

Collection #
M 0564

**BERNARD F. SCHERMERHORN
PAPERS, 1862–1864**

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Background](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Series Description and Location](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by:
Paul Brockman
21 November 1990
Updated 11 May 2004

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 mss. box (.3 linear feet)

COLLECTION DATES: 1862-1864.

PROVENANCE: Blue River Books, 86th & Ditch, Indianapolis, Indiana, 17 October 1990

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT: Held by Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1991.0015

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Bernard F. Schermerhorn (1821-1883) was born in Middleburg, Schoharie Co., N.Y. He was graduated from Union College in New York, and moved with his family to Tippecanoe Township in Carroll County, Indiana in the fall of 1840. After working on the family farm for several years, he began studying law and started a practice in Delphi in 1854. He was elected State Representative in 1856 as a member of the Democratic Party. In September 1861, he recruited a company for the 46th Indiana Regiment and was commissioned captain in Company C. The regiment served in Kentucky, Tennessee and the participated in the opening of the Mississippi River; it also participated in the battles of New Madrid, Riddle's Point and Fort Pillow. Schermerhorn spent the winter of 1863 in Indiana on recruiting service. He returned to the regiment for the 1863 campaign seeing action at Port Gibson, Champion Hills and the siege of Vicksburg. He was promoted to major in August 1863, and served in Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. From February-November, 1864, Schermerhorn was in command of the Camp of Distribution in New Orleans. He was honorably discharged in December 1864.

Schermerhorn returned to the South shortly after the war and managed a cotton plantation for about one year. He then came back to Delphi where he resumed his legal practice. From 1867-1871 he was judge for the 15th district court of common pleas. Schermerhorn also engaged in several business enterprises including the building of the Chicago & Indianapolis Air Line Railway.

Sources: *History of Carroll County, Indiana*. Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1882.

Walsh et al. *A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly, Vol. 1*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1980.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The correspondence consists of 107 letters written by Schermerhorn to his wife, Josephine Case Schermerhorn, from 5 January 1862 to 24 November 1864. The letters were written from camps in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Indianapolis. Subjects contained in the letters include descriptions of military engagements, including the siege of Vicksburg (July, 1863) and Fort Pillow, the caliber of leadership, friends in the regiment from home and their well being and questions and comments about the home front. Schermerhorn also writes in length regarding his attempts at promotion to major from June-July, 1863, and a letter or recommendation from his predecessor. Schermerhorn also talks about the devastation to the countryside and the occupation of the Confederacy.

SERIES DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Box 1: Papers, 1862-1864

Folder 1: Correspondence, January-February, 1862

Folder 2: Correspondence, March-April, 1862

Folder 3: Correspondence, May-June, 1862

Folder 4: Correspondence, July-August & November, 1862

Folder 5: Correspondence, January-April, 1863

Folder 6: Correspondence, May-June, 1863

Folder 7: Correspondence, August-December 1863

Folder 8: Correspondence, January-May, 1864

Folder 9: Correspondence, June-November, 1864

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://157.91.92.2/>
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, M 0564).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.