

Information Sheet

R Bradford, Moses Jasper, 1833-1865.
360 Letters, 1861-1865.
Two folders.

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

These are Civil War letters of Moses J. Bradford, a native of Relfe, Phelps County, Missouri, and an officer of the Missouri State Guard and the 10th Missouri Infantry (CSA). He wrote from camps in Missouri and Arkansas, and, after his capture in 1863, from Union prison camps in Ohio, Maryland, Delaware, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Moses Jasper Bradford was the youngest son of Adam and Frances Neely Bradford. The Bradfords came to Missouri from Kentucky about 1817, settling on Spring Creek in what was then Pulaski County, Missouri. Adam Bradford established a sawmill near the mouth of Spring Creek, the first of five mills which he and his sons operated in the extensive pineries of the Big Piney River watershed. Later, Adam Bradford operated a general store. The Bradfords were prominent members of the Spring Creek community, which came to be called Relfe. It became part of Phelps County when that county was created in 1857.

Moses Jasper Bradford was born and grew up on Spring Creek. He married Malissa Jane Stephens (1839-1932), a native of Kentucky, in 1859. At the beginning of the Civil War, Bradford joined Gen. James H. McBride's division of the Missouri State Guard and was appointed quartermaster. Bradford left the state organization sometime after April 1862, but remained active in the war. A Union military patrol from the post at Rolla captured him in June 1862. The officer who filed the report on the patrol referred to Bradford as "a noted guerrilla ... who has caused us much trouble."

Bradford apparently was paroled or exchanged. By April 1863, he was captain of Company G of the 10th Missouri Infantry (CSA), a unit organized the previous November. He took part in the futile and costly attack on Helena, Arkansas, on 4 July 1863. Captured for the second time, Bradford was among the 271 men of the 10th Missouri who were killed, wounded, or captured at Helena. He was incarcerated with other Confederate officers at various Union prisons, including Johnson's Island (Ohio), Camp Hammond (Md.), Fort Delaware (Del.), Morris Island (S.C.), and Fort Pulaski (Ga.). He died from the effects of scurvy and malnutrition at Fort Pulaski on 13 February 1865.

The Bradford collection includes a total of forty letters, thirty-eight of which were written to his wife and family. There are twenty-six originals in the collection, and photocopies of another fourteen. There are no envelopes with any of the letters. Some are addressed to Malissa Jane Bradford in care of Solomon King, a resident of Rolla and friend of the family. Ten of the letters were written in 1861-1863 during service with the Missouri State Guard and 10th Missouri Infantry at Lebanon, Springfield, and Cassville, Missouri, and Camp Bolin and Little Rock, Arkansas. They include advice on family business matters, news of acquaintances in the army, and comments on his duties and on the course of the war. The remainder of Bradford's letters were written from prisoner of war camps. They note his homesickness and fears for the welfare of his family, his treatment while in captivity, and the deteriorating condition of his health. His last letter, written less than two weeks before his death, mentions his ill health and "needy circumstances."

The collection also includes two letters concerning Bradford's death. One, written by Lt. William Halliburton, a fellow soldier and prisoner of war, was probably the first news of Bradford's fate to reach his family. The last letter is from Kitty Morse of Jefferson City, who had heard of Bradford's death and wrote of it to Malissa Jane Bradford, thinking perhaps that the news had not reached her.

r442	5 May 1989	Mr. & Mrs. Robert N. Hill	Gift
r523	7 October 1991	Vance A. Bradford	Gift

Shelf List

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Folder 1: Letters, 5 September 1861 -- 7 April 1865 (40 items, originals and photocopies).

Folder 2: Letters, 5 September 1861 -- 7 April 1865 (typescripts).

<i>r442</i>	<i>2 May 1989</i>	<i>Mr. & Mrs. Robert N. Hill</i>	<i>Gift</i>
<i>r523</i>	<i>7 October 1991</i>	<i>Vance A. Bradford</i>	<i>Gift</i>

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