

BROWNLOW FAMILY COLLECTION

Accession Number 27
1896-1908 and undated
1.5 linear feet (1 box and 1 map folder)

Provenance: The collection was donated by Heather Hendershot-Staple of Jonesborough, Tennessee on June 30, 2022. The materials in this collection were found by her when she purchased the former Brownlow home at 421 West Main Street.

Access Note: The collection is available for research use.

Biographical Note: Born in Abingdon, Virginia, Walter Preston Brownlow (March 17, 1851-July 8, 1910) was a Tennessee congressman, who served the state's first congressional district from 1897-1910. In 1876, Brownlow purchased the Jonesboro *Herald and Tribune*, and he served as publisher and editor until his death. Brownlow was a delegate and member of the Republican National Convention in 1880, 1884, 1896, 1900, and 1904. Brownlow was appointed postmaster of Jonesboro in 1881 and later that year was appointed doorkeeper of the United States House of Representatives. He was elected congressman of Tennessee's first district in 1897, and he served in that position until his death. During his tenure as congressman, Brownlow is most known for his involvement in the Bureau of Public Roads, establishment of the rural free mail delivery service, and, more locally, for securing the Mountain Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (Mountain Home) in Johnson City, Tennessee. The soldiers' home was established by an Act of Congress in 1901. Brownlow served as a member of the Board of Managers for the home from 1902-1910. He is buried at the national cemetery there.

Brownlow's uncle was William G. "Parson" Brownlow (1805-1877), who was the 17th Governor of Tennessee from 1865 to 1869. After serving as governor, Parson Brownlow also served as U. S. Senator to Tennessee from 1869 to 1875. Walter P. Brownlow married Clara A. Holbach in 1870. They had six children: daughters Anna, Clara, and Nellie and two sons, William G. Brownlow, and another son, who did not live to adulthood.

Scope and Content Note: This collection consists of a series of letters (1896-1902) between Walter P. Brownlow and Major Paul Devine discussing a Civil War pension and a scrapbook of newspaper clippings complied by Mrs. Brownlow in the 1890s. Clippings in the scrapbook include religious passages, medicinal remedies, obituaries, politics, and articles related to her husband's career, and the Mountain Home facility in Johnson City. There is also a set of loose newspaper clippings covering similar topics as those in the scrapbook. Additionally, there are two loose newspaper pages that include photographs of the Mountain Soldier's Home (Mountain Home). Miscellaneous items make up the last few items in this collection. This includes two dance cards, a receipt from 1896, one business card, two copies of a 1908 public resolution detailing the appointment of members of the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, and an advertisement for a watch. The collection material is arranged in alphabetical order by subject.

Important subjects include:

Brownlow family

Brownlow, Walter Preston, 1851-1910

James H. Quillen Veterans Administration Hospital (Johnson City, Tenn.)

Republican Party (U.S., 1854-)

Tennessee—Politics and government

United States--Congress

Washington County, Tenn.—History

Folder and Item List

1. Correspondence of Walter P. Brownlow with Paul Devine involving a Civil War pension, 1896-1902
2. Newspaper Clippings, undated
3. Newspaper Clippings, undated
4. Newspaper Clippings, undated
5. Newspaper (unidentified) related to Mountain Home, undated (Oversized map folder)
6. Scrapbook, 1896 and undated
7. Miscellaneous items, 1896-1908 and undated

Location: