

McLean County Museum of History

William W. Orme Collection

Processed by
Carol Straka
Summer 2017

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	3 Boxes
COLLECTION DATES:	1853-1866 plus literature books from 1810-30.
RESTRICTIONS:	Contains fragile items; consult with archivist about handling.
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

William Ward Orme was born 1832 in Washington, D.C. His parents died when he was 13 years old, so he lived with a grandfather who taught him to be a cabinetmaker. At age 17 William traveled to Chicago where he worked as a bank messenger and studied law.

In 1850 William came to Bloomington. After a short stint in private practice with a partner, Orme became a deputy clerk in the circuit clerk office of William McCullough. At age 20, he passed the Bar and in 1853 wed Nannie McCullough, daughter of William McCullough.

Shortly thereafter he went into a successful partnership with Leonard Swett, an established courtroom lawyer. Orme's legal work was admired by Abraham Lincoln, David Davis, and others who saw a bright future for him.

While Orme advised his brother not to "bother" with politics, he could not escape its appeal. He attended the convention at Majors Hall where the Republican Party was formed and he was involved in the Lincoln for President Club. When Lincoln was elected President in 1860 Orme did not hesitate to ask for political favors through letters and even a personal visit to Washington. With the advent of the Civil War, Orme was instrumental in the forming McLean County's 94th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment and was elected Colonel of the Regiment. Two of his brothers also served in the same regiment. In August 1862 the Regiment left for active duty in southern Missouri.

When Orme was away from his wife, he wrote lengthy letters to her containing his thoughts, opinions, and daily activities. His descriptions of military life included many of the same complaints of other soldiers: boredom with inaction, tiresome marches, and camp illnesses. Orme had been campaigning for a promotion in rank to General. Because of his youth and inexperience, Lincoln's response to Orme's lobbying was that Orme first needed to "distinguish himself in battle." His opportunity came with the Battle of Prairie Grove. After that battle he was promoted to Brigadier-General.

In this same period, Orme learned that his father-in-law William McCullough had been killed in battle at Coffeyville, Mississippi. His brother Joseph Orme was killed by friendly fire a short time later.

Orme was suffering bouts of an illness which was later identified as tuberculosis. However after a period at home to deal with family affairs, he returned to duty and soon moved with his troops to Vicksburg, Mississippi where he participated in the siege of that city. His letters home were quite descriptive of the action and the aftermath.

Illness plagued Orme and when he was no longer able to serve in the field, he was assigned to take command of the prison Camp Douglas at Chicago, Illinois. The cold and damp weather of Chicago aggravated his illness. Unable to concentrate on his duties there, he resigned from the Army and returned to Bloomington to recuperate. In 1864, he was appointed Supervising Special Agent of the Treasury Department at Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1865 shortly after Lincoln's assassination Orme's ill health again forced him to resign from his duties. He died at home in Bloomington on September 13, 1866 and was buried in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington, IL.

Adapted from biography at McHistory.org

Scope

The collection includes correspondence; land deeds; and assorted documents from Orme's legal practice and his Treasury Department assignment at Memphis. Some correspondence appears as original letters; others are copies Orme made as he penned the originals and these appear in two "copy books." Ribbon-bound volumes include published War Department orders and reports to Congress. Several small literature books round out the collection.

Box and Folder Inventory

Box 1 Folders & Loose Books

Folder 1: Law Practice

- 1.1.1 Notary Public commission, 12 Dec 1854. Verso shows handwritten oath, 13 Dec 1854.
- 1.1.2 Partnership agreement between Leonard Swett and Orme, 2 pp., 8 Jan 1855 plus amendment 9 Oct 1855, 1 p. *Original displayed in Politics Gallery.*
- 1.1.3 Appointment as commissioner to take bail and affidavits, 9 Jan 1856.
- 1.1.4 Official transcript from court of US Northern District of Illinois at Chicago regarding John Scott, Clingan Scott, & William E. Scott vs. Elias C. Hingey & John Hingey, 18 Jul 1856. Appears to be a case of trespass and damage. 10 sheets plus blue envelope.
- 1.1.5 Notary Public commission, 1 Dec 1858.
- 1.1.6 Blank form for foreclosing a mortgage.
- 1.1.7 Note payable to Jas S. Mayor by Swett & Orme, \$1667.50, 1 Sep 1855. Some payments listed on reverse.
- 1.1.8 Note payable to Orme from Jonathan Merriman and Allen H. Dillon, \$296.08, 13 Dec 1856. Payments recorded on reverse.
- 1.1.9 Note payable to Davis, Flagg & Allin from Orme, \$333.33, 25 Aug 1856. Payment noted.
- 1.1.10 Four receipts, 1853-57.

Folder 2: Land Deeds, Etc.

- 1.2.1 Receipt for payment to buy one share in McLean County Fair ground association, 5 Mar 1856.
- 1.2.2 Warranty deed: James S. Major & wife Addie Major sell to Leonard Swett & William W Orme, 66.71 acres in Mclean County for \$6,670, 20 Dec 1855. Note indicates land was sold to Phoenix.

- 1.2.3 Deed: Asahel Gridley and wife Mary A. E. Gridley sell to Orme, Lot 14 in Block 6 in Western Addition to Bloomington, for \$240, 31 May 1858.
- 1.2.4 Mortgage deed: Lucinda M. Lyman Trustee of Simeon Lyman, sells Lots 7, 10 & 11 in Block 11 in the Durley Addition to Bloomington to Wm W. Orme & Nannie L. Orme, for \$1500 due in 3 years plus progressive payments of \$75 each six months for three years, 1 May 1860.
- 1.2.5 Sheriff's deed: Firm of Monheimer Friedman & Co (Ohio) at Sept 1859 term of Circuit Court in Mclean County recovered a judgment against Lemuel N. Bishop for \$439.85 plus costs. Execution 24 Oct 1860 for sheriff to sell 80 acres in Twp 22 N R6East (Bellflower Twp). Bought by Orme 16 Nov 1860.
- 1.2.6 Sheriff's deed: Multiple judgments awarded against Wm. F. Hance in April 1860 term of Circuit Court. Executed via sheriff auction to Orme most of north half of lots 13 and 14 in Bloomington on 9 Oct 1861. 2 sheets.
- 1.2.7 Tax sale: County Court certificate that Orme purchased part of lot 13 for \$18.74 of back taxes and costs, 24 Jun 1862.
- 1.2.8 Mortgage deed: David Davis, Wm F. Flagg & Wm. H. Allin sell to Orme Lots 7 10 & 11 in Block 11 of Durley Addition to Bloomington for \$1,000 due as 3 promissory notes of \$333.33 due in 1, 2, & 3 years plus interest at 10%, 25 Aug 1856. Paid & satisfied 4 April 1863.
- 1.2.9 Mortgage deed: Jeremiah Flannegan sells to Orme Lot 1 in Block 11 in Allin, Gridley & Prickett's Addition to Bloomington for \$112.50 payable in two years with 10% interest, 5 Mar 1864. 2 sheets.

Folder 3: McNulta Correspondence, 1863-64

Typed transcriptions included with each letter in this folder.

- 1.3.1 McNulta at Springfield Mo. to Orme, concerning Orme's refuting that he himself was resigning, McNulta's illness in Fayetteville and slow recovery, rivalry between physicians Russell and Hubbard precluded McNulta's visit home, upcoming movement of Army of the Frontier headquarters, locations and status of officers and units, Col. Baldwin's arrest and presumed charges for ordering guerillas shot, willing to move Orme & Burr's horses with army, request for some good bourbon whiskey and schnapps. Plus recommends Albert Lake as Orme's new aide de camp. 1 Feb 1863. 4pp.
- 1.3.2 McNulta, asking Orme to prevail upon Gen Curtis to order the unit or McNulta himself to Vicksburg to fight, rising confidence of Union victory based on discussions with Confederate deserters and female relatives of men high in the Confederacy, wants to end war by both offering general amnesty and military force, urges Orme to remain in military for his future prospects, hopes Orme becomes general soon, etc. Undated 2 pp.
- 1.3.3 McNulta at camp near Springfield, MO, to Orme, concerning McNulta returning to duty at Forsythe on Feb 14 and commanding 2nd Bridge; previous ill treatment of Battery E soldiers that prompted soldiers petition and charges against officers; planned troop movements to Little Rock; Major Laughlin has recommended Sgt Woodcock for Lt; Lt M.E. Ferguson has resigned due to family sickness but they have since recovered and he's been recommended for captain of Co G; Sgt Moore recommended for 2nd Lt in Co H over Lawrence of DelaPlain(sp?); Browns' resignation; Lt Tim Owen made quartermaster of Army of Frontier; Lt Van Gundy is ill in Springfield; 94th undoubtedly

strongest regiment in the Army of the Frontier; wants to be in siege of Vicksburg; 23 Feb 1863. 4pp.

- 1.3.4 Col. J. McNulta, Comdg 94th Ills at Camp Vicksburg, MS, to Orme, offering official report of part taken by McNulta's command in the siege of Vicksburg, 10 Jul 1863. Includes list of casualties from 14 Jun to 4 Jul 1863 prepared 6 Jul 1863. Both prepared by G. B. Okeson, Captain & Acting Adjutant. Totals 3 pp. plus secretary's filing notes.
- 1.3.5 J. McNulta at Brownsville (TX?) to Orme concerning arrival of Maj. Briscoe; climate, health, smallpox vanishing and yellow fever threatening, Gen. Herron's unsuccessful efforts to "get us in the field," Howard, Steere's(sp?) awaiting approval of his dismissal, Bertram, Orme's resignation due to health, strong desire to get into military action and earn advancement, rumors of Orme considering run for Congress instead of Swett, 22 May 1864. 4pp.

Folder 4: Miscellaneous Correspondence, etc. 1862-65

- 1.4.1 Col. Orme near Springfield, MO, to Capt. Brewster, A.A. of Genl. Herron's Brigade, requesting authorization for Major Rankin G. McLaughlin to visit Springfield and Bloomington, IL, on various military business, 28 Sep 1862.
- 1.4.2 Mrs. Bradner (by order of President Mrs. Barber) at Bloomington to Col. Orme about 200 pound box of supplies which the group is mailing to the soldiers with intent to send more, 17 Oct 1862.
- 1.4.3 Geo. B. Okeson, Adjutant, at Headquarters of 94th near Forsyth, MO, to Col. Orme, regarding his preference for major (Capt. Routt), etc., 3 Feb 1863.
- 1.4.4 Capt. Jerome Madley of Herron's Division, at Vicksburg to General Orme, advising the two boats which will be assigned to Orme's command, 10 Jul 1863.
- 1.4.5 Capt. James C. McFarland of 94th at East Pascagoula, MS, to General Orme, regarding ordnance account, 21 Jan 1864.
- 1.4.6 E.M.Prince at Bloomington to Gen. Orme at Memphis, TN, concerning finding a job for S.W. Sunderland of Benjaminville, 17 Oct 1864.
- 1.4.7 War Dept. Chief Clerk John Potts at Washington City to late Brig. Genl. Orme at Bloomington requesting accounting for the \$500 advanced to Orme 11 Nov 1863, dated 26 Sep 1865.
- 1.4.8 Members Belonging to Genl. Orme's Brig Brass Band. List of 16 soldiers, undated.
- 1.4.9 Memoranda for Maj. Laughlin. List of six items to complete for Col. Orme. On reverse, an additional list in another hand.

Folder 5: Correspondence 1862-66

- 1.5.1 Letter from Joseph Orme Evans concerning donation of Orme's letter, 14 May 2003 plus gift agreement, etc. 3 pp.
- 1.5.2 Col. T.A. Marshall of 1st Illinois Cavalry near Houston, MO, to Gov. Yates, concerning J. McNulta's qualifications as officer and ranking captain, 22 Jun 1862.
- 1.5.3 Wm. A. Hacker at Jonesboro, IL, to Orme at Bloomington, discussing attachments formed at the Convention, hopes for early conclusion to the war, expected local voting results on state constitution, yesterday's election for Member of Congress, his own political aspirations, etc., 7 May 1862.

- 1.5.4 Wm. R. McCracken, Provost Marshal's Office at St. Louis to Orme responding to death of Orme's father-in-law McCullough and brother Joseph Orme and offering regards to Orme's family, 21 Jan 1863.
- 1.5.5 From unidentified at Silver Creek, to the General Commanding the Federal Army at Yazoo City requesting that a representative of Miss Boyce, a native of New York detained by ill health in the South, be allowed to buy medicines, etc., and also that Miss Boyce be protected, and lists personal contacts such as Sec'y Seward, 18 July 1863.
- 1.5.6 David Brier at Bloomington to Brig. Gen Wm. W. Orme concerning responses to military victories at Vicksburg and Port Hudson, complexities of a contract for 3,000 bushels of corn and possible legal alternatives discussed with Hanna, 23 Jul 1863. Orme has noted to wife Nannie the compliment Bier paid her.
- 1.5.7 M. Swann(sp?) at Bloomington to Gen. Orme concerning collection of accounts as directed by Swett on his departure; request for a confiscated, small, double barrel shot gun, etc., 1 Aug 1863.
- 1.5.8 Richard Ames at Bloomington to Gen. W. W. Orme expressing indignation over the onerous requirements for a widow to claim her husband's military pension, 18 Oct 1863.
- 1.5.9 Wm. Harrison Grigsby at Rochester NY to General Orme seeking military assignment under Orme, citing past jobs in military and as newspaperman, etc. 1 Jan 1864. Continues dated 4 Jan 1864 stating Grigsby has decided to seek job in State Dept in Washington and do nighttime newspaper reporting and now seeks Orme's recommendation. 6 pp. on 2 sheets.
- 1.5.10 E. L. Baker, editor of Daily Illinois State Journal at Springfield to General Orme at Chicago regarding investigation into Fowler & Baker's contract for subsisting troops and seeking Orme's intervention, 1 Feb 1864.
- 1.5.11 Wm. Harrison Grigsby at Rochester NY to Orme acknowledging Orme's letter, discussing Grigsby's career alternatives, and requesting Orme's letter of recommendation to either Marshall Lamon or Mr. Swett at Washington, 4 Feb 1864. 6 pp on 2 sheets.
- 1.5.12 Wm. H. Fry at Harrisburg PA to Brig. Gen. Orme at Chicago requesting Orme's autograph, 4 Feb 1864.
- 1.5.13 Maj. Genl. Francis J. Herron at Brownsville, TX, to Genl. Orme expressing condolence on death of brother, discussing Herron's current position (with almost unlimited power but too much office work), 27 Feb 1864.
- 1.5.14 P. C. Lockwood at Boston to Brig. Gen Wm. W. Orme requesting autograph, 18 Apr 1864.
- 1.5.15 David Brier at Bloomington to Gen Wm. W. Orme at Chicago, expressing gladness that Orme will be returning home, etc., 23 April 1864.
- 1.5.16 Col. M R M Wallace of 4th Ill Cavalry at Ft. McPherson (Natchez, MS) to Brig. Genl. Orme at Camp Douglas Chicago advising that men of the unit wish to buy a headstone for Col. McCullough, 29 May 1864.
- 1.5.17 Treasury Dept. General Agent Wm. Mellan at Cincinnati to Sup. Sp. Agt. Wm W. Orme at Bloomington acknowledging Orme's letter, advising waiting for President's order before proceeding to Memphis (and thus avoiding military interference), and advice on Orme's Confederate bonds, 4 Nov 1864.
- 1.5.18 N. B. Buford Brig. Genl. Commanding at Helena, AR, to Gen W. W. Orme, privately advising that Genl. Canby's Order No. 33 would hugely help crush the Rebellion if

enforced, and expressing confidence that Orme will reform the abuses at Memphis, etc.
6 Nov 1864.

- 1.5.19 H. Clay Conde at Planters House St. Louis to Orme requesting Orme's opinion of Conde's professional prospects in Memphis and recounting Conde's history, 21 Nov 1864.
- 1.5.20 Lt. Col. (& A. A. G.) T. C. Davies at Memphis to Orme as Treasury agent asking Orme's home address to facilitate a home visit from Genl. Dana, 2 Jan 1865.
- 1.5.21 Robert W Hale, Genl. Supt of Chicago and Alton Rail Road Company at Chicago, enclosing pass for the year with his respects, 21 Jan 1865.
- 1.5.22 J. E. Merriman, president of Memphis Library Association to Genl. Orme request Orme deliver a lecture, 16 Feb 1865.
- 1.5.23 H. A. Littleton at Memphis to Genl. Orme at Bloomington regarding letter signed by Memphis citizens expressing appreciation for Orme and to be published in local newspaper, 21 Jun 1865.
- 1.5.24 Wm. P. Mellen, Genl Agent at New Orleans, to Secy of Treasury H. McCulloch at Washington advising that Orme wishes to resign as soon as a replacement is named due to Orme's feeble health and recommending David G. Barnitz as replacement, 7 Oct 1865.
- 1.5.25 David G. Barnitz at Memphis to Gen. W. W. Orme at Bloomington enclosing Mellen's letter of recommendation (see item above) and requesting Orme send it to Washington with his resignation; Senator Draper's charges of excessive cotton freight charges and other business matters; 17 Oct. 1865. 3sheets.
- 1.5.26 H. A. Littleton at Memphis to Orme wishing him improved health, suggesting a visit to Memphis, small residual presence of Treasury and military in Memphis, flourishing business and crops, etc., 28 March 1866.

Folder 6: Treasury Agent Documents, 1864-65

- 1.6.1 Permit for Family Supplies permitting E. W. Dale to buy specific \$467.90 of such at Memphis and transport them via river to his home at Commerce, MS, 20 Nov 1864. 2 sheets with detailed list.
- 1.6.2 Certificate allowing Geo. D. Martin of Desha County Arkansas to land and transport goods for use on plantation Henrico(?) signed by Asst Special Agent for leasing Abandoned Plantations W. Adair M. McDowell, 14 Nov 1864. 1 sheet with attached sheet itemizing specific goods. Notation on the list of goods appears to say "Disapproved N. B. Buford Brig Genl."
- 1.6.3 Statement of account and receipt of payment from Hudson Burr for his services as chief clerk in Nov 1864 as approved by Orme, 31 Dec 1864.
- 1.6.4 Tapp & Wickes notice of shipment of 2 sets of 10 bales of cotton each, both being sent to Helena, AR, via Orme's orders, 3 Jan 1865. Contains particulars of shipments, shipping insurance, etc. Includes attached revenue stamp.
- 1.6.5 Deposit certificate of First National Bank of Memphis, TN, deposited by Orme for tax on salaries, 24 Aug 1865.
- 1.6.6 String-bound set of eight depositions each before a Chickasaw County, MS, justice of the peace, The first seven persons (J. B. Gladney, Daniel Clark, J.B. Baskins, G. P. Baskins, Robert W. Chandler, James Calvert, James B. Watkins) each swearing to having raised themselves the cotton each sold to W. C. Chambers & Co. and also their allegiance to US, 22-24 Aug 1865. The eighth deposition from James J. Chambers who swears that 18

bales cotton seized by Federal authorities at Memphis about 13 Aug 1865 are property of W. C. Chambers & Co. and were the same as specified in the prior seven depositions. Revenue stamps on each. Released by consent of special agent M. G. Jay 20 Aug 1865 at Okolona, MS.

- 1.6.7 Treasury Dept. promulgation of Executive Order from President Andrew Johnson, 14 Sep 1865. Duty of all officers to turn over to Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands all funds collected for their benefit.
- 1.6.8 Printed communication from Orme of Treasury Dept. concerning management of captured, abandoned and confiscable personal property, 11 Oct 1865.

Folder 7: Miscellaneous

- 1.7.1 Names of the Persons who voted for President & Vice President at the election held in Memphis November 8, 1864.
- 1.7.2 Sale of Lots 11 & 12 by Bloomington Cemetery Association for \$400 to Nannie L. Orme, 24 Nov 1866.
- 1.7.3 "Contents of Gen. William W. Orme's Files." Hand printed summaries of 25 letters in this collection, undated, no author. 9 pp.

Box 1 Loose Books

1. Copy book with copies of his handwritten correspondence, 4 Nov 1864 - 15 Jan 1866. Most letters are written from Memphis or Bloomington. Most are official business, while others are personal business. McLean County-associated correspondents include E. M. Prince, Leonard Swett, John F. Humphrey, Luman Burr, and J. Leaming,

A couple special interest items:

1 Dec 1864 Orme requests of Lincoln to have William McCullough, son of the late Col. McCullough, assigned to Orme as the boy is physically too feeble for the military service.
3 Dec 1864 Orme advises Swett that he can make money in cotton at Memphis if he gets a Presidential order. He also asks if Ellery will be sustained at Washington as his plan doesn't work without the military authorities support.

2. Orders of the War Dept from No. 110 up to Series of 1862 & Series of 1863.

Ribbon bound orders from Adjutant General's Office.

3. Orders of War Dept Series of 1863. Ribbon bound.

4. Letter of the Secy of the Navy answering a Senate resolution to transmit official reports connected with recent engagements on Mississippi which resulted in capture of Fts. Jackson, St. Philip and city of New Orleans, destruction of rebel flotilla, &c. From 37th Congress, 2d Session. Ex Doc No. 56. 6 June 1862. 107 pp plus maps. Ribbon bound.

5. Report of Major General John Pope. House of Representatives 37th Congress, 3d Session, Ex. Doc. No. 81. 2 March 1863. 256 pp. Ribbon bound.

6. Rules & Regulations concerning Commercial Intercourse with and in states and

parts of states declared in insurrection. The collection, receipt, and disposition of captured, abandoned and confiscable property, and employment and general welfare of freedmen. Washington, July 29, 1864. 76 pp.

Box 2 Loose Literature Books

- 1.** Eight volume set of *The Plays of William Shakespeare, accurately printed from the Text of the Corrected Copy left by the late George Steevens, Esq.*, published by M'Carty & Davis, Philadelphia, 1830.
- 2.** *Le Magasin Des Enfants*, Par Mme le Prince de Beaumont, Tome Troisieme, Paris Corbet Aine, Libraries, Quai Des Augustins, 1827. 2 volumes (1-2 & 3-4).
- 3.** *Biographical Memoirs of the Illustrious General George Washington*, for I. Cooke & Co, Book-Sellers, N. Haven, 1810.
- 4.** *A General Guide for Practising Physicians in the Examination of the Sick with an Appendix of Medical Formulae*, by J.F. Daniel Lobstein, M.D. Lewis D. Belair, Foreign Bookseller, Philadelphia, 1823.
- 5.** *Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books by John Milton, in Two Volumes. Vol. I.* J. Locken, Philadelphia, 1828. Noted inside: "Jos. P. Orme, Rhetoric Class, 1858."
- 6.** *Locke's Conduct of the Understanding and Bacon's Essays.* J. Walker, London, 1813.
- 7.** *The Iliad of Homer.* Translated by Alexander Pope. Vol. I. W. Borradaile, New York, 1825. Noted inside: "Joseph P. Orme, Washington D.C."
- 8.** *Excerpta ou Fables Choisies. De la Fontaine, avec des notes nouvelles.* De L'imprimerie de L'economical School. New-York, 1810.

Box 3 Copy Book

As of October 2017, this fragile book is in a special box of its own labeled "W. W. Orme Letters." It's being held by the Archivist for preservation via photography.

This copy book includes copies made at the time the originals were penned. The letters apparently involve Orme's "Bloomington law practice and other matters late in his life after his retirement from the Army." A letter from donor J. Orme Evans dated 3 Dec 2005 is also included.