

Collection #
SC 1322

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SCRIBNER PAPERS, 1846–1900

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 12 folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1846-1900

PROVENANCE: Purchased from Lorenz G. Schumm, La Porte, Indiana, January 1950

RESTRICTIONS: None

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RELATED COLLECTIONS: B. F. Scribner, *How Soldiers Were Made* (E 506.5 38th S37 1887);

Mary Helen Scribner, *The Old House Speaks* (pam F 534 N41 S36 1933);
William Augustus Scribner, *Early Days in New Albany* (pam F 534 N 41 S38 1962);
SC 2198 William Augustus Scribner Papers;
SC 1317 Lorenz Schumm's;
SC 0233 Elizabeth Clapp Papers, and
M 0145 William R. Holloway Papers

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1950.0108

NOTES: Photograph stored in V.C.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Benjamin Franklin Scribner (1825-1900) was born in New Albany, Indiana, the son of Abner Scribner. He early displayed a military bent, joining the Spencer Grays, a local militia group. When war broke out with Mexico in 1846, the group volunteered for action, and became Company A of the 2nd Indiana Volunteers. Scribner served for one year, seeing action at Buena Vista and earning promotion to sergeant. In 1847 he published an account of his experiences, largely excerpts from his journals, entitled *Camp life of a volunteer* (Evansville, J. R. Nunemacher, 1847).

Scribner's civilian occupation was as a chemist and druggist, and in the profession he ran the partnership of Scribner and Maginness, one of the largest of its kind in New Albany.

In 1861 Scribner first joined a local militia, then as colonel recruited the 38th Indiana Volunteers. This regiment in the following two years served in Kentucky and Tennessee, and saw action at Stones River, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, and Kenesaw Mountain. In the words of an 1866 account, Scribner "did his duty without faltering, and was among the first to bare his breast to the leaden flood." He was retired because of ill health in 1863, having been brevetted a brigadier general.

Scribner took advantage of his war service to obtain appointment in 1865 as collector of internal revenue for the second Indiana district. He held this post for six years, while retaining an interest in the drug business which was run by his partner. From 1871 to 1878 he continued in business, and briefly established a branch on Maiden Lane in New York City. In 1878 he was appointed treasury agent in Alaska, and was assigned to St. Paul Island in the Pribiloff group. It is not clear how long he served in this sub-Arctic outpost.

He continued active in veterans' affairs, and published *How soldiers were made; or the war as I saw it under Buell, Rosecrans, Thomas, Grant and Sherman* (New Albany, 1887).

Sources: Materials in collection

Representative Men of Indiana, Vol. I

Indiana's Roll of Honor, Vol. II

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling twelve folders, contains correspondence from the period 1846-1900. It is arranged chronologically

Folder 1 and Collection guide and 8 annotated mailing envelopes.

In Folders 2-5, 1846-1848, are letters written among Scribner, his friend and future partner Edmund A. Maginness (Ned), a third close friend named H. G. Love, and an officer with whom the trio became very friendly, Lt. Green. Mainly these letters relay hometown news to members of the group who are away at the Mexican front.

In Folder 6-7, are letters from the period between the Mexican and Civil Wars, 1849-1859. Notable are two, dated 1849 and 1850, from Love to Scribner, describing his trip to California and on to Naples; one is embellished with a quite "literary" description of the Bay of Naples.

In Folder 8-10, 1861-1864, are Civil War letters, mainly from Scribner to Maginness and dealing both with business matters and with conditions at Scribner's headquarters in Kentucky and Tennessee. A final group of letters describe Scribner's efforts to obtain a position in the Treasury Department. There is one photograph, head and shoulders view of Benjamin Franklin Scribner in Civil War uniform.

In Folder 11-12, 1865-1900, are some miscellaneous letters to and from Scribner about business and veterans' affairs; also letters to Mrs. Scribner from her uncle in Pennsylvania and from three of her ten children.

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 1322).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.