

William Darke Briscoe Civil War diaries collection

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1861-1862, 2013



Title Statement

William Darke Briscoe Civil War diaries collectionGuide to the William Darke Briscoe Civil War diaries collection C0239

Subtitle: William Darke Briscoe Civil War diaries collection

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Publication Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0239

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/360

Unit Date

1861-1862, 2013

Language

English

Abstract

Approximately 22,500 words total, a detailed manuscript account, in diary form, of long periods of the first two years of the Civil War in Virginia, April 18-August 12, 1861, and April 10- September 8, 1862. The diaries contain eye-witness accounts of Civil War battles, social commentary on life during wartime, and detailed descriptions of travel in Virginia, including trips to Montpelier and Weyer's Cave. The first diary features a detailed double-page manuscript map of the first Battle of Bull Run.

Creator

Briscoe, William Darke, 1832-1906

Extent

0.25 Linear Feet 1 box

Physical Location

R48, C2, S3

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

No known copyright. The Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries believes that this collection is not restricted by copyright or related rights, but a conclusive determination could not be made. (See <https://rightsstatements.org/page/NKC/1.0/?language=en>)

Acquisition Information

Purchased from L&T Respress Books in June 2013.

Processing Information

Processing completed by Jordan Patty in September 2013. EAD markup completed by Jordan Patty in September 2013. Finding aid updated by Amanda Menjivar in February 2024.

Preferred Citation

William Briscoe Darke Civil War Diaries collection, C0239, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.

Biographical Information

William Darke Briscoe (1832-1906), a native of Charlestown, Virginia (now West Virginia), enlisted in the Confederate army at the outbreak of the Civil War, and he was assigned quartermaster to the local company. He served through the war, eventually rising to the rank of captain in the 12th Virginia Cavalry. John S. Mosby, in his "Stuart's Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign" includes a paragraph concerning Briscoe's delivery of a dispatch at the end of June 1863, from northern Virginia to Robert E. Lee's headquarters in Pennsylvania. The balance of what seems to be known of Briscoe's service in the war is contained in the diaries in this collection. Following the war Briscoe returned to Charlestown and to farming, marrying and raising a family of six children. In 1903 he published "Evet's Run," a long poem based on Jefferson County's local traditions, in the West Virginia Historical Magazine (Vol. 3, October, 1903).

Scope and Content

Approximately 22,500 words total, a detailed manuscript account, in diary form, of long periods of the first two years of the Civil War in Virginia, April 18-August 12, 1861, and April 10-September 8, 1862. The diaries contain eye-witness accounts of Civil War battles, social commentary on life during wartime, and detailed descriptions of travel in Virginia, including trips to Montpelier and Weyer's Cave. The first diary features a detailed double-page manuscript map of the first Battle of Bull Run.

The diaries describe Briscoe's activities, moods, and thoughts from the opening of the war at Harper's Ferry through the first Battle of Bull Run and during the 1862 spring and summer campaigns in Virginia, from Jackson's valley campaign to the eve of the battle at Antietam. Included are accounts of his foraging expeditions to supply his troops, eyewitness accounts of battle, reports and rumors from other quarters,

reconstruction of extensive conversations and encounters with comrades, neighbors, and other fellow Southerners, including would-be girlfriends, commentary on the war, and long descriptive travelogues describing famous and not-so-famous areas he traversed. The diaries focus as much on the social aspects of the struggle as the military. Miscellaneous manuscript notes appear on the endpapers and final leaves of second volume. The handwriting is a little difficult to read, but provide a detailed first-hand account of five months from each of the first two years of the Civil War. The collection also contains a rough typescript of volume one and a typescript of several lengthy passages from volume two. The book dealer that sold the diaries created the typescripts.

Related Material

The Special Collections Research Center holds many other collections focused on the [American Civil War](#), as well as [diary collections](#).

Keywords

Diaries

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

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Virginia -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Confederate States of America -- History, Military

Arrangement

The collection is arranged by format.

Description of Subordinate Components

Series 1: Civil War diaries

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/98118

Unit Date 1861-1862

Container Summary (2 folders)

Volume 1

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/98119

Unit Date 1861

Text 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Volume 2

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/98120

Unit Date 1862

Text 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Series 2: Typescripts

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/98121

Unit Date 2013

Container Summary (1 folder)

Typescripts**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/98122**Unit Date** 2013**Text** 1 (box)**Container** 3 (folder)