James S. Brisbin Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2020

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

Catalog Record: http://lccn.loc.gov/mm2017086189

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms020001

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff
Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division Staff, 2020
Collection Summary

Title: James S. Brisbin Papers
Span Dates: 1861-1957
Bulk Dates: 1862-1866
ID no.: MSS86189
Creator: Brisbin, James S. (James Sanks), 1837-1892
Extent: 115 items
Extent: 1 container plus 1 oversize
Extent: 1.55 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English.
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2017086189
Summary: Union army officer and author. Correspondence, maps, military records, and biographical materials related to Brisbin's Civil War service.

Acquisition Information

The papers of James S. Brisbin were purchased by the Library of Congress in 2017.

Processing History

The papers of James S. Brisbin were arranged and described by Katherine Madison in 2020.

Other Repositories

Other papers of James S. Brisbin can be found at the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in New York City, New York and at the Montana Historical Society in Helena, Montana.

Copyright Status

Materials from the James S. Brisbin Papers are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The James S. Brisbin Papers 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, James S. Brisbin Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837, May 23</td>
<td>Born, Boalsburg, Pa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861, Apr.</td>
<td>Private, 7th Pennsylvania Volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1861, Apr. 26  Second lieutenant, 1st Dragoons (Cavalry), United States Army
1861, June 15  Married Mary Jane Wagner (died 1887)
1861, Aug. 3  Second lieutenant, 1st Cavalry, United States Army
1861, Aug. 5  Captain, 6th Cavalry, United States Army
1863, June 9  Brevetted major, United States Army
1864, Mar. 1  Colonel, 5th Colored Cavalry, United States Army
1864, Dec. 12  Brevetted brigadier general, United States Army Volunteers
1864, Dec. 19  Brevetted lieutenant colonel, United States Army
1865, Mar. 13  Brevetted colonel, United States Army
1865, May 1  Brigadier general, United States Army Volunteers
1865, Dec. 15  Brevetted major general, United States Army Volunteers
1866, July  Captain, 9th Cavalry, United States Army
1868, Jan. 1  Major, 2nd Cavalry, United States Army
1870  Published *Beldon, the White Chief*. Cincinnati and New York: C. F. Vent
1885, June 6  Lieutenant colonel, 9th Cavalry, United States Army
1889, Aug. 20  Colonel, 1st Cavalry, United States Army
1890, Dec. 12  Married Amelia Wilson
1891, Apr. 22  Colonel, 8th Cavalry, United States Army

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of James Sanks Brisbin (1837-1892) span the years 1861-1957, with the bulk of the material dating from 1862 to 1866. The collection documents Brisbin's military service during the Civil War and his personal relationship with his first wife, Mary Jane Wagner Brisbin (1845-1887).

The collection consists predominantly of correspondence from Brisbin to Wagner during his service with the Army of the Potomac and while serving in various Trans-Mississippi campaigns. One letter (August 12, 1862) includes description of a woman disguised as a male soldier in the Union Army. Additional material in the collection includes battlefield sketches of the 1st Battle of Bull Run (1861) and the Battle of North Anna River (1864), an order for artillery review by President Abraham Lincoln (1863), the certificate confirming Brisbin's appointment to brevet major for meritorious service during the Battle of Beverly Ford in 1863 (1866), and other papers. Also included in the collection is correspondence (1952-1957) with Brisbin and Wagner's daughter Kathryn Brisbin Power regarding her father's postbellum military service in the American West. Included with these later letters is a typed and edited transcript of a letter (1892) from Brisbin to Edward Settle Godfrey regarding George A. Custer and the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Select original letters between Brisbin and Wagner show signs of editing by Power.

**Arrangement of the Papers**

This collection is arranged chronologically.

**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**
Brisbin, James S. (James Sanks), 1837-1892.
Brisbin, Mary Jane Wagner, 1845-1887--Correspondence.
Custer, George A. (George Armstrong), 1839-1876.

**Organizations**
United States. Army of the Potomac
United States. Army.

**Subjects**
Bull Run, 1st Battle of, Va., 1861.
Little Bighorn, Battle of the, Mont., 1876.
North Anna River, Battle of, Va., 1864.

**Places**
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Campaigns.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Participation, Female.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
Virginia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
West (U.S.)--History, Military--19th century.
West (U.S.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

**Occupations**
Army officers.
Authors.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Diagram of a position of forces with explanatory note, 1st Battle of Bull Run, 1861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| BOX 1     | Correspondence with Mary Jane Wagner Brisbin, 1862-1868, 1877  
            | (7 folders) |
| BOX 1     | Order No. 50, 1863 |
| BOX 1     | Map of operations on the North Anna River, May 24-26, 1864 |
| BOX OV1   | Presidential appointment certificate, 1866 |
| BOX 1     | Obituary in the *Democratic Watchman* (Bellefonte, Pa.), 1892 |
| BOX 1     | Correspondence with Kathryn Brisbin Power, 1952-1957 |
| BOX 1     | Genealogical note on the name "Brisbin," undated |
| BOX 1     | Photograph, undated |