

# Cushing, Alonzo D., Letters

Alonzo D. Cushing Letters  
1861-1864



## Title Statement

Cushing, Alonzo D., Letters Alonzo D. Cushing Letters, 1861-1864 Ms.1988.067

**Author:** John M. Jackson, Archivist

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specref@vt.edu  
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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

Ms.1988.067

### Unit Date

1861-1864

### Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

### Abstract

This collection contains letters written by Alonzo D. Cushing of the 15th Maine Infantry during the American Civil War, written from Pensacola, Florida; New Orleans; and Readville, Massachusetts.

### Creator

Cushing, Alonzo D., 1819-1883

### Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

### Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

## Administrative Information

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## Source of Acquisition

The Alonzo D. Cushing Letters were purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in 1988. An addition was donated in January 2023.

## Processing Information

The processing and description of the Alonzo D. Cushing Letters commenced and was completed in April 2021. An addition was integrated in January 2024.

This collection had long been identified as the H. D. Cushing Correspondence, but a closer inspection and research in 2021 revealed the letters to have been written by Alonzo D. Cushing.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Alonzo. D. Cushing Letters, Ms1988-067, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

# Biographical Note

Alonzo D. Cushing, son of Adam and Mary Cushing, was born in Dedham, Massachusetts, in 1819. He appears in the 1860 census for Presque Isle (Aroostook County), Maine, as a 40-year-old farmer, living with wife Mary, 40, and six children, including Ellis, 14, and Almon, 11. The 1870 census describes Maine native Alonzo D. Cushing as a 50-year-old blacksmith, living in Peabody (Essex County), Massachusetts with wife Aseneth P., 47, and two children. Other records reveal that Alonzo D. Cushing and Asenath P. Richardson were married in Middleton (Essex County), Massachusetts in 1842. Alonzo D. Cushing died in Peabody, Massachusetts on August 15, 1883. A veteran of Company C, 15th Maine Infantry during the American Civil War, he was buried in Oakdale Cemetery, Middleton, Massachusetts.

# Scope and Content

This collection contains 13 letters written by Alonzo D. Cushing, a soldier in the 15th Maine Infantry during the American Civil War. Among them are letters written from camps in Pensacola, Florida; and New Orleans; and from a hospital in Readville, Massachusetts. Cushing's letters focus on camp activities, interactions with local inhabitants, and family matters.

Cushing's first letter, written from Gardner in early 1861, discusses the mustering in of his regiment. He describes his meals and promises to send home provisions with his pay. (Because the 15th Maine was organized in late 1861, Cushing may have served for a short time in an earlier unit, or his letter may be misdated.) Cushing next writes from Ship Island, Mississippi, briefly describing his recent sea voyage and discussing his prospects for transfer to a Massachusetts cavalry regiment. Discussing family matters, Cushing expresses alarm over his sons' misbehavior and disobedience at home, a concern that would be often repeated throughout his letters. In the next four letters, dated from October, 1862, to April, 1863, Cushing writes from Pensacola, Florida. Among Cushing's points of discussion are an argument caused by a letter that he'd written to his hometown newspaper, the drunkenness in camp, observations of local enslaved people ("[T]he slaves hear abouts have all hurd of Mr. Linkons proclamation tha are having a jolification ..."), Confederate prisoners of war, a freedmen's school, and the regiment's movements and activities. He also writes of the attitudes of soldiers and the local inhabitants toward slavery. Throughout Cushing's letters are scattered directions to his wife in how to manage the farm and the family and lengthy fatherly advice to his sons. He writes of arguments with local inhabitants about the war and slavery, on the latter Cushing writing, "I disliked slavery befour this rebelon I abhor it now and pray and hope it [the war] never will sease until all are free." By August, 1864, Cushing was in the hospital in Readville, Massachusetts, apparently suffering from rheumatism, and he describes his surroundings and the food.

# Keywords

Civil War

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

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## **Description of Subordinate Components**

**Letters**

**Unit Date** 1861-1864

**folder** 1