Hancock, Winfield Scott, 1824-1886.

Winfield Scott Hancock papers
1865–1872

Abstract: This collection comprises eleven documents regarding the military career of Winfield Scott Hancock, particularly his involvement in the execution of accused Lincoln assassination conspirator, Mary Surratt, his brief command of the fifth military district (Louisiana and Texas) during Reconstruction, and biographical material which highlights his military career during the Civil War.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 099, F815
Creator: Hancock, Winfield Scott, 1824-1886.
Title: Winfield Scott Hancock papers
Inclusive Dates: 1865–1872
Extent: 11 items
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 099, F815, Winfield Scott Hancock papers, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: F815: Shelved in SPEC MSS 099 manuscript boxes; F815 (Removal): Shelved in SPEC MSS 099 oversize boxes (32 inches)

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/

Source: Gift of the Moyerman family, 1972.


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Biographical Note

Winfield Scott Hancock was a decorated Union officer during the Civil War. Recognized for his success in repulsing the Confederate forces at Gettysburg, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general in 1864 and later major-general. In 1867 he commanded the Department of Louisiana and Texas, where his proclamation giving civil tribunals jurisdiction was heralded by local government but disapproved by Congress. He was relieved of command and transferred to the Department of Dakota (1870–1872), later the Division of the Atlantic (1872–1886), and finally to the Department of the East. In the National Democratic Convention of 1868 he received votes for the presidential nomination and in 1880 he was nominated for president by the Democratic Party, which he lost to James A. Garfield.

Sources:

Scope and Content Note

This collection of eleven documents follows the military career of Winfield Scott Hancock, particularly his involvement in the execution of accused Lincoln assassination conspirator, Mary Surratt, his brief command of the fifth military district (Louisiana and Texas) during Reconstruction, and biographical material which highlights his military career during the Civil War.

The first three documents chronicle the exact nature of Hancock's involvement in the trial and execution of accused Lincoln conspirator, Mary Surratt. The documents characterize Hancock's involvement as limited.

The second set of documents consists of printed military orders and correspondence generated by General Hancock while in command of the Louisiana and Texas (Fifth) District in 1867–1868. As commander of that reconstruction district, he issued general order No. 40 which restored the right to trial by jury, habeas corpus, liberty of the press, freedom of speech, and other civil liberties to the district. Along with this order are correspondence and a clipping (The Weekly Crescent, New Orleans, March 28, 1868) related to the issue. This order was unpopular with Congress, resulting in Hancock's being relieved of command and transferred to the Dakota District.

Two drafts of biographical statements and a handwritten poem complete the collection. The biographical material concludes in 1867 when Hancock took command of the Fifth Military District and focuses on his military career. The handwritten poem is untitled, but the first line begins: "Dakota gents: please listen."
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names
Surratt, Mary E. (Mary Eugenia), 1820-1865.

Topical Terms
Conspiracies--United States--19th century--Sources.
Fifth military district (reconstruction), 1865-1877--19th century--Sources.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865--Assassination--19th century--Sources.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)--History--19th century--Sources.

Form/Genre Terms
Autobiographies.
Broadsides.
Clippings.
Orders (military records)
Reports.

Occupation
Officers (military officers)

Related Materials in this Repository
MSS 521 Abraham Lincoln collection
MSS 465 Autograph Abraham Lincoln documents from the Lincoln collection at the University of Delaware
Detailed Description of the Collection

Mary Surratt documents, 1865–1872 3 items

Three documents, two handwritten (possibly by Hancock), and one printed related to General Hancock's involvement in the trial and execution of Lincoln conspirator, Mary Surratt.

Statement of facts - Trial & execution of Mrs. M. E. Surratt, ca. 1868–1872 [Box 54 F815]

Autograph document, 8 p.

Handwritten document which states that General Hancock was not involved in the Commission which tried the conspirators, nor in charge of the prisoners, nor the execution – written to defend Hancock from accusations regarding his responsibility for Surratt’s execution. The item is undated but written after Hancock was a potential Democratic presidential nominee (1868?) and before 1872.

Proceedings in the matter of application for writ of habeas corpus in case of Mrs. M. E. Surratt, 1865 July 5–7 [Box 54 F815]

Autograph documents

Nine pages of handwritten copies of the correspondence exchanged on July 7, 1865, regarding the writ of habeas corpus in Mary Surratt’s case, plus a copy of the July 5, 1865, presidential order for the execution of the conspirators.

Orders for the Organization of the Military Commission for the Trial of Mrs. Surratt, ca. 1865–1872 [Box 54 F815] (Removed to: SPEC MSS 099 oversize boxes (32 inches))

Printed broadside which details that General Hancock had no involvement in the commission which tried Mrs. Surratt and further prints the testimony of The Reverend Father Walter, St. Patrick’s Church [Washington, D. C.], about the kindness and sympathy displayed by Hancock to the Surratt family.

Fifth Military District (Reconstruction) orders and clipping, 1867–1868 5 items

This grouping contains printed military orders and correspondence generated by General Hancock while in command of the Louisiana and Texas (Fifth) District in 1867–1868. As commander of that Reconstruction district he issued general orders No. 40 which restored the right to trial by jury, habeas corpus, liberty of the press, freedom of speech, and other civil liberties to the district. The collection also contains a printed letter and a clipping related to this issue. The order was unpopular with Congress, resulting in Hancock's being relieved of command and transferred to the Dakota District.

General Orders No. 40, 1867 November 29 [Box 54 F815]

New Orleans, LA

Special Orders No. 203, 1867 December 5 [Box 54 F815]
New Orleans, LA

General Orders No. 1, 1868 January 1 [Box 54 F815]

New Orleans, LA

Letter to Texas Governor E. M. Pease, 1867 December 28 [Box 54 F815]

Clipping from the *The Weekly Crescent*, 1868 March 28 [Box 54 F815] (Removed to: SPEC MSS 099 oversize boxes (32 inches))

New Orleans, LA. Discusses Hancock's letter to Governor Pease.

Biographical statements and poem, undated 3 items

Contains two biographical sketches focusing on Hancock's military career and a poem.

Biographical statement [Box 54 F815]

Incomplete draft, includes corrections.

Sketch of W. S. Hancock [Box 54 F815]

Draft of biographical statement. Concludes in 1867, when Hancock took command of the Fifth Military District

Untitled poem [Box 54 F815]

Autograph manuscript

The sixteen-line handwritten poem is untitled, but the first line begins: "Dakota gents: please listen."