

**The Filson Historical Society**

**Braswell, Ethel O., 1898-1972  
Papers, 1918-1922**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Collections.

Size of Collection:  
0.66 cubic feet and 1 ovz. folder

Location Number:  
Mss./A/B823

**Braswell, Ethel O., 1898-1972  
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**Scope and Content Note**

The Ethel Braswell papers contain records pertaining to her work for the federal government during World War I, as well as her service as a Reconstruction Aide in Occupational Therapy at Camp Zachary Taylor following the war's end. Papers consist of correspondence, diary entries, official documents, holiday cards, magazines, souvenir booklets, and newspapers.

Braswell's correspondence includes letters to and from friends in Washington, D.C. such as Harold Schell, Nick, Sadie, Maurice Gray, Clara L., and a romance interest "Hank." She also corresponds with her family members, including her sister Emma "Mattie" Braswell, Lottie Wilmott Braswell, and her father, James Braswell. The correspondence between friends from Washington, D.C. and Camp Taylor regard personal life, gossip, advice, and anecdotes riddled with sarcasm. Ethel's correspondence with Harold Schell is particularly sarcastic. Correspondence with her family members describe her experiences in Washington, D.C. and her opinion of Camp Taylor upon arrival and throughout her time in Kentucky.

Ethel Braswell's diary entries provide descriptive information on the two months she was employed as a Reconstruction Aide at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky. She describes the barracks, and her encounters with officers, including Captain Cummings, Surgeon General Ireland, Colonel Billings and General March. She also describes the soldiers she meets and teaches such as Sergeant Foley, Private Hillman, Bowman, Domikas, Richey, Geis, Rose and many more. Braswell teaches the soldiers English grammar, math, reading and typing. She provides her assessment of soldiers' grade levels and comments on the lack of education among them. In addition to her duties as a teacher, Braswell also edits issues of Camp Taylor's *Daily Bulletin*. She mentions leisure time activities with her fellow aides and teachers, Ms. Roberts, Ms. Hearn, Ms. Blakey, Ms. Beatty, etc., such as going to shows, going to "eating places", picnics in Cherokee and Iroquois parks, and a trip to Mammoth Cave.

Ethel Braswell's service record provides information on Reconstruction Aide duties, payment and expectations.

Souvenirs included in the collection consist of booklets and postcards from Camp Taylor and Mammoth Cave, in Kentucky.

Miscellaneous materials include issues of the *Daily Bulletin* published at Camp Taylor, periodicals related to the care and reconstruction of wounded soldiers, and a speech by William Jennings Bryan.

An oversize folder includes newspaper issues that Braswell received during her time at Camp Taylor, including *Trench And Camp* (May 26 & June 9, 1919), and *Over the Top* (June 25,

1919). Articles regard opportunities for disabled soldiers to improve work skills, editorials, poems and medical news.

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**Biographical Note**

Ethel Braswell was born in 1898 to James and Ophelia Braswell. She was their eldest child and grew up on a farm in Haddock, Georgia. When she was nineteen, she left Georgia and moved to Washington, D.C. where she joined her younger sister Emma "Mattie" Braswell. She arrived in Washington, D.C. on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918 and served during the remainder of World War I and the Reconstruction period. She originally was assigned to the War Risk Insurance Department. After the war, she was hired as a Reconstruction Aide through Medical Department of the United States Army. Her position as a Reconstruction Aide lasted from April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1919 to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919 at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky. After she was discharged, she returned to Washington, D.C. She married Benjamin Pubols. In 1972, she died in Arlington, Virginia.

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**Folder List**

Box 1

- Folder 1: Personal correspondence, 1918
- Folder 2: Personal correspondence, January-April 1919
- Folder 3: Personal correspondence, May-December 1919
- Folder 4: Personal correspondence, 1920
- Folder 5: Journal during service as Reconstruction Aide at Camp Taylor, April-July 1919
- Folder 6: "My pupils", list of soldiers instructed by Braswell at Camp Taylor, 1919
- Folder 7: U.S. Army service record, Reconstruction Aide at Camp Taylor, 1919-1922

Box 2

- Folder 8: U.S. Army Base Hospital postcards and Camp Taylor souvenir booklet, 1919
- Folder 9: Mammoth Cave postcards and souvenir booklet from Braswell's trip in April 1919
- Folder 10: *Daily Bulletin* newspaper, Education Department, Camp Taylor, April-June 1919
- Folder 11: The Red Cross Magazine, November 1918
- Folder 12: Publications re: Reconstruction work with wounded soldiers, June 1919
- Folder 13: Official souvenir program, Victory Parades of U.S. Army, September 1919
- Folder 14: William Jennings Bryan speech transcription, September 24, 1919

Oversize

- Folder 15: Newspaper issues: *Trench And Camp*, May 26 & June 9, 1919. *Over the Top*, June 25, 1919.

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**Subject Headings**

American Red Cross – Periodicals.  
Bryan, William Jennings, 1860-1925.  
Camp Zachary Taylor (Ky.)  
Camp Zachary Taylor (Ky.) – Newspapers.  
Diseases.  
Greeting cards.  
Kentucky – Religious life and customs.  
Kentucky – Social life and customs.  
Mammoth Cave (Ky.) – Description and travel.  
Military training camps – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Occupational therapy.  
Postwar reconstruction.  
Segregation – Kentucky.  
Soldiers – Education, Non-military.  
Suicide.  
Teachers – Kentucky – Louisville.  
United States. Army – Minorities – History – 20<sup>th</sup> century.  
United States. Bureau of War Risk Insurance.  
U.S. Army Base Hospital (Camp Zachary Taylor, Ky.)  
Veterans – Services for – Kentucky.  
World War, 1914-1918.  
World War, 1914-1918 – War work – Women.