

Collection #  
M 0291  
OM 0587

**WILLIAM ALONZO WAINWRIGHT  
QUARTERMASTER RECORDS, 1862–1869**

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Processed by

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

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half-size box, 1 OM folder, 1 flat file folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1862–64 (originals); 1862–69 (including photocopies)

PROVENANCE: Guy Wainwright, Indianapolis

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: David Bittle Floyd, *History of the Seventy-fifth regiment of Indiana infantry volunteers, its organization, campaigns, and battles (1862–65)*. General Collection: E506.5 75th.F5 1893; George B. Dowsman Letters. Manuscript Collection: SC 2881; Helen Floyd Carlin Collection. Manuscript Collection: M 0039

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1949.1220 and 1962.0019

NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

William Alonzo Wainwright (1832–1904) was born in Hanover, Grafton County, New Hampshire to Albert Wainwright, a tinsmith, and Sophronia Jones Wainwright. Between the ages of twelve and eighteen, he served as a clerk for Levi P. Morton, who was later Vice President of the United States. Wainwright moved to Concord, New Hampshire at the age of twenty and worked in Abel Hutchins' dry goods store. In 1853, after only a year, he moved to Noblesville, Hamilton County, Indiana. There he opened a store selling hardware, tin, and stoves. He also married Hannah G. Wainwright, with whom he had three children. Only one, Lucius, survived to adulthood. William and Hannah's grandson Guy Wainwright is this collection's donor.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Wainwright enlisted in the Sixth Indiana Volunteer Infantry, Company J. At the expiration of his term in August, he transferred to the Thirty-Ninth Indiana as the regiment's band leader. In July 1862, he entered the Seventy-Fifth Indiana Volunteer Infantry at the rank of Sergeant, but was soon promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and Regimental Quartermaster. It is likely that his previous occupations as clerk and shopkeeper contributed to the decision.

Beginning in 1863, Wainwright held a number of regional administrative positions. That December, he was promoted to the position of Captain and Assistant Quartermaster of the Engineers Department, Department of the Mississippi. In June 1864 he became Assistant Quartermaster of the Department of the Cumberland. Among other responsibilities, he oversaw Nashville's Taylor Depot. In December 1865, after the war's end, he was named Chief Assistant Quartermaster in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he managed the depot's closing and investigated claims. Over the next few years he also administered the re-interment of Union dead in Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Atlanta. Contemporary newspaper accounts describe a horrific 1866 incident in which a Knoxville lynch mob hanged a black union guard—who had run away after being accused of murdering an officer—in Wainwright's yard. The mob threatened to hang Wainwright as well, until they determined he had not been responsible for the man's initial escape. Following an 1869 transfer to the Brownsville, Texas Quartermaster's Department, he was honorably discharged in 1870 at the rank of brevet major.

Wainwright returned to Noblesville, where he continued his hardware business and built a large Gothic Revival home that still stands today. In 1878 he purchased half interest in a business that produced abstracts, which he sold within the year. The firm continued first as Wainwright and Company, and then as Wainwright Trust Company. The 1880 federal census lists his occupation as "farmer," and it is known that he bred horses. According to his obituary, he was a member of several societies, including the Masons, the Odd Fellows, and the Grand Army of the Republic. William Alonzo Wainwright died in 1904 in Noblesville.

Sources:

Collection Guide, William Alonzo Wainwright United States (Union) Assistant Quartermaster Records. Tennessee State Library and Archives, 2001.

Collection Materials

Noblesville Preservation Alliance. "Most Endangered Structures List," 2014.

"Murder of Col. Dyer, and Lynch Mob." *Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, 21 February 1866.

United States Census Records

United States Find a Grave Index

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists primarily of documents from William Alonzo Wainwright's time as quartermaster for the Seventy-Fifth Indiana Volunteer Infantry. The bulk of these are from 1862, and include abstracts, returns, receipts, invoices, and other miscellany. The documents are arranged hierarchically, beginning with returns.

*Returns* are reports of stores that the army required each quartermaster to submit. *Abstracts* are supporting documents for the returns, listing particular types and amounts of stores received or transferred within a period of time. The *receipts and invoices* are records of single transactions. Wainwright's documents list a variety of stores and equipment: stationery, mules, wagon grease, iron, food items, soap, candles, and clothing, among others.

In addition to the 1862 documents, there are also memoranda covering the years 1862–64, and a folder of eleven photocopied quartermaster documents from Wainwright's career after he left the Seventy-Fifth Indiana. The memoranda folder includes a sworn statement written by Wainwright, detailing the loss of several records and forty-nine pairs of infantry booties. Wainwright adamantly claims no fault in the loss, blaming it on a forced nighttime march. The formality and vehemence of the statement may relate to the army's policy of holding quartermasters liable for any losses.

The records in this collection reveal what articles the Union Army deemed necessary, and (by their absence) what soldiers were expected to supply themselves. Abstracts for food stores record both poundage and the number of rations for each item type, thus allowing researchers to determine, to some extent, how much food a soldier was supposed to receive in 1862. Additionally, the records can be used in conjunction with payroll records or in comparison to other quartermasters' records for a more detailed picture of the daily lives of the Seventy-Fifth Indiana's officers and enlisted men.

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Memoranda, October 1862–April 1864

Miscellaneous Records (photocopies), May 1865 and  
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### CONTAINER

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## 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, M 0291).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.