. ft. 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

Permission to publish material from the William S. Burns Reminiscences must be obtained from Special Collections, Virginia Tech.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the William S. Burns Reminiscences commenced and was completed in December, 2011.

Preferred Citation

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Biographical Note

William Stewart Burns was born in Geneva, New York on November 24, 1833. He graduated from Hobart College and was working for the Kansas Relief Committee by 1860.

Soon after the outbreak of the Civil War, Burns journeyed to Missouri to accept a commission as second lieutenant in the Fremont Hussars, organized by Burns' acquaintance, Alexander S. Asboth, under John C. Fremont. The unit became the 4th Missouri Cavalry in February, 1862. Burns was promoted to captain and remained with the regiment through its campaigns in Missouri and northern Arkansas until February, 1863, when poor health forced a hospital stay in Ironton, Missouri. Following his release, Burns accepted an appointment to the staff of James Dwight, deputy provost marshal for the District of Missouri. Shortly afterward, Burns was appointed judge advocate for the District of Columbus, Kentucky; then appointed acting assistant inspector general for the XVI Corps in July. He participated in the Meridian Campaign, the Red River Expedition, and in operations in northern Mississippi before mustering out with his regiment on September 20, 1864.

Burns had married Sophie Lake Savage Burns (born 1839) on November 24, 1863, and the couple would have four children: (William S., Charles C., Sophie F., and Edward B.). The family lived in Steuben County, New York, where Burns worked as a bookkeeper and clerk for real estate dealers John and Ira Davenport until 1905. William S. Burns died on January 16, 1911, and is buried in Nondaga Cemetery, Bath (Steuben County), New York.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the Civil War reminiscences of William S. Burns, a captain in the 4th Missouri Cavalry, written as a series of articles for an unidentified newspaper (probably the *Steuben Courier*). Clipped from the newspaper, the articles have been pasted into a small scrapbook bearing the embossed cover title, "My Father's Army Life." In attempting to provide a detailed and accurate picture of his war-time experiences, Burns relies not only on his own memory, but upon entries from his journal, correspondence, military orders, and the writings of others. In doing so, Burns presents lengthy accounts of the Battle of Pea Ridge, the Red River Campaign, and other operations in the western theater, while providing assessments of various military leaders. Also mounted in the scrapbook are various engravings portraying war-time scenes and clipped from unidentified sources, a photographic portrait of Burns, and a clipping of a poem written by William S. Burns Jr.

Related Materials

The [William S. Burns Papers](#), held by the University of Michigan, contains a scrapbook that is apparently similar to the one in this collection, as well as a number of letters written by Burns to his brother Charles.

Keywords

Civil War

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Description of Subordinate Components

Description of Subordinate Components

Scrapbook

Unit Date [1887?]

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