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**Charles F.W. Behm**  
**Papers, 1826-1871**

**Melanie A. Yolles**  
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**Main Entry:** Behm, Charles F.W., 1813-1882  
**Title:** Papers, 1826-1890 (bulk 1861-1865)  
**Size:** .1 linear ft. (1/2 AB)  
**Source:** Gift of Angela P. Suter, 1990

**Biographical  
Statement:**

German-born merchant sea captain. Behm served as a U.S. Navy officer during the Civil War. He was appointed Volunteer Lieutenant in August, 1861 and during his military service commanded the bark Brazilliera and steamer Southfield in the North Atlantic Blockade Squadron, and the steamers Cornubia and Princess Royal in the Gulf of Mexico. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander in December 1864 and discharged in November 1865.

**Description:**

Behm's papers consist chiefly of letters and naval orders received, 1861-1865. Included are Behm's appointments to his various posts, twelve letters from Admiral Louis M. Goldsborough concerning his efforts to assist in Behm's promotion, advice on conduct and naval etiquette, and personal matters such as dieting. Of particular note are Behm's report and the ensuing correspondence with Admiral Samuel P. Lee regarding damage to the Southfield during a skirmish off Plymouth, N.C., and two letters to Behm from fellow officers describing the destruction of the Congress and the Cumberland by the Merrimack and the arrival of the Monitor (3/9/62) and a description of the Battle of Mobile Bay with accompanying sketch map (8/7/64). The papers also include two letters from Behm to his daughter Augusta (1858; 1862), an autograph album signed by Behm's friends in Friedland, Pomerania (1826), a photograph of Behm, and five buttons from his naval uniform.

The Papers (1826-1890)  
of

CAPTAIN CHARLES F. W. BEHM (1813-1882)

<u>Item</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject/Description</u>
Autograph album			1826	Belonged to C. F. W. B. and contains the autographs of his acquaintances/friends in Pomerania
Letter	Capt. Behm	A. H. Loots (?)	4/29/61	Obtaining for Behm, at the Captain's request, a position in the United States Navy
Official communication	Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Charles F. W. Behm (hereafter, simply C. F. W. B.)	Gideon Welles Secretary of the Navy (hereafter, simply G. W.)	8/26/61	Statement of Behm's appointment to the Navy as "Acting Volunteer Lieutenant. . . on temporary service"
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	Samuel D. Bruno, Commander (?)	9/25/61	Statement of Behm's appointment to command the U.S. Bark "Brazilliera"
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	L(ouis) M. Goldsborough, Flag Officer, Commanding N. A. B. S.	1/9/62	Orders Behm's detachment from the "Braziliera"; orders Behm to take command of the U. S. Steamer "Southfield, " at Hampton Roads (North Carolina)
"General Order"	"The Officers and men under my command"	L(ouis) M. Goldsborough (hereafter, simply L. M. G. ), Flag Officer Commanding North Atlantic Blockading Squadron	2/9/62	Congratulates the officers and men involved in the successful campaign "to crush the Hydra of rebellion" at Roanoke Island Island (North Carolina)
Letter	"My Dear Friend" (C. F. W. B.?)	C. H. W. (?)	3/9/62	Describes in detail the destruction of the ships "Cumberland" and "Congress" by the Confederate ironclad "Merrimac"; describes also the confrontation between the Union ironclad "Monitor" and the "Merrimac" (at Hampton Roads)

<u>Item</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject/Description</u>
Letter	C. F. W. B. Commanding U. S. S. "South- field," Sound of N. Carolina	L. M. G.	5/21/62	Acknowledges Behm's request for a position in the Regular Navy (probably), but says nothing can be done "until the law for reorganizing the Navy, now up before Congress, is passed."
Note	C. F. W. B.	(Major) General A(mbrose) E. Burnside (hereafter A. E. B.)	5/30/62	Asks Behm to mail letters to the Secretary of War
Letter (copy)	Captain G(ustavus) V(asa) Fox, Assistant Secre- tary of the Navy	A. E. B.	5/30/62	Praises Behm's service; "it will afford us all infinite gratification to hear, that his very valuable services in these waters have been rewarded by the Department." (Written at New Bern, North Carolina.)
Letter (copy)	"My dear Commodore"	A. E. B.	5/30/62	Urges the Commodore to "look to" rewarding Behm for "his valuable services in these waters." Different subject: "Please dont take any more of Bowans' vessels, if you can help it." (Also at New Bern, North Carolina.)
Note	"Dear Wife"	C. F. W. B.	5/31/62	Accompanies the copies of Burnside's letters of 5/30/62; "I thought you might think them valuable," wrote Behm to his wife.
Letter	"My dear Hopple" (Augusta Hoppley Behm, his daughter)	C. F. W. B.	6/16/62	Catching up on family news, including a new photograph of "Hopple," of which Behm says, "I cannot agree with your friends at Hartford. that it is a good likeness, You look as if you were thirty. & as if you were agoing to cry."

<u>Item</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject/Description</u>
Official communication (copy)	Captain C(harles) W. Flusser, Commanding U. S. Steamer "Commodore Perry"	C. F. W. B.	12/10/62	Reports skirmish at Plymouth, North Carolina, in which Behm's steamer U. S. "Southfield" was disabled
Official communication (copy)	C. F. W. B.	S(amuel) P. Lee, A. R. Admiral Commanding N. A. B. Squadron	12/11/62	Queries Behm on twelve points regarding the disabling of the "Southfield" at Plymouth
Official communication (copy)	A. R. Admiral S(amuel) P. Lee	C. F. W. B.	12/29/62	Behm's response to Lee's queries of 12/11/62
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	G. W.	12/28/63; duplicate, 1/11/64	Orders Behm to report to S(ilas) H. Stringham in Boston, Massachusetts, to take command of the U. S. S. "Cornubia" (directed to Behm at "No. 17 Lafayette Place, New York, NY")
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	2/22/64	Apologizes for not writing sooner; reports progress in Congress on "incorporating volunteer officers permanently into the Navy"; tells Behm how to apply for the prize money owed him; mentions their mutual friend, Case
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	3/7/64	Writes of exchanging photographs; requests information on the equipment of Cunard (foreign?) steamers, of which Behm would see many in Boston; speaks of serving "on a General Court-Martial, with Admiral Stringham & others, for the trial... of Commodore Wilkes"

<u>Item</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject/Description</u>
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	G. W.	4/11/64	Orders Behm to proceed with the U.S. Steamer "Cornubia" to New Orleans and report to Rear Admiral D <sup>avid</sup> (ouglas) G(lasgow) Farragut in the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron (hereafter D. G. F.)
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	James S. Palmer (?), Commodore, Commanding at New Orleans	5/25/64	Orders Behm to proceed to Mobile Bay and report to Admiral Farragut
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	D. G. F.	5/28/64	Orders Behm to move to Pensacola Bay "and report to Commander Alexander Gibson Senior Officer afloat"
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	D. G. F.	7/12/64	Orders Behm to proceed to Galveston, Texas, reporting to Commander M(elancthon) B. Woolsey "for duty on the coast of Texas"
Letter	C. F. W. B. (still commanding "Cornubia")	Edward Bates (?) aboard U. S. Steam Sloop "Ossipee," Mobile Bay	8/7/64	Describes battle at Mobile Bay; supplies map of the bay and lines of battle, sketch of the "ram" "Tennessee," and of that vessel's ramming bow and stern
	"Reparation for the bottom of Iron Vessels"		10/16/64	Recommended by James M. Adams, Chief Engineer, U.S.N., U.S. Steamer "Ossipee"; off Galveston, Texas (application of lime and tallow)
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/6/64	Responds to Behm's letter of 12/4/64, in which Behm evidently requested information on the examinations of Acting Volunteer Lieutenants; urges Behm to postpone the "ordeal" until his health improves; L. M. G. says he will soon go to Europe.

<u>Item</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject/Description</u>
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/7/64	Urges Behm to proceed with his examination by the Navy Department, health permitting; speaks of the failings of the steamer "Cornubia," Behm's vessel
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/12/64	Expresses satisfaction that Behm has applied for an examination by the Navy Department; discusses the format of naval communications, specifically the distinction between the address of a letter and its superscription (apparently Behm had queried Goldsborough on this because of an incident of confusion over a letter); dancing and dieting
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/13/64	Promises Behm a copy of the recently released report by the Secretary of the Navy; further comments on the Bantling diet
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/15/64	Tells Behm the answer he received from the Navy was incorrect and will be changed so that Behm's request for an examination will be granted
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/15/64	Details the mistake over the request Behm had made (a clerk had handled the request in a routine manner); gives advice on being in the Navy, specifically that one shouldn't "get into a <u>feese</u> (?) about every seeming <u>contretemps</u> & threaten resignation" (which Behm had done?)
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/21/64	Addresses Behm's health problem and its relevance to the outcome of Behm's examination before the Navy; urges Behm to obtain a special report from the physician Dr. Abernethy
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/22/64	Hints at a positive resolution of Behm's case before the Department and urges Behm to "emulate the cucumber, & keep cool"



<u>Item</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject/Description</u>
Letter	C. F. W. B.	L. M. G.	12/23/64	Congratulates Behm on having been "put 'clean through'" and granted the rank of Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy, despite his health, of which Goldsborough had made light in presenting Behm's case before the Department; urges Behm never to "mention individuals in talking about" his naval affairs and to "be reticent concerning the action that has been taken in" his case; tells Behm he may report for active sea service at any time, but advises him to wait for his health to improve
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	G. W.	4/11/65	Orders Behm to proceed to Philadelphia aboard the U.S.S. "Bermuda, where he is to take command of the U.S.S. "Princess Royal," relieving Commander M(elancthon) B. Woolsey
Notice of promotion	C. F. W. B.	G. W.	4/13/64 <sup>5</sup>	By order and consent of the U.S. Senate, Behm is instated into the U.S. Navy as Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Commander, "next (in rank) after Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Commander William C. Rogers
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	H(enry) K. Thatcher, A. R. Admiral	4/30/64 <sup>65</sup>	Order Behm to proceed in the U.S.S. "Bermuda" to report to Captain B(enjamin) F. Sands at Galveston, there to take command of the "Princess Royal"
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	Navy Department, Bureau of Navigation and Office of Detail	7/24/65	Detaches Behm from command of the "Princess Royal" for a four-month Leave of Absence
Official communication (and envelope)	C. F. W. B.	G. W.	11/28/65	Honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy

<u>Item</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject/Description</u>
Official communication	C. F. W. B.	Treasury Department, 4th Auditor's Office	4/14/71	Notification of prize money to be paid Behm for his participation in the capture of the "Albemarle &c" by the U.S.S. "Southfield" (\$103.28)
Envelope	C. F. W. B.	Charles & William B. King, Attorneys-At-Law	11/18/1890	
Letter	"My dear Sister" (?)		May 17th	[MISSING]
Membership certificate	C. F. W. B.	The New York Customs Mutual Aid Association		Declares that upon Behm's death, the amount realized "from the Assessment required by said Constitution and By-Laws is to be paid to his Daughters Augusta and Julia"
Letter	"My dear Augusta"	C.F.W.B.	11/24/1858	Personal. Mentions Atlantic Cable.