

Finding Aid to James R. O'Neill Materials

Descriptive Summary:

Repository:

Civil War Museum, Kenosha, Wisconsin

Language of Material:

Material in English

Abstract:

James R. O'Neill Materials consist of Pre-Civil War and Civil War research material concerning the activities of James R. O'Neill. Four major activities of Mr. O'Neill are highlighted in this collection: 1) his pre-war life as an artist and theatre performer, 2) Civil War band activities, 3) the 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry, and 4) the Massacre at Baxter Springs in October of 1863.

Administrative Information:

Use Restrictions:

Photocopies available upon request. Fee required.

Preferred Citation:

James R. O'Neill Materials. The Civil War Museum, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Provenance:

James R. O'Neill Materials were donated to the Civil War Museum by the family of the late Don Jensen of Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Processing Information

Processed by Richard Zimmermann

Collection Overview:

James R. O'Neill (Feb. 6, 1833—October 6, 1863) was an artist and performer (music/dance/vocal/instrumental) who lived and worked in Wisconsin prior to the Civil War. He created and painted panoramas for musical programs in Wisconsin prior to the war and then moved to Leavenworth, Kansas. When the Civil War erupted, O'Neill was commissioned by Harper's Weekly to illustrate combat scenes in the West. Joining General James G. Blunt's forces in Kansas, O'Neill was a civilian member of a band that accompanied Blunt and the 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry in 1862 and 1863 until he was killed at Baxter Springs, Kansas by Quantrill's raiders. Don Jensen researched and wrote about O'Neill's activities before and during the Civil War and collected articles and primary source documents that chronicled the life and times of James R. O'Neill.

JAMES R. O'NEILL MATDERIALS I

I. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JAMES R. O'NEILL

A. James O'Neill Article (O'Neill Bio)

- James O'Neill: "The Kindle of his Bright Eye." By Don Jensen. 33 pgs.

B. Newspaper Articles (Newspapers)

- *Kenosha Times*, April 3, 1856. "Artists at Madison." 1 pg.
- *Kenosha News*, August 27, 2012. Diane Giles "Church unearths piece of history." 4 pgs.
- *Wisconsin Daily Patriot* .10/1/1860. Article on O'Neill. 1 pg.???

C. ILL Refs. O'Neill Biography (News Bios)

- Illinois References for James O'Neill. 22 pgs.

D. O'Neill's Sketches (Sketches)

- O'Neill cartoons copied from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*. 24 pgs.
- "Victory of Blunt at Cane Hill," Pre-cursor of Prairie Grove. Nov. 28, 1862.
- "Rout of Rebels in Arkansas," Jan. 17, 1863.
- "Battle of Honey Springs," Aug. 29, 1863.
- **Illustrations** Brig Gen. James Lane, four cartoons, Baxter Springs Monument. 8pgs.

E. Theater Information for Madison, WI (Theater)

- Articles and references to James R. O'Neill.
- *Daily Madison State Journal*, 3/18/59.
- *Daily Madison State Journal* 2/18/59 and 3/7/59.
- Script for "The Carpenter of Rouen."
- Handwritten excerpt of Letter
- 7 pages of travel itinerary (O'Neill's 1853-1861).
- *Daily Madison State Journal*. Seven articles and notices concerning O'Neill.
- Henry C. Youngerman, "Theater Buildings in Madison Wisconsin, 1836-1900." In *Wisconsin Magazine of History*. Vol. 30, No. 3, September 1946. 15 pgs.
- Wisconsin Circuit Court Records: Hoyt, et. al. versus Languish, 1858. 11 pgs.

F. Panoramas

- Miscellaneous information on the art of panorama creation in 19th century. 72 pgs.

G. Art in Leavenworth (Leaven. Art)

- James R. O'Neill's drawing of "Battle of Honey Springs," and notices concerning his activities in Kansas during the Civil War. 13 pgs.

H. Frank Leslie (Drawings)

- *The Civil War: A Centennial Exhibition of Eyewitness Drawings*. (Washington, D. C., National Gallery of Art. 1961.) 107 pgs.
- Article in *Journal of Popular Culture* by Andrea G. Pearson, “Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper and Harper’s Weekly: Innovation and Imitation in Nineteenth-Century American Pictorial Reporting.” 30 pgs.

II. CIVIL WAR BAND ACTIVITIES

A. Blunt’s Band ((Mil. Bands)

- Email correspondence concerning Civil War brass bands. 3 pgs.
- Photos and article concerning band at Baxter Springs. 2 pgs.
- Summary article on Band and individual summary biographies. 27 pgs.
Leavenworth Times July 4, 1863. Article on Blunt’s Band. 1 g.

B. Military Records:of Brigade Band (Records)

Information concerning individual band members. “3rd Wisconsin Cavalry Band/A.K.A. Pellage’s or Blunt’s Band” provides detailed information on formation and travels of this unit. A band unit history. Don Jensen’s notes on biographies of band members also include letters from the time. 47 pgs.

- Summary of National Archives, Ancestry.com and History-Sites.com Records. 6 pgs.
- Frank Ballow. 2 pgs.
- Heinrich Bulow. 2 pgs.
- James M. Colton. 5 pgs.
- Thomas L. Davis. 8 pgs.
- John Fritz. 23 pgs.
- George Gemunder. 9 pgs.
- Frank M. Larue. 2 pgs.
- Thomas P. Leach. 1pg.
- Theodore Luscher. 14 pgs.
- James P. M. Madison. 6 pgs.
- Nathan A. Nott. 2 pgs.
- Henry K. Pellage. Band Leader of Brigade Band, 1st Brigade, 1st Division, Army of the Frontier. 12 pgs.
- Wenzel Quis. 3 pgs.
- Franz Rosmanith. 2 pgs.
- August Sheel. 2 pgs.
- Frederick K. Simon. 2 pgs.

JAMES R. O'NEILL MATERIALS II

III. THE 3RD WISCONSIN CAVALRY

A. 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry (3rd Wis. Cav.)

- “Army of the Frontier.” 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry: Unit History. 5 pgs.
- Letters of Frank Larue, 3rd Wis. Cavalry to his parents. 4 transcriptions and 13 pages copied from originals. Railroad Accident.
- History of 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry and Roster. 10 pgs. Newspaper accounts of 3rd Wis. 8 pgs.
- Army of the Frontier service history. 5 pgs.
- Rosters of 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry. 67 pgs.
- Newspaper accounts of 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry activities. 8 pgs.

IV. THE MASSACRE AT BAXTER SPRINGS (Baxter Sp.)

A. Blunt (Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt Biographical Materials)

- Two biographies and descriptions of Prairie Grove Battle and Baxter Springs Massacre. 21 pgs.
- 4 Photos: Baxter Springs Monument.

B. Baxter Springs Battle

- Wm. G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*. “The Battle and Massacre at Baxter Springs, October 6, 1863.” 6 pgs.
- Union Casualties and Rosters for Baxter Springs. 4 pgs.
- *Kenosha Telegraph* Article on Baxter Springs. Oct. 22, 1863. 1 pg.
- *Quantrill and the Border Wars*. William Elsey Connolly. (Cedar Rapids Iowa: Torch Press, 1909.) Excerpts. 8 pgs.
- *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*. Summer, 1970. “Incident at Baxter Springs.” 18 pgs.
- List of Officers and Soldiers (Casualties) Buried. 2 pgs.
- Online List of Soldiers Killed at Baxter Springs. 2 pgs.
- Newspaper Accounts and reports of Baxter Springs Massacre. 38 pgs.