

GRIGSBY-MCDONALD PAPERS, 1862-1901

Collection #
SC 2368

Table of Contents

[User information](#)
[Historical sketch](#)
[Scope and Content note](#)
[Cataloguing information](#)

Processed by
Charles Latham
19 April 1993

USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 4 folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1862-1901

PROVENANCE: John W. McDonald, Jr., Honolulu, HI, ca 1984

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ACCESSION NUMBER: 92.0747x

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Bennet Grigsby (born 1817) was born in Jefferson County, Kentucky, but moved to Orange County, Indiana, as a child. Educated in local schools, he worked as a tailor in Paoli until 1855, when he moved to a farm in French Lick Township. In 1850 he was elected vice president of the Paoli Temperance Association. In November 1861 he was enrolled as a corporal in Company G, 49th Indiana Regiment, and in March 1863 he was promoted to second lieutenant. He was mustered out when his term expired in November 1864. Thirty-five years later he was still living in French Lick Township. He married Matilda Bateman, and had two sons, Ross (who fought with Sherman in Georgia) and Bennet, and two daughters, Caroline and Susan (who married Wilford B. McDonald).

The one reference in county histories to Wilford B. McDonald states that in 1865 he was elected one of three judges and inspectors to decide whether or not to incorporate the town of Orleans. The Civil War papers in this collection indicate that McDonald was in Company K of the 53rd Indiana Regiment, but he is not listed as either an officer or an enlisted man in the regiment (although Meredith McDonald is listed as a first lieutenant).

Wilford McDonald's son, Dr. Claude McDonald (1869-1899) died of "rheumatism of the heart" while serving in the Spanish-American War.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling four folders, contains letters, a journal, and hand-copied accounts, dated 1862-1901.

Folder 1 contains Civil War letters from Bennet Grigsby to his wife and children, as he serves in the southern sector of the war. They are lively letters. He sends his wife money and tells her how to run the farm, and he castigates his son Ross for keeping bad company. He describes his regiment's retreat from West Virginia, and the siege of Vicksburg. He assesses the degree of "Secesh" sympathy in areas he passes through. He describes a black regiment, and comments on the future of freed slaves. He describes how female camp-followers smuggle liquor into camp under their skirts, and wishes he could be the corporal assigned to search them. He comments on other women so poor that their dresses cannot even accommodate hoops.

Folder 2 contains letters, 1898-1900, from Grigsby to his daughter in Terre Haute. His health and that of his wife are major topics.

In Folder 3 are Civil War materials associated with W. B. McDonald. Included are accounts of the 53rd Indiana copied from W. H. H. Terrell and from the 1884 Orange County history. There are also three pages of a connected account and eight pages apparently copied from a journal written at the time, of actions by the regiment.

In Folder 4 are three items relating to Dr. Claude McDonald and his wife Effie.

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Grigsby, Bennet, b. 1817

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Grigsby, Bennet, b. 1817

McDonald, Claude, 1869-1899

United States. Army. Indiana Infantry Regiment, 49th (1861-1865)

United States. Army. Indiana Infantry Regiment, 53rd (1862-1865)

Soldiers--Indiana--Orange County

Camp followers--United States

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

Indiana--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

Vicksburg (Miss.)--History--Siege, 1863

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Afro-Americans

ADDED ENTRIES: McDonald, Wilford B.

END

