

Benjamin Helm Bristow Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2010

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79013862>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms010310>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2011

Collection Summary

Title: Benjamin Helm Bristow Papers

Span Dates: 1839-1932

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1874-1896)

ID No.: MSS13862

Creator: Bristow, Benjamin Helm, 1832-1896

Extent: 16,000 items

Extent: 20 containers

Extent: 7.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79013862>

Summary: Army officer, lawyer, United States secretary of the treasury, and solicitor general. Correspondence, speeches, biographical material, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, other printed material, and photographs relating primarily to Bristow's service as solicitor general and secretary of the treasury in the administrations of Ulysses S. Grant and to his New York City law firm. Includes a letterpress book of incoming and outgoing correspondence of the commissioner of internal revenue concerning the whiskey frauds of 1875.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Belknap, William W. (William Worth), 1829-1890--Correspondence.

Blaine, James Gillespie, 1830-1893--Correspondence.

Boynton, Henry V. (Henry Van), 1835-1905--Correspondence.

Bristow, Benjamin Helm, 1832-1896.

Childs, George William, 1829-1894--Correspondence.

Davis, David, 1815-1886--Correspondence.

Drexel, Anthony J. (Anthony Joseph), 1826-1893--Correspondence.

Edmunds, George F. (George Franklin), 1828-1919--Correspondence.

Fish, Hamilton, 1808-1893--Correspondence.

Goodloe, William Cassius, 1841-1889--Correspondence.

Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885--Correspondence.

Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885.

Harlan, John Marshall, 1833-1911--Correspondence.

Meriwether, W. A.--Correspondence.

Porter, Horace, 1837-1921--Correspondence.

Swayne, Noah Haynes, 1804-1884--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Department of the Treasury. Office of the Secretary.

United States. Office of Commissioner of Internal Revenue.

United States. Solicitor General.

Subjects

Law--United States.

Practice of law--New York (State)--New York.

Whiskey fraud.

Places

United States--Economic policy--To 1933.

United States--Politics and government--1865-1900.

Occupations

Army officers.
Cabinet officers.
Lawyers.
Public officials.

Provenance

The papers of Benjamin Helm Bristow, army officer, lawyer, United States secretary of the treasury, and solicitor general, were deposited in the Library of Congress by William B. Bristow in 1937 and converted to a gift in 1946.

Processing History

The Bristow Papers were processed in 1972. The finding aid was revised in 2010.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Benjamin Helm Bristow is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Benjamin Helm Bristow are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Benjamin Helm Bristow Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1832	Born, Elkton, Ky.
1851	Graduated, Jefferson College, Washington, Pa.
1853	Admitted to Kentucky bar after studying law with his father, Francis Bristow, congressman from Kentucky.
1861-1865	Officer in Kentucky infantry and Kentucky calvary; wounded at the Battle of Shiloh (1863) and assisted in the capture of John Hunt Morgan during his raid through Indiana and Ohio (July 1863)
1863-1865	Kentucky state senator
1865-1866	Assistant United States attorney
1866-1870	United States district attorney for Louisville, Ky., district
1870-1872	First solicitor general of the United States
1874-1876	Secretary of the treasury Reorganized Treasury Department and successfully prosecuted the "Whiskey Ring" accused of defrauding the federal government of tax revenue
1876	Candidate for Republican Party nomination for president

1878	Began law practice in New York
1896, June 22	Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Benjamin Helm Bristow (1832-1896) span the years 1839-1932, with the bulk of the material from 1874 to 1896. The collection consists of correspondence, speeches, biographical material, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, other printed materials, and photographs relating primarily to Bristow's service as solicitor general and secretary of the treasury in President Ulysses S. Grant's administrations and to his New York City law firm. Included are a letterpress book of incoming and outgoing correspondence of the commissioner of internal revenue concerning the whiskey frauds of 1875.

Among the correspondents are William W. Belknap, James Gillespie Blaine, Henry V. Boynton, George William Childs, David Davis, Anthony Joseph Drexel, George F. Edmunds, Hamilton Fish (1808-1893), William Cassius Goodloe, Ulysses S. Grant, John Marshall Harlan, W. A. Meriwether, Horace Porter, and Noah Haynes Swayne.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	Dec. 1839-Dec. 1871
BOX 2	1872-1873
BOX 3	Jan.-Oct. 1874
BOX 4	Nov. 1874-Mar. 1875
BOX 5	Apr.-Aug. 1875
BOX 6	Sept.-Dec. 1875
BOX 7	1876-1877
BOX 8	1878-1893, undated
BOX 8	Speeches and biographical material
BOX 8	Treasury reports and related matter
BOX 8	Photograph of Bristow
BOX 9	Letterbooks
BOX 9	Vols. 1-3, June 1872-1874
BOX 10	Vols. 4-6, July 1874-Feb. 1875
BOX 11	Vols. 7-9, Mar. 1875-May 1882
BOX 12	Vols. 10-12, May 1882-May 1896
BOX 13	Private, Apr.-June 1876
BOX 13	Copies of letters received and sent by the commissioner of internal revenue related to whisky frauds in St. Louis, Mo., Chicago, Ill., and Milwaukee, Wis.
BOX 14	Record of correspondence in the office of solicitor of the treasury relating to the detection and prosecution of defrauders of revenue on distilled liquors
BOX 15	Newspapers and clippings
BOX 16	Scrapbooks
BOX 16	Vols. 1-2, June 1874-1876
BOX 17	Vol. 3, July 1876-June 1896
BOX 18	Other printed matter
BOX 18	Memorial of Bristow
BOX 18	Miscellaneous
BOX 19	Photographs and steel engravings
BOX 20	Negative photostats and letters
BOX 20	1839-1876
BOX 20	1875-1887