

Information Sheet

R Kesler family.
448 Kesler-Lytle families, papers, 1861-1869.
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 papers of the Kesler and Lytle families of Champaign, Illinois. The collection consists primarily of the Civil War letters of William H. Kesler, written during his service in the 3rd Missouri Cavalry, 13 January 1862 – 12 June 1865. There are also four letters from the papers of Alexander M. Lytle, 10 September 1861 – 10 April 1869. Genealogical information on the Kesler and Lytle families is included.

The correspondence of the Kesler (spelled “Kessler” by the family after the Civil War), and the Lytle family came together in 1871 as the result of the marriage of Rose Ann Kesler (1851-1913), and Alexander McKinnie Lytle (1848-1923) in Champaign, Illinois. The collection consists of twenty-seven letters, the majority of which were written to Rose Ann Kesler by her brother during his military service in the Civil War.

William H. Kesler was a resident of Champaign, Illinois, when the war began. He was one of many Illinois soldiers who joined Missouri volunteer units after the quota of their home state was reached. Kesler enlisted in late fall 1861 in the 3rd Missouri Cavalry, a unit raised by Col. John M. Glover at Palmyra, Missouri. He joined Company D, which was composed of equal numbers of Missouri and Illinois men captained by John H. Reed of Champaign. The 3rd Missouri Cavalry was mustered in at Palmyra, where it was headquartered until spring 1862. Kesler and his unit first saw action in December 1861 against Col. Joseph Porter’s rebel forces at Halltown and Mount Zion Church in northern Missouri. From March 1862 through August 1863, the 3rd Missouri Cavalry was assigned to the headquarters at Rolla and Pilot Knob, Missouri, and was part of the Army of Southeast Missouri. The regiment fought Gen. John S. Marmaduke’s raiding Confederate cavalrymen at Hartville and Bloomfield, Missouri, in 1863, and was in the Union squadron which raided Batesville, Arkansas, in January 1863. As part of a Union cavalry brigade, the 3rd Missouri Cavalry marched into Arkansas in August 1863, and was part of the force which captured the state capital at Little Rock on 10 September. The unit was assigned to the Army of Arkansas in 1864. Kesler and the Missouri cavalrymen participated in Gen. Frederick Steele’s ill-fated Camden Expedition, after which they returned to Little Rock. Kesler spent most of the remainder of the war in the vicinity of Little Rock, where the regiment mustered out in June 1865.

Kesler’s letters include war news such as descriptions of the actions at Mount Zion Church and Hartville, Missouri, camp life near Little Rock, the army’s joy over the Confederate surrender in the east, and its despair over the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. He also passed along news of family friends, the most prominent of whom were Col. and Mrs. John H. Reed. Formerly Kesler’s company commander, John H. Reed led the 3rd Missouri Cavalry by war’s end and seems to have detailed Kesler to duty on the regimental staff. Kesler often listed his return address in care of Mrs. Reed, who stayed with her husband at Little Rock for much of the time his regiment was posted at the capital.

Genealogical information compiled by descendants is available in the Information Folder. Included are copies of a photograph of William H. Kesler in uniform, the wedding photograph of Rose Ann Kesler and Alexander McKinnie Lytle, and a page from the Lytle family bible.

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21 August 1991

Laura Maxine Lytle Dodd

Gift

Shelf List

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exander M. Lytle, 10 September 1861--10 April 1869. Genealogical information on the Kesler and Lytle families is included.

Folder 1: Kesler papers, 13 January 1862—12 July 1865 (23 items, with typescripts).

Folder 2: Lytle papers, 10 September 1861—10 April 1869 (4 items, with typescripts).

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Register of Correspondence

Folder 1 Kesler letters, 1862-1865

<u>Date</u>	<u>Letter</u>
13 Jan 1862	William Kesler, Palmyra, Mo., to Rosana Kesler (4 pp., with cover)
27 Jun 1862	William Kesler, [no place], to Rosan Kesler (2 pp. with cover)
03 Oct 1862	William H. Kesler, Camp Meahger, Rolla, to Rosan Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
11 Jan 1863	P. Shoppell, Tarlton, Ill. [?] to M. Kesler (4 pp. no cover)
18 Jan 1863	William H. Kesler, Houston, Mo., to Rosan Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
01 May 1863	W. H. Kesler, Houston, Mo., to Rosan Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
07 Oct 1863	William H. Kesler, Little Rock, Ark. to Rosanah Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
25 Oct 1863	James Morford, Little Rock, Ark. to Rosann Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
02 Mar 1864	William Kesler, Little Rock, Ark., to Rosan Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
29 Mar 1864	W. H. Kesler, Little Rock, Ark. to Rosan Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
04 Oct 1864	Will [Kesler], Duvall's Bluff, Ark., to Rosan Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
23 Nov 1864	Will [Kesler], Little Rock, Ark., to Rosa Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
20 Dec 1864	Will [Kesler], Camp near Little Rock, Ark., to Rosa Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
08 Jan 1865	William H. Kesler, Little Rock, Ark., to Rosan Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
17 Jan 1865	[William H. Kesler], Little Rock, Ark., to Brother and Sister (4 pp., no cover)
06 Feb 1865	William H. Kesler, Camp near Little Rock, Ark., to Rosa Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
20 Feb 1865	William [Kessler] Little Rock, Ark., to Rosanah Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
14 Mar 1865	W. H. Kesler, Camp near Little Rock, Ark., to Rosa Kesler (3 pp., with cover)
23 Mar 1865	William H. Kesler, Little Rock, Ark., to Rosa Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
16 Apr 1865	Will H. Kesler, Little Rock, Ark., to Rosa Kesler (2 pp., with cover)
20 Apr 1865	Will [Kesler], Little Rock, Ark., [Rosa Kesler] (4 pp., no cover)
12 Jun 1865	Will H. Kesler, Little Rock, Ark., to Rosannah Kesler (4 pp., with mismatched cover)

Folder 2 Lytle Papers, 1861-1869

<u>Date</u>	<u>Letter</u>
10 Sep 1861	Alex R. Mc[Mullen], Camp McCall, Washington D.C., to sister & mother (4 pp., no cover)
30 Dec 1868	"Auntie Ev", "Home," to "Dear Nephew" (4 pp., no cover)
02 Mar 1869	W. W. White [no place], to A. M. Lytle (4 pp., with cover)
10 Apr 1869	W. H. M. Miller, Indiana County [Pa.], to Alexander M. Lytle (4 pp., with cover)

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