

Watson, George W., Correspondence

George W. Watson Correspondence
1862-1865



Title Statement

Watson, George W., CorrespondenceGeorge W. Watson Correspondence, 1861-1865 Ms.1989.024

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1989.024

Unit Date

1862-1865

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The George W. Watson Correspondence contains letters from George W. Watson, a private in Company H, 12th New Hampshire Infantry during the American Civil War, written to his family from camps in Virginia and from Point Lookout, Maryland. Also includes a letter from unidentified Union soldier written from Batesville, Arkansas.

Creator

Watson, George W.

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to research.

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Source of Acquisition

The George W. Watson Correspondence was donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 1989.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the George W. Watson Correspondence commenced and was completed in January 2022.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], George W. Watson Correspondence, Ms1989-024, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

George W. Watson, son of Jacob and Rachel Swain Watson, was born April 21, 1841. He enlisted as a private in Company H, 12th New Hampshire Infantry at Laconia, New Hampshire on August 15, 1862, and remained with the regiment through all of its battles, with the exception of Gettysburg. He was mustered out on May 16, 1865. Following the war, Watson returned to Laconia and worked in a mill as a spinner and overseer. Watson married Sarah Philbrick (1846-1906) in 1866, and the couple would have seven children. George W. Watson died on February 14, 1896 and was buried in Union Cemetery, Laconia, New Hampshire.

Scope and Content

This collection contains 18 letters from George W. Watson, a private in Company H, 12th New Hampshire Infantry during the American Civil War, written from camps in Virginia and Maryland. With the exception of the first letter, which is addressed to both his parents, all of the letters are addressed to Watson's mother. The letters commence from Georgetown on October 16, 1862. Employing some unique spelling (e.g., "tell my dear sister to not crie for i chall come home a gane and see you all in a shourt time ..."), Watson shares personal news while requesting news from home and frequently provides his opinions of his surroundings ("give me Newhampshire for all the country that I seen yet for my part i light it the best") and rations ("we have some Magety ham to Eat Once in while..." and later "we get oysters and Fish a penty...") while advising others at home not to join the army. He asks for provisions to be sent from home and notes the prices paid in camp for tobacco and various foodstuffs. He also writes of guarding prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland. Watson writes frankly of both personal and national affairs, at one point complaining about his father having gotten drunk on the money that he had sent to his mother and sisters, and at another condemning at length the Copperheads ("i supose the Coperheads say it [the war] will last as long as Linkon is president i think more of a rebbel then i do of a coperhead..."). He also writes from the siege of Petersburg, describing the breastworks, the gunshot that went through the toe of his shoe in a recent charge, and of a rebuffed attempt to trade between the lines with the Confederates. The letters conclude with Watson writing from Point of Rocks Hospital about his upcoming furlough.

Also in the collection is a single letter from an unidentified Union soldier writing from Batesville, Arkansas to his father, brother, and sisters, and relaying his recent activities and national war news.

Keywords

Civil War

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

Rights Statement for Archival Description

Description of Subordinate Components

Letters

Unit Date 1862-1865

folder 1

Camp near [Georgetown, Virginia]

Unit Date 1862-10-10

Camp [Recruits near] Alexandria, Virginia

Unit Date 1862-11-12

Camp [Recruits] near Alexandria, [Virginia]

Unit Date 1862-11-21

Camp near Falmouth, Virginia

Unit Date 1863-03-15

Point Lookout, Maryland

Unit Date 1863-10-02

Point Lookout, Maryland

Unit Date 1863-10-18

Point Lookout, Maryland

Unit Date 1863-11-07

Point Lookout, Maryland

Unit Date 1864-02-07

Point Lookout, Maryland

Unit Date 1864-03-26

Point Lookout, Maryland

Unit Date 1864-04-06

Near Williamsburg, Virginia

Unit Date 1864-04-16

Williamsburg, Virginia

Unit Date 1864-05-01

Near [Petersburg], Virginia

Unit Date 1864-06-23

[Petersburg], Virginia

Unit Date 1864-07-15

Bermuda Hundred, Virginia

Unit Date 1864-09-24

Bermuda Hundred, Virginia

Unit Date 1864-11-28

Chapin's Farm, Virginia

Unit Date 1864-12-26

Point of Rocks Hospital, Virginia

Unit Date 1865-02-02

Batesville, Arkansas

Unit Date 1862-05-06